

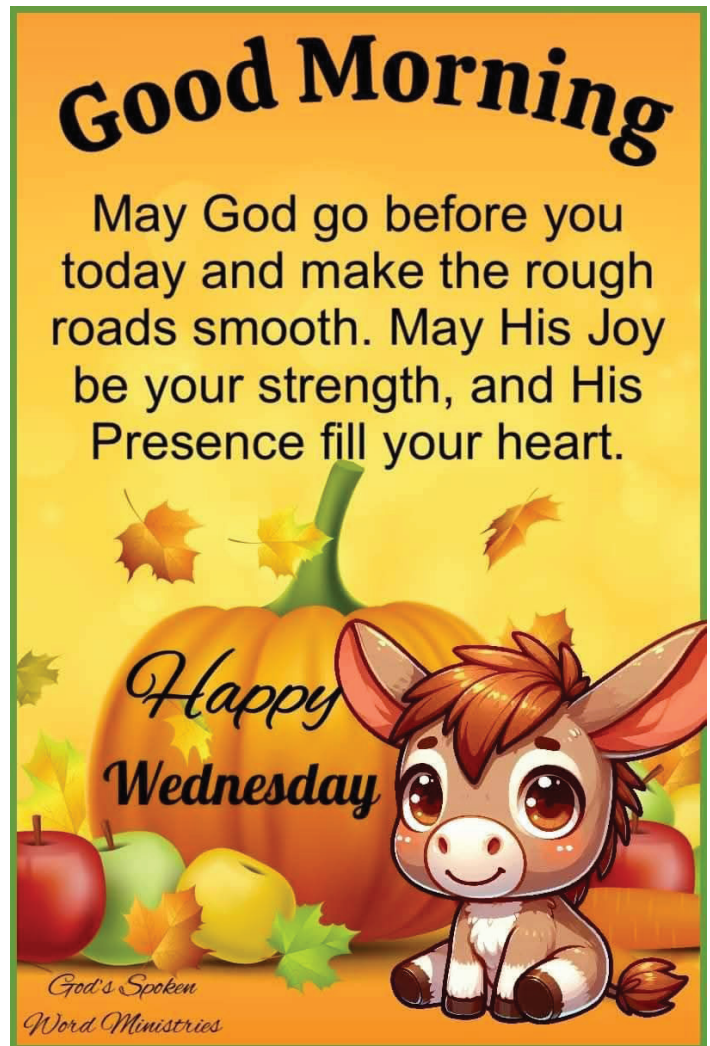
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## Wednesday, Nov. 12

Senior Menu: Thanksgiving meal: Roast turkey with dressing, green bean casserole, mashed potatoes with gravy, cranberries, pumpkin bar, dinner roll.  
School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.  
School Lunch: Pasta Primavera, cooked broccoli.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.  
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 5:30 p.m.  
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.  
4th grade GBB practice, 3:30 p.m.  
6th grade GBB practice, 6 p.m.  
FCCLA Food Drive, 6-8 p.m.



## Thursday, Nov. 13

Senior Menu: Chicken rice casserole, California blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.  
School Breakfast: Cereal.  
School Lunch: Sloppy joes, fries.  
Groton Lions Club meeting, 6 p.m., 104 N Main  
MS GBB at Webster (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.)  
3rd grade GBB practice, 5 p.m.

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

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# 1440

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

## House Shutdown Vote

The House reconvenes today and is expected to vote on a Senate bill to reopen the government. The vote comes on the 43rd day of the US' longest shutdown.

Seven Democrats and one independent joined 52 Republicans to pass the Senate bill, which would fund much of the government through January. The Agriculture Department—which facilitates SNAP food benefits to 42 million Americans—would be funded through September 2026. The bill does not extend COVID-era healthcare subsidies for 24 million people who purchase plans under the Affordable Care Act. Democratic leaders had sought to make reopening the government conditional on extending those subsidies, due to expire Dec. 31. ACA marketplace premiums are projected to rise up to 30%, from 18%, without an extension. Federal health subsidies cost an estimated \$1.8T in 2023, roughly 7% of the US gross domestic product.

Separately, airlines canceled an estimated 6% of flights at 40 of the US' busiest airports yesterday amid ongoing air traffic controller shortages.

## Early Winter Blast

An Arctic blast swept across the eastern half of the US this week, driving temperatures 15 to 25 degrees below average and affecting over 190 million people. The first major winter storm of the 2025-26 season was fueled by a sharp dip in the jet stream that pulled polar air from Canada nearly three weeks before meteorological winter officially begins Dec. 1.

The winter storm set record daily lows from Alabama to Tennessee and brought rare freezes to the Deep South. Snowfall reached as much as 18 inches in Michigan, while parts of Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin saw more than a foot of lake-effect snow. About 7.5 inches of snow was reported in the Smoky Mountains, with some snow reported as far south as northern Georgia. Florida experienced wind chills in the 30s, triggering warnings as stunned iguanas fell from trees, paralyzed by the cold.

Temperatures are expected to begin rebounding today as the system shifts farther east.

## Bob Ross Auction

The first three of 30 original Bob Ross paintings were sold at an auction yesterday in Los Angeles, with additional sales planned in London, New York, and Boston. Auction earnings will be given to US public television stations, which saw \$1.1B in federal funding cuts this year over concerns of bias and obsolescence.

The pieces sold yesterday are "Cliffside" (\$115K, painted in 1990); "Home in the Valley" (\$229K, painted in 1993); and "Winter's Peace" (\$318K, painted in 1993). Ross' landscapes are rarely seen on the open market—he painted them under a work-for-hire deal, giving Bob Ross Inc. ownership of nearly all of them.

Ross was known for his calm demeanor and catchphrases like "happy little trees." He hosted 403 episodes of "The Joy of Painting" from 1983 to 1994, following a 20-year US Air Force career. He died from lymphoma in 1995 at age 52.

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

MLB reaches agreement with sportsbooks to cap bets on individual pitches at \$200; news follows indictments of pitchers Emmanuel Clase and Luis Ortiz.

Cristiano Ronaldo confirms 2026 World Cup will be his final tournament with Portugal.

Sally Kirkland, Oscar-nominated actress best known for "Anna," dies at age 84.

Four-time NBA All-Star Michael Ray Richardson, banned from league for drug use, dies at age 70.

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Jimmy Kimmel's bandleader Cleto Escobedo III dies at age 59.

"KPop Demon Hunters" ruled ineligible for British Academy Film Awards, or BAFTA Awards.

Pope Leo to host special Vatican audience Saturday with artists from across the film and TV industry.

## Science & Technology

Meta's chief AI scientist, Yann LeCun, to depart company and launch his own AI startup; LeCun won the 2018 Turing Award, leaves amid Meta's push toward superintelligence.

Doctors demonstrate first remote, robot-assisted thrombectomy; a specialist in Scotland successfully removed a brain clot from a cadaver in Florida using a remotely guided robot.

Use of GLP-1 weight loss drugs cuts risk of death in colon cancer patients by more than half over five years; drug may help reduce inflammation and other mechanisms that promote tumor growth.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 +0.2%, Dow +1.2%, Nasdaq -0.3%); Dow closes at record high as CoreWeave (-16.3%) pulls down Nasdaq.

SoftBank sells entire stake in Nvidia for \$5.83B and part of its stake in T-Mobile for \$9.17B; sales of shares reportedly will be used to help fund the Japanese firm's expected \$30B investment in OpenAI.

Sonder to file for Chapter 7 bankruptcy after Marriott International terminates licensing agreement with the short-term rentals and boutique hotel operator.

## Politics & World Affairs

US Navy's largest and most advanced aircraft carrier—the USS Gerald R. Ford—arrives in Caribbean amid tensions with Venezuela.

Kansas county agrees to pay more than \$3M over 2023 law enforcement raid on small-town weekly newspaper.

At least 12 people killed, 27 wounded in Pakistan after suicide bombing attack outside a district court in Islamabad.

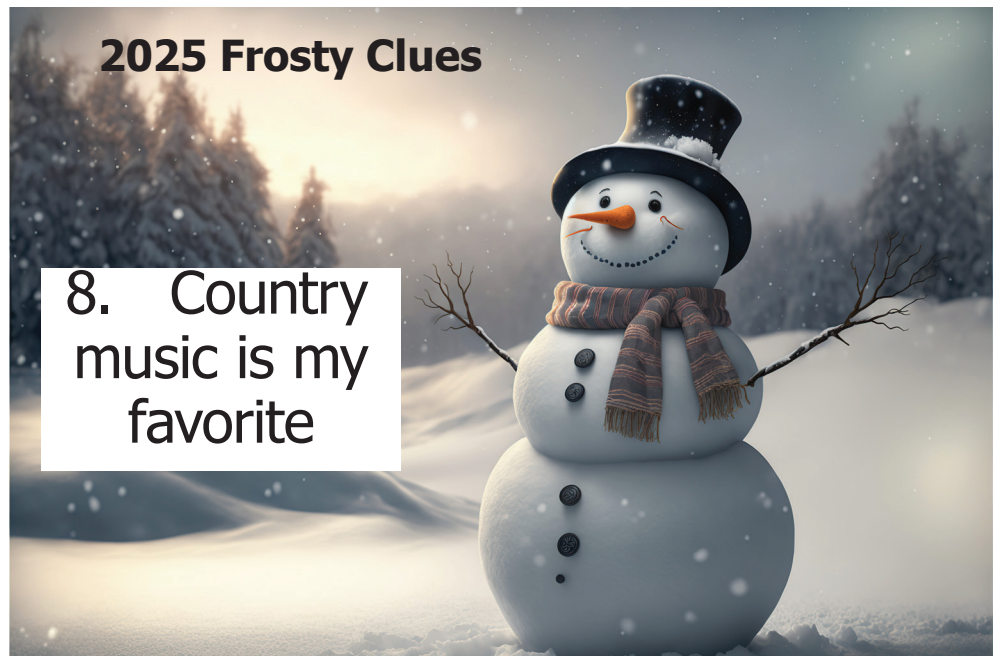
At least 20 dead in Turkish military plane crash in Georgia after taking off from Azerbaijan.

## Frosty is Back!!!

Please check the Groton Daily Independent for daily clues as to who the Groton Area Mystery Frosty is. The unveiling of Frosty will take place at the Groton Area Snow Queen Contest on Sunday, November 30th, at 4:00 pm.

## 2025 Frosty Clues

8. Country music is my favorite



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Groton Post No. 39 American Legion

## *Annual Turkey Party*

Saturday, Nov. 15, 2025

Starting at 6:30 p.m.

Groton Legion Post Home, 10 N. Main.

**Turkey, Ham and Bacon  
to be given away**



Lunch served  
by Auxiliary

DOOR  
PRIZE!

**FREE ADMISSION**

## Tigers Battle to the End, Fall in Five-Set SoDak 16 Thriller

FORT PIERRE — In a match filled with momentum swings, emotion, and post-season pressure, the Groton Area Tigers pushed Rapid City Christian to the limit Tuesday night in the SoDak 16 at Stanley County High School before falling 3-2 in a five-set classic. Set scores were 25-18, 26-28, 25-21, 20-25 and 15-8.

The Lady Comets built separation in the opening set by breaking a 10-10 tie with six straight points en route to a 25-18 win. Groton responded in gutsy fashion in set two, erasing several late deficits. Tied at 24-24 and again at 26-26, the Tigers delivered the final two points to pull out a dramatic 28-26 win and even the match.

Set three featured 10 ties and four lead changes before Rapid City Christian strung together another six-point run, turning a 14-14 deadlock into a 20-14 lead on the way to a 25-21 win. Once again, the Tigers answered. Trailing 8-7 in the fourth, Groton surged back, tying the set at 15-15 and taking control down the stretch to force a deciding set with a 25-20 victory.

Rapid City Christian set the tone early in the fifth, racing to a 6-1 lead. Groton continued to fight, but the early hole proved too deep as the Comets finished off the match 15-8 to punch their ticket to the state tournament.



**A good crowd was on hand for the SoDak16 volleyball match at Stanley County.** (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Jerica Locke**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

### **Coach Hanson: "They are a true team"**

Groton head coach Chelsea Hanson praised the intensity and environment of the postseason showdown.

"The atmosphere in that gym tonight was more than anyone could ask for in a high school game," Hanson said. "It was so loud and the momentum shifts were up and down the whole game."

Hanson credited Rapid City Christian's performance while expressing deep pride in her team's effort.

"Rapid City Christian played an unbelievable game — even if we played our best volleyball it would have been tough to overcome what they were doing offensively," she said. "Tonight was our best blocking night of the season and it still just wasn't quite enough."

She noted the Tigers' composure and resilience.

"I felt like we competed and we never gave them the game. Our girls



**Jaedyn Penning**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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**Kella Tracy**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

battled back from behind multiple times — we just couldn't slow them down like we needed to."

It was Groton's first five-set match of the season — a testament, Hanson said, to how much the Tigers left on the floor.

"We got as much as we could out of our players," she said. "I am so sad for our players that they couldn't get into the state tournament, but I am beyond proud of all that we have overcome."

Despite adversity throughout the season, Hanson said her team stayed united.

"We've had injuries, we've had fatigue, but of all the things we've 'had,' I am the most proud of how these girls had each other's back all season long. They are a true team — one that every kid dreams of being a part of."

She also thanked the program's seniors.

"Our leadership was so great and we will miss our four seniors immensely. They all had skill, but they are great people and amazing role models."

With heavy hearts but hopeful spirits, Hanson said the Tigers will cherish this season.

"We're all a bit numb tonight, but this group has bright days ahead, whether it's in volleyball or not."

## Individual Tiger Statistics

Chesney Weber: 38 assists, 12 digs, 2 ace serves, 3 solo blocks, 2 assisted blocks

Rylee Dunker: 12 kills, 27 attack attempts, 2 solo blocks, 1 assisted block

Tevan Hanson: 9 kills, 35 attacks, 2 assists

Taryn Traphagen: 9 kills, 17 attacks, 3 assisted blocks

Sydney Locke: 4 aces, 15-for-16 serving

Jaedyn Penning: 14 digs, 1 ace, 16-for-16 serving

Jerica Locke: 27 digs

McKenna Tietz: 12 digs

(Team totals: 45 kills, 38 assists, 89 digs, 9 blocks, 8 aces)



**Rylee Dunker**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Sydney Locke**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Tevan Hanson**  
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Chesney Weber**

(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

season at 25-6. Rapid City Christian moves on to the state tournament at 29-11.

## Rapid City Christian Statistical Leaders

A dominant offensive night for the Comets

Chloe Weber: 33 kills — a powerhouse performance that fueled the victory

Faith King: 17 kills, 41 assists, 14 digs, 5 blocks, 1 ace

May Callahan: 3 aces, 17 digs

Maddie Estelle: 6 kills, 4 blocks, 5 digs, 1 ace

Liza Kiefer: 3 kills, 2 blocks, 2 digs

Brecklyn Hermanson: 3 kills, 1 block

(Team total: 54 kills, including 50 from Weber and King combined)

Weber's 33 kills stood out as one of the top hitting performances of the season statewide, repeatedly swinging momentum.

Groton closes a memorable



**Taryn Traphagen**

(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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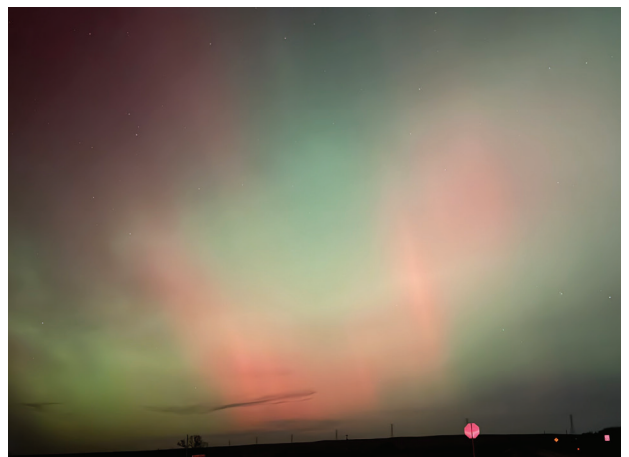
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The northern lights were in full force Tuesday evening. Jeslyn Kosel took this photo near Onida.



Bob Gibbs took this photo from Groton.



Paul Kosel took this photo north of Pierre.

## Columbia Auxiliary honors De Eh Tha Say for national Poppy Poster award

A powerful piece of student artwork from De Eh Tha Say has earned national recognition in the American Legion Auxiliary's Poppy Poster Contest, placing first in the Northwestern Division.

The contest, which teaches youth about patriotism, sacrifice, and honoring fallen service members, encourages students in grades 2–12 to create posters featuring the red Memorial Poppy — a symbol of remembrance inspired by World War I battlefields and carried forward as a tribute to those who lost their lives in service to the United States.

Columbia American Legion Auxiliary Unit 58 selected senior De Eh Tha Say as this year's Class 5 winner from their local entries. Her artwork advanced to the South Dakota state competition, where it also won top honors, before moving on to the national contest. From there, it earned first-place recognition across the Northwestern Division of the United States.

Cara Dennert, representing the Columbia Auxiliary, emphasized the importance of the tradition.



**Cara Dennert is pictured with De Eh Tha Say at the Veteran's Day Program when Tha Say was recognized for her national award.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

"Over a century after the First World War, the red poppy remains a symbol of sacrifice and gratitude," Dennert said. "Through this contest, our young people not only develop artistic skills, they learn the meaning behind the poppy and why we honor those who gave their lives for our freedoms."

A copy of De Eh Tha Say's award-winning poster was shared with audience members during the ceremony. Dennert noted that beyond recognition, winners help support veterans' families — as donations are made in their name toward scholarships for children of fallen service members.

"We're incredibly proud of her work," Dennert added. "Her creativity, respect for veterans, and heartfelt message captured the spirit of the poppy. It's an honor to see a student from our small community receive national recognition."

### The Award Winning Poster



American Legion Auxiliary

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**L-R Grace Oswald, Harley Delzer, Anna Oswald.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



**Principal Brett Schwan serves during the Groton Area Elementary Veteran's breakfast.**

(Photo by Bruce Babcock)



**Local Veterans eating with their families during Veteran's breakfast.** (Photos by Bruce Babcock)

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**Fifth grader Emery Blackwood with her grandfather Bruce Babcock.** (Photo Courtesy Bruce Babcock)



**Local full-time AGR SFC Brent Weink poses with fellow Groton Legionnaire Bruce Babcock at the Groton Veteran's Day ceremony.** (Photo Courtesy Bruce Babcock)



**Senior Jayden Schwan played taps for the last time at a Veteran's Day Program.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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**The Groton Area band, under the direction of Joshua Friez, performed the Service Songs at the Veteran's Day Program.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



**The middle school choir, under the direction of Landon Brown, sang, "Colonel Bogey's Grand Old Flag."** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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The fourth and fifth grade class sang, "My Country Tis of Thee." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The band played, "Aces of the Air." (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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**The All State Choir sang the "Star Spangled Banner" after the flags were presented.** (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM video.)

**Watch for the stories of the  
Veterans in upcoming issues of the GDI**

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The second and third graders sang, "America, the Beautiful." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The JK/Kindergarten/First Graders sang, "God Bless America." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The High School Choir sang, "We Honor You." (Photo by Paul Kosel)

## Codington County Fatal Crash

The date of the incident was incorrectly reported. The correct date and time the incident occurred is 9:44 p.m. Wednesday, November 5, 2025.

What: Single vehicle fatal crash  
Where: Meadow Lake Road and 29th Street SE, two miles south of Watertown, SD  
When: 9:44 p.m., Wednesday, November 5, 2025

Driver 1: 24-year-old male from Harrisburg, SD, fatal injuries  
Vehicle 1: 2012 Harley Davidson Switchback 103  
Helmet Used: No

Codington County, S.D.- A Harrisburg man died Friday, Nov. 7 from a Wednesday evening motorcycle crash two miles south of Watertown, SD.

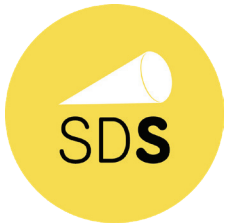
The name of the person involved has not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary information indicates the driver of a 2012 Harley Davidson was traveling northbound on 29th Street SE. As the driver approached the intersection of Meadow Lake Road, he lost control and was separated from the motorcycle.

The driver was taken to Prairie Lakes Hospital with life-threatening injuries and later transferred to a Sioux Falls hospital, where he died from injuries sustained in the crash.

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

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



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **State loads partial benefits onto food assistance cards and plans to add the rest later**

**BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF**

Delayed food assistance benefits will be loaded onto payment cards overnight, South Dakota officials said Tuesday, but recipients will receive only a portion of their usual benefits.

The state Department of Social Services said it hopes to load the rest of the money onto payment cards later, after the federal government shutdown ends.

The state department said it followed Saturday guidance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, which directed states to issue 65% of benefits. But the state department said that because recipients' benefits are calculated by household based on federal rules, "amounts received by beneficiaries will vary."

South Dakota typically distributes Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program payments on the 10th day of the month, which was Monday. The benefits were delayed because of federal shutdown-related chaos affecting the program that helps 42 million Americans, including 75,000 South Dakotans, afford groceries. It takes about \$15 million of federal funding monthly to cover benefits in South Dakota.

On Thursday, a federal judge ordered the Trump administration to pay the program's full November benefits, despite the ongoing government shutdown, which was caused by Congress' failure to pass a spending bill on time.

On Friday, the U.S. Department of Agriculture told states it was releasing full November funding for SNAP, and the South Dakota Department of Social Services said it would pay full benefits Monday.

Later Friday, the U.S. Supreme Court temporarily blocked the order from the lower court, which the Trump administration had appealed. The South Dakota Department of Social Services reacted Saturday by saying it had "paused implementation of its plan to provide full benefits."

Monday night, the U.S. Senate passed a bill that could end the government shutdown, but the bill still needs approval from the House and a signature from President Trump, which is expected later this week.

On Tuesday, the U.S. Supreme Court extended through Thursday its pause on the lower court order that had directed the Trump administration to pay full November benefits.

### **On Veterans Day, South Dakota names six bridges for World War II veterans**

**BY: JOSHUA HAIAR**

SIOUX FALLS — Greg Learning appreciates that when drivers cross a bridge near Parker, they might think of his uncle, Army Pvt. Marvin Gunderson, who was killed in action 80 years ago during World War II.

The bridge is one of six that the state of South Dakota named for World War II veterans Tuesday on Veterans Day.

"When folks drive by, that's somebody's loved one, and it's a good way to keep their memory alive," said Learning, a retired Air Force veteran.

All six of the veterans who were honored lost their lives in combat. The ceremony at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance was a continuation of the state's Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedication program. It was launched in 2019 by then-Gov. Kristi Noem's administration to dedicate bridges to South Dakotans

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who were killed in action or classified as missing in action.

Gov. Larry Rhoden attended Tuesday's ceremony.

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction," Rhoden said, quoting former President Ronald Reagan. "We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected and handed on for them to do the same."

The program has a committee that meets annually in April and selects veterans to honor and bridges to dedicate. An application form is available online.

The state's Department of Veterans Affairs said more than 50 bridges had been named in honor of South Dakota veterans before Tuesday's ceremony. The department said more than 3,000 South Dakotans have died while serving in the military.

## Bridge dedications

The South Dakota veterans honored on Tuesday:

Navy Water Tender Second Class Porter Rich: Served on several battleships and was killed aboard the USS Oklahoma during the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941, the same year he was married and his son was born. The Porter L. Rich Bridge is on U.S. Highway 14, about 2 miles east of De Smet.

Navy Machinist's Mate Second Class Milton Muller: Served on the USS Leary and died when the ship was torpedoed in the North Atlantic on Christmas 1943; his body was never recovered. The Milton L. Muller Bridge is on state Highway 38 bridge, east of Montrose.

Army Cpl. Harvey Henle: The paratrooper jumped into Normandy on D-Day and was killed by sniper fire in France 10 days later. The Harvey H. Henle Bridge is on state Highway 11, about 2 miles north of Brandon.

Army Sgt. Alvin Erpenbach: Fought in North Africa and Italy, and was twice wounded, the latter being a landmine that killed him in 1944. The Alvin W. Erpenbach Bridge is on state Highway 42, about 8 miles west of Ethan.

Army Pvt. Marvin Gunderson: Landed on Okinawa, Japan, in 1945 and was killed in action two days later. The Marvin L. Gunderson Bridge is on state Highway 19, north of Parker.

Army Pfc. Leland Nielson: Was stationed in the Philippines and was wounded by a Japanese sniper in 1945 and died of his injuries the next day. The Leland L. Nielsen Bridge is 11 miles north of Volin on state Highway 19.

*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.*

## Standing Rock Sioux Tribe argues against pipeline lawsuit dismissal in latest DAPL filing

BY: MARY STEURER

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe argues in new court documents that a federal judge was wrong to dismiss its latest lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Standing Rock filed the lawsuit, which seeks to shut the pipeline down, last October.

The tribe argues the Army Corps flouted federal law by allowing the Dakota Access Pipeline, also known as DAPL, to operate without an easement to cross Lake Oahe. Lake Oahe is a reservoir of the Missouri River that borders the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota state line.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg dismissed the case in March, finding that the tribe was re-litigating claims it already brought before his court in a previous lawsuit filed in 2016. At the time of the first suit, Standing Rock was leading a protest movement against the pipeline's construction that brought thousands of demonstrators to rural south-central North Dakota.

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The tribe disputed Boasberg's dismissal in new arguments filed last week with the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals.

"This appeal is a necessary step to hold the Corps accountable for its unlawful actions, to protect our people from the ongoing risks posed by DAPL, and to ensure that our sovereignty is respected," Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chair Steve Sitting Bear said in a Friday statement.

Standing Rock says Boasberg's dismissal should be reversed because the Army Corps of Engineers' yearslong inaction on the easement counts as a separate issue the courts haven't ruled on yet.

"These are not challenges to past decisions but to the Corps' ongoing violations of clear statutory duties," the tribe wrote in court records.

The Army Corps initially granted the oil pipeline an easement in 2017, but Boasberg revoked it in 2020 after finding the agency had broken the law by not fully evaluating the pipeline's environmental impacts.

Boasberg ordered the Corps to conduct a complete environmental impact study, which is still pending five years later. The agency published a draft in late 2023.

While the judge in court orders has been critical of the Army Corps' failure to move faster, he said this isn't something the tribe can sue over.

"No matter its frustration with Defendants' sluggish pace, it is not yet entitled to a second bite at the apple," he wrote in his March order.

He said the tribe may file another lawsuit once the Army Corps finishes its environmental impact study and takes final action on the easement.

The tribe in the case claims the Army Corps violated a number of other federal laws related to the Dakota Access Pipeline, including that it hasn't enforced regulatory standards for emergency spill response plans.

Standing Rock has said in court filings it has new evidence showing the pipeline is unsafe. The pipeline developer, Energy Transfer, has indicated previously it does not consider the information credible.

"We still need people to stand with us. People think Standing Rock ended when DAPL went online in 2017," said Doug Crow Ghost, Standing Rock's director of water resources.

The tribe also alleges that the Army Corps failed to investigate reports that sacred cultural sites were destroyed during the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, which it says is required under the National Historic Preservation Act. The pipeline company disputes that it desecrated cultural sites.

"These are old, untrue claims the Tribe continues to put out, trying to change the facts of the situation," Energy Transfer said of the lawsuit in an email Tuesday to the North Dakota Monitor.

The Dakota Access Pipeline passes through unceded land recognized as belonging to the Sioux Nation in 19th century treaties with the U.S. government.

Several states, including North Dakota, have intervened in the lawsuit as defendants. The states have argued that shuttering the pipeline would harm the regional economy, make road and rail transit more dangerous and would violate states' rights.

Dakota Access, the pipeline's owner, also joined the lawsuit on the side of the Army Corps. Dakota Access is owned by subsidiaries and affiliates of Energy Transfer.

The federal government, intervening states and Dakota Access are expected to respond to the tribe's arguments by early January.

*North Dakota Monitor reporter Mary Steurer can be reached at [msteurer@northdakotamonitor.com](mailto:msteurer@northdakotamonitor.com).*

*This story was originally produced by North Dakota Monitor, 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.*

*Mary Steurer is a reporter based in Bismarck for the North Dakota Monitor. A native of St. Louis, Steurer previously worked as the local government reporter for the Casper Star-Tribune newspaper in Wyoming.*

## US Supreme Court maintains temporary freeze on full SNAP benefits for November

BY: JACOB FISCHLER

The U.S. Supreme Court has extended through Thursday a pause on lower courts' orders that the Trump administration authorize a full month of benefits for a food assistance program that 1 in 8 Americans use to buy groceries.

A brief, unsigned order published Tuesday evening also said the full court would decide on the administration's request to block court orders that the U.S. Department of Agriculture release full November benefits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

The case was presented to Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, who said she would have dismissed the case and denied the request for an administrative stay. Jackson was appointed to the high court by President Joe Biden.

The order adds another wrinkle to a case that was already the object of a weeklong tug-of-war over how the program should operate during the government shutdown.

The shutdown could end before the stay expires. The U.S. Senate passed a bill Monday to reopen the government, and the House is expected to pass it Wednesday. President Donald Trump has said he supports the measure and will likely sign it before the end of the day Thursday.

Trump and administration officials have maintained they were not authorized to release November SNAP benefits during the shutdown.

A Rhode Island federal judge ordered the USDA on Thursday to release full benefits for November. The department sent states a memo authorizing those payments Friday morning, then appealed to the Supreme Court on Friday evening to have the district court's order overturned.

At the same time, the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the lower court's order.

In the face of often contradicting administrative guidance and court orders, some states began processing full benefits for November, while others have yet to release them.

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

## Hemp growers, retailers targeted in section of government shutdown legislation

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — Kentucky's two U.S. senators sparred this week over the future of the country's hemp industry — one arguing that a provision attached to the package that will reopen the government will close a problematic loophole and the other contending the language will regulate the industry "to death."

Sen. Mitch McConnell ultimately prevailed and was able to keep the section in the Agriculture appropriations bill cracking down on hemp that Sen. Rand Paul tried to remove during floor debate. Both are Republicans.

The appropriations bill is riding along with a stopgap spending bill that will end the government shutdown and is expected to be voted on by the House as soon as Wednesday. The hemp measure has raised alarm in farm states benefiting from a robust hemp growing industry.

Hemp plants have 0.3% or less of tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, while cannabis or marijuana plants have higher concentrations of that substance, which is what gives users the "high or stoned" feeling.

A summary of the bill put together by Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Susan Collins' staff says the new language would prevent "the unregulated sale of intoxicating hemp-based or hemp-derived products, including Delta-8, from being sold online, in gas stations, and corner stores, while preserving non-intoxicating CBD and industrial hemp products."

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The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has a warning page on its website cautioning "that delta-8 THC products have not been evaluated or approved by the FDA for safe use in any context."

## Farm Bill origins

McConnell explained he is targeting hemp because its uses have expanded beyond what was intended. "I led the effort to legalize industrial hemp through the 2014 pilot program and the 2018 Farm Bill," McConnell said. "Unfortunately, companies have exploited a loophole in the 2018 legislation by taking legal amounts of THC from hemp and turning it into intoxicating substances, and then marketing it to children in candy-like packaging and selling it in easily accessible places, like gas stations and convenience stores all across our country."

McConnell said the new provision, which won't take effect until a year after the bill becomes law, would "keep these dangerous products out of the hands of children while preserving the hemp industry for farmers."

Paul and Oregon Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley urged their colleagues to remove that McConnell provision from the larger spending package, but were unsuccessful.

"This is the most thoughtless, ignorant proposal to an industry that I've seen in a long, long time," Paul said.

The new language would change the definition of what makes a hemp plant legal, a move Paul said would mean "every plant in the country will have to be destroyed."

"This bill's per-serving THC content limit would make illegal any hemp product that contains more than point four milligrams," Paul said. "That would be nearly 100% of the existing market. That amounts to an effective ban, because the limit is so low that the products intended to manage pain or anxiety will lose their effect."

## State laws said to be nullified

The legislation, Paul added, will negatively impact the nearly two dozen states that have set higher limits on hemp production.

"Currently, Maine limits THC to three milligrams per serving. That will be overruled. My home state limits THC to five milligrams in beverages; that will be overruled. Minnesota, Utah, Louisiana also have five milligrams per serving. Alabama and Georgia have 10 milligrams. Tennessee has 15 milligrams," Paul said. "The bill before us nullifies all these state laws."

Merkley said the new provision in the larger spending package would eliminate the hemp industry, which Congress took steps to establish more than a decade ago.

"I support my other colleague from Kentucky who doesn't want intoxicated products produced from hemp," Merkley said. "But the definition that is in this bill does far more than that, and it has to be fixed. So for now, it needs to be stripped out."

The Senate voted 76-24 to table, or set aside, Paul's amendment after McConnell moved to block it from being taken up directly.

The Agriculture funding bill is one of three full-year government spending bills included in the stopgap spending package that will end the government shutdown once the House approves the measure later this week and President Donald Trump signs the bill.

## Trade group warns of hundreds of thousands of jobs affected

Hemp Industry & Farmers of America Executive Director Brian Swensen wrote in a statement released last week that McConnell's provision would have a devastating impact on the industry and its workers.

"Congress legalized hemp, Americans built an industry, and now Washington wants to pull the rug out from under hardworking farmers and small business owners. The industry wants a solid regulatory package that protects kids, but instead, Congress wants to place industry-killing caps on cannabinoids. Congress is not listening to the industry they created — they're dismantling an industry with over 325,000 jobs and

driving consumers to an unregulated, unsafe, and untaxed black market.”

John and Kara Grady, owners of Slappyhappy Hemp Company, said during an interview with the Missouri Independent the new language could hinder their business, possibly forcing them to close down.

“You’re sick to your stomach all day long,” said Kara Grady, “knowing your hard work is for not.”

Zack Kobrin, a Fort Lauderdale attorney with the firm of Saul Ewing who works in the hemp and cannabis industry, told the Florida Phoenix that many in the industry “are surprised it was such a sudden and sweeping measure.”

“I think for those that are cowboys, they will just maximize on making as much as they can until they can’t,” Kobrin said. “I think for those hemp operators that were trying to work with regulators and trying to follow the rules, this will be a real blow.”

*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 senator says spending bill includes \$21.9 million of his requests for South Dakota projects

**BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF**

U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, R-South Dakota, said a stopgap spending bill to reopen the federal government includes \$21.9 million worth of funding he requested for projects in South Dakota.

The spending bill incorporates the full-year appropriations bills for the Agriculture Department, the Legislative Branch, military construction projects and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs.

Rounds said those bills include seven of his congressionally directed spending requests, also known as earmarks. Four of those are for construction projects at Ellsworth Air Force Base near Rapid City to accommodate the future addition of B-21 bomber planes, which are under development:

\$4.8 million for planning and design for a Weapons Generation Facility Dormitory.

\$3.5 million for planning and design of a Communications Center.

\$4 million for 11 new munitions storage structures.

\$5.4 million for two other munitions storage structures.

Rounds’ other earmarks are:

\$1.7 million for an aircraft maintenance hangar at Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls.

\$2 million for South Dakota State University’s Cottonwood Field Station renovation and expansion in western South Dakota.

\$500,000 for SDSU’s Transient Animal Research Support Facility.

The spending bill passed the Senate on Monday night, with yes votes from Rounds and Majority Leader John Thune, R-South Dakota. The House is expected to clear the legislation for President Donald Trump’s signature later this week, which would end the longest federal government shutdown in U.S. history.

Rounds issued a statement saying “it’s now time to move forward and continue working on our regular order appropriations process, but we can’t ignore the devastating effect that six weeks of a government shutdown has had on our nation.” He said thousands of federal workers have gone without pay, millions of families have had the federal benefits they use to feed their children put at risk and the nation’s air travel system has been thrown into chaos.

“It’s my hope that these families who have suffered real damaging effects can move forward with their lives,” Rounds said. “We must work hard in the Senate to prevent a shutdown like this from happening again.”

## The midterm ballot measure battles have already begun

**Fights over rules and voter language are playing out in courts and legislatures**

**BY: JONATHAN SHORMAN**

When Missouri Republican lawmakers approved a new district map in September to help their party in Congress, progressive activist Richard von Glahn was ready. Hours after the state legislature passed the gerrymandered map, von Glahn had submitted a proposed ballot petition to put it to the voters.

It would be more than a month before the Republican-controlled secretary of state's office approved the petition, squeezing the number of days in which Glahn's group, People Not Politicians, has to gather signatures.

Missouri Republican Secretary of State Denny Hoskins argued the group couldn't begin collecting signatures until the governor signed the map into law, two weeks after its legislative passage.

People Not Politicians is now suing Hoskins over the fate of some 90,000 signatures collected after lawmakers approved the map on Sept. 12 and before the secretary of state approved the petition on Oct. 14. The group faces a mid-December deadline to gather roughly 106,000 signatures.

A year out from the 2026 midterm elections, such legal fights and procedural maneuvering over ballot measures and referendums are already well underway in states across the country. The disputes will go a long way in determining not only what ballot measures and referendums are put before voters, but also how those questions are summarized on ballots and other official documents.

Some ballot measure campaigns argue that partisan state officials, such as secretaries of state and attorneys general, have put their thumb on the scale with misleading or inflammatory official summaries and have used arcane procedures to slow them down. More and more, campaigners say, their planning anticipates extensive litigation.

Legal challenges have also been launched against new state laws regulating citizen-led ballot measures. Critics of the regulations argue that in many cases they're effectively restrictions, while proponents claim the rules are necessary for election integrity and to combat abuses of the ballot measure process.

"Missourians have had this constitutional right for 150 years, and if the [secretary of state's] logic holds Missourians of today and tomorrow will not have the same rights as their parents did to petition their neighbors for redress of government overreach," von Glahn, speaking about the referendum process, told Stateline in a statement.

While many states have allowed voters to place issues on the ballot for decades, those elections have attracted significant attention in the past few years as states vote on abortion rights and other divisive issues. Between 2018 and 2024, more than 200 lawsuits involving ballot measures were filed in state and federal courts, according to data gathered by the State Democracy Research Initiative at the University of Wisconsin Law School.

Even in states without a citizen-led process, state legislatures have often referred controversial measures to voters. Mid-decade congressional redistricting is emerging as the latest flash point, with California voters last week approving a ballot measure referred by state lawmakers that allows a Democratic gerrymander of the state to take effect.

Twenty-four states — including every Western state except New Mexico and Hawaii — have a citizen-led ballot measure process, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, with 17 fairly described as Republican-leaning or swing states. Several are currently the site of pitched legal and political battles over the ballot measure process.

In Montana, the state attorney general has rewritten summaries — the language voters see on ballot measures — for proposals aimed at ensuring nonpartisan courts, prompting a lawsuit that's pending before the state Supreme Court. Arkansas civic and campaign groups have sued to block a series of new ballot measure rules, including a requirement that canvassers ask potential petition signers for a photo ID.

Florida lawmakers passed a bill requiring ballot measure campaigns to turn in petition signatures more quickly. Oklahoma lawmakers imposed new geographic distribution requirements for signature collections. And in Utah, lawmakers voted to require campaigns to provide detailed information on how a proposal

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would be funded and whether it would require a new tax.

Democrats and other progressives expect upcoming state legislative sessions, many of which begin in January, to bring more measures aimed at the ballot measure process.

"Missouri is a good indicator of what we're going to face in 2026," said Chris Melody Fields Figueredo, executive director of the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center, which aids progressive ballot measure efforts across the country.

"And this has been true for the last several years," she said. "One of the major tactics that those who are opposed to direct democracy — they go after the signature-gathering process to invalidate legitimate signatures, to prevent issues that voters want from getting onto the ballot."

## How do officials view their role?

Many Republicans defend their approach to ballot measures as necessary to ensure fairness in the process and prevent fraudulent signature collection. Some also voice concerns that state constitutions have become too easy to amend, as Democrats and progressives turn to ballot measures to enact policies such as minimum wage increases and abortion access that are often blocked in GOP-controlled statehouses.

Missouri's secretary of state, Hoskins, has cast his approach to the People Not Politicians referendum petition as defending the state constitution from out-of-state actors.

While People Not Politicians is suing the secretary of state in Missouri court, Hoskins is suing the group in federal court. In a lawsuit brought jointly by Hoskins and Missouri Republican Attorney General Catherine Hanaway, Hoskins argues that under the U.S. Constitution, the power to draw congressional maps rests with the state legislature.

"My job is to uphold the Constitution and make sure the process for changing it is fair, transparent, and understood by Missouri voters," Hoskins said in a statement to Stateline after this story published.

"The right of initiative and referendum is a fundamental part of our state, but the integrity of that process matters. Missourians deserve to know exactly what they are being asked to vote on, especially when constitutional amendments have lasting effects," Hoskins said. "I will continue to follow the law, defend the rule of law, and safeguard the trust Missourians place in this office."

Chuck Hatfield, a Missouri attorney who has long worked on litigation related to ballot measures in the state, said secretaries of state have historically viewed their role as ministerial.

"You're supposed to move paperwork from the left side of the desk to the right side of the desk," he said.

"I don't think this secretary of state sees his role that way," said Hatfield, who is one of the lawyers representing People Not Politicians in its lawsuit against Hoskins. "I think he sees himself as more of an advocate."

Missouri Secretary of State communications director Rachael Dunn wrote in an email that Hoskins' role is ministerial and administrative, and that the secretary believes voters deserve "clarity, accuracy, and full context" when asked to amend the state constitution.

"That is not activism. That is stewardship of a process that belongs to the people," Dunn wrote.

Hoskins' more aggressive stance toward ballot measures echoes the posture of Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen, a Republican who this year has rewritten the ballot language of proposals concerning state courts despite finding the measures met legal requirements. Montanans for Fair and Impartial Judges and Montanans for Nonpartisan Courts are both proposing similar measures to require nonpartisan judicial elections. Judicial elections have been nonpartisan in Montana since the 1930s, but the groups want to codify the practice in the state constitution.

Knudsen rewrote the ballot language of the measures to emphasize that nonpartisan elections also prohibit political party labels "including labels like independent." The two groups say the phrase suggests independent candidates can't run in judicial elections and have filed lawsuits challenging the rewrites.

Knudsen's office didn't respond to an interview request. But Amanda Braynack, Knudsen's communications director, has previously called the lawsuits frivolous. "Liberal activists appear to be worried that Montanans will see the facts of what makes an election nonpartisan rather than their own opinion on the ballot," Braynack told the Flathead Beacon in October.

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Caitie Butler, a spokesperson for Montanans for Nonpartisan Courts, said state law does give the attorney general leeway to rewrite ballot language if it's clearly biased or argumentative, but she emphasized that the group believes its language was neither. She called ballot language rewrites a "growing challenge" in Montana over the past couple of election cycles.

Election Reformers Network, a nonpartisan group that advocates for the impartial administration of U.S. elections, in a January 2025 report said that in 85% of states with a citizen-led ballot measure process, a single party controlled the governorship and both chambers of the state legislature — with 13 Republican trifectas and nine Democratic trifectas in those states.

In recent years, voters in both Republican- and Democratic-leaning states had approved ballot measures with policies opposed by lawmakers, the report found. Examples included a 2020 Colorado vote that lowered tax rates, a 2024 California vote increasing certain criminal penalties, a 2020 Oklahoma vote to expand Medicaid, and a 2020 Florida vote to raise the minimum wage, among others.

The report highlighted the role of partisan state officials in the ballot measure process. In every state with citizen-led ballot measures, partisan officials play a role in reviewing and drafting ballot language. In nearly 60% of states, they also play a role in signature verification.

"There are definitely elements of our system that allow for partisan manipulation of elections in very different domains than in the polling station or around mail ballots, but instead in the domains that control options voters have," Kevin Johnson, co-founder and executive director of Election Reformers Network, said in an interview.

## Tighter rules

State legislatures can also exercise significant influence over the ballot measure process by setting rules that make qualifying proposals for the ballot either more or less difficult.

Arkansas lawmakers earlier this year approved a series of measures tightening requirements surrounding ballot measure proposals and gathering signatures. Under the new laws, canvassers must inform potential signers that petition fraud is a criminal offense and request photo ID from potential signers.

Potential signers must also now read a petition's ballot title or have it read to them. And ballot titles must not be written above an eighth grade reading level.

"These bills are not restrictive. What these bills are is they provide safeguards or guardrails, and the reason you need guardrails is because there have been plenty of accidents along the way," Arkansas state Sen. Kim Hammer, a Republican, said during floor debate in February.

Hammer, a candidate for Arkansas secretary of state and the lead sponsor of some of the bills, didn't respond to a request for comment. He said on the Senate floor that he rejected the idea that the measures were taking away the rights of the people, but that they are intended to address increasing "outside interference" in the ballot measure process.

The League of Women Voters of Arkansas and several ballot measure campaign groups have sued in federal court to block the new laws. A judge held a hearing in late September but hasn't yet ruled on whether to grant a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction against the requirements as the lawsuit plays out.

In Missouri, a state court trial in People Not Politicians' lawsuit against Hoskins over its referendum petition signatures was abruptly postponed last week because the judge was ill. A new hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, though it's not clear when the judge will rule.

People Not Politicians can almost certainly block the gerrymander for the 2026 election if the group collects enough valid signatures by a Dec. 11 deadline outlined in state law. A successful referendum petition will place the map before voters in November 2026, and Missouri would be prohibited from using the redrawn lines in the meantime.

On Nov. 5, People Not Politicians announced it had collected more than 200,000 signatures — or roughly double the minimum number it needs.

*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.*

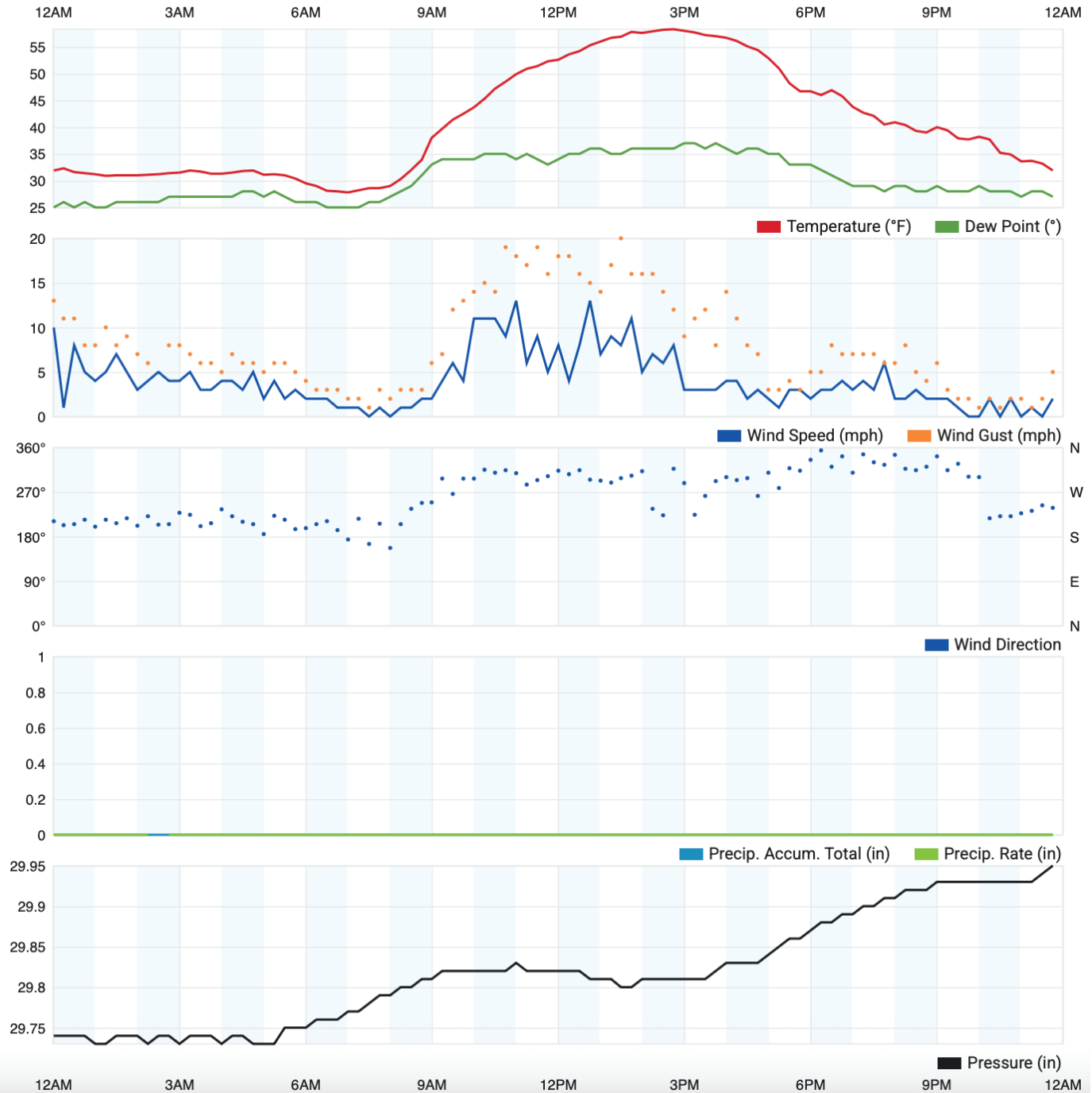
*Jonathan Shorman covers democracy for Stateline, including elections, voting rights, fights over state vs. federal power, civil liberties and more.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

November 11, 2025



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Today



High: 54 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 28 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Thursday



High: 57 °F

Mostly Sunny

Thursday  
Night



Low: 34 °F

Mostly Clear

Friday



High: 61 °F

Mostly Sunny

## What's Ahead



**Today**

A blend of clouds and sun

Highs: 48-58°



**Thursday**

Clouds early then decreasing clouds

Highs: 53-65°



**Friday**

Mostly sunny and warm  
- near record highs possible!

Highs: 63-75°



**Saturday**

Cloudy early then clearing. Cooler

Highs: 50-57°



NWS Aberdeen, SD  
Wed Nov 12, 2025 3:14 AM

Dry conditions continue through the rest of the week with a gradual warmup in temperatures. Highs for Friday will run about 20 to 30 degrees above average!

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 58 °F at 2:48 PM

Low Temp: 28 °F at 6:54 AM

Wind: 20 mph at 1:27 PM

Precip: : 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 768 in 1905

Record Low: -14 in 1896

Average High: 44

Average Low: 21

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.36

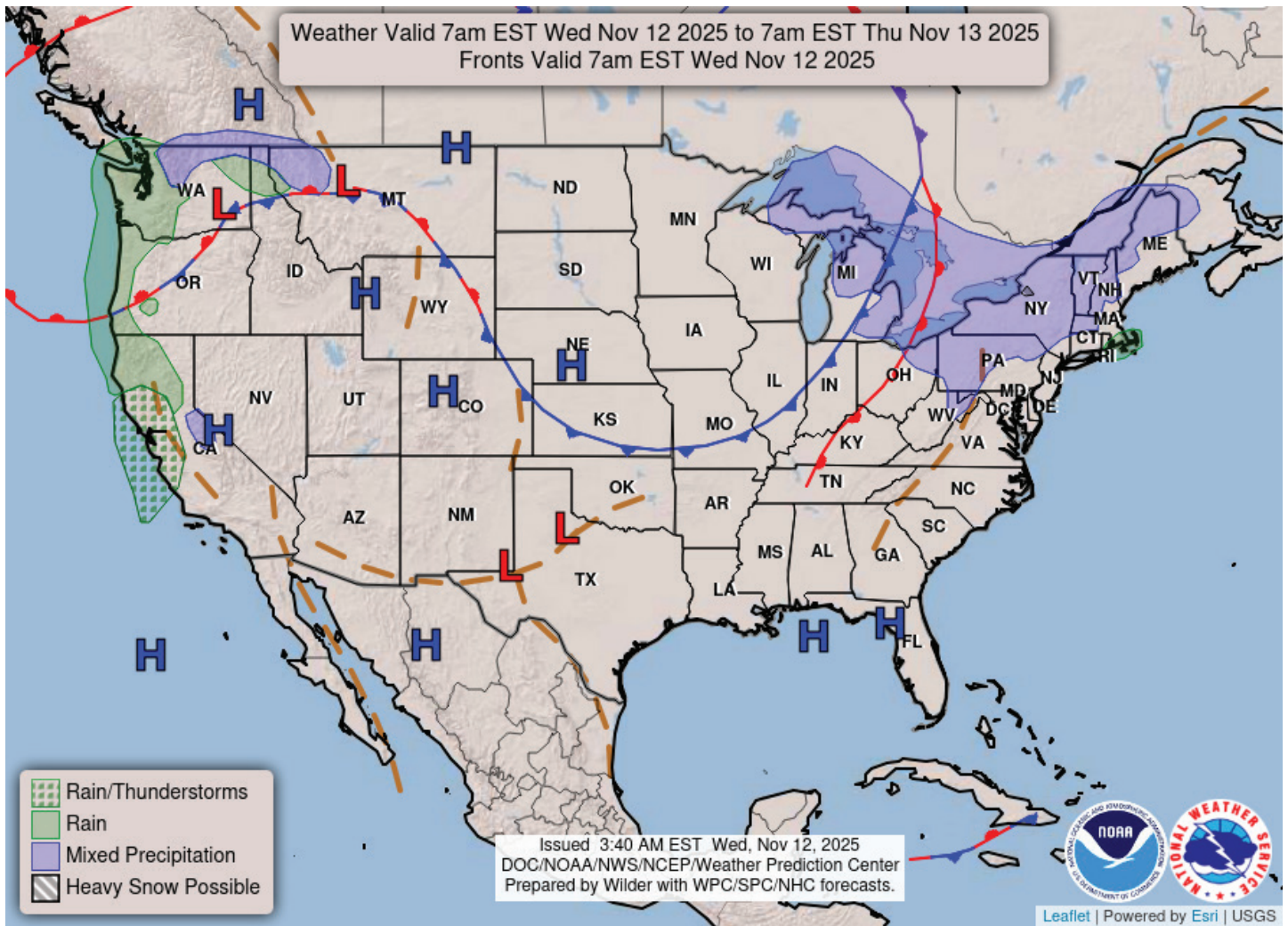
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 20.83

Precip Year to Date: 23.51

Sunset Tonight: 5:05 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:29 am



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## Today in Weather History

November 12, 1993: A winter storm moved through the area on November 12th and 13th. A wintry mix of precipitation in the form of freezing rain, sleet, and snow began during the afternoon on the 12th in western portions of Minnesota, while heavy snow fell in a swath from southwest South Dakota through central and northeast parts of the state, with generally four to eight inches reported. Freezing rain also preceded the snow in south-central South Dakota. Significant accumulation of ice occurred within about a 70-mile wide area from west central Minnesota into the Arrowhead region. Up to five inches of snow fell on top of the ice, making travel extremely hazardous. In South Dakota, locally heavier snowfall amounts included 12 inches at Midland and 10 inches central Hughes County. Several schools and other community events were closed due to the ice and snow. In south central South Dakota, trees were damaged by heavy ice, some of which fell on power lines, causing an outage. Other snowfall amounts include; 8.0 inches in Blunt; 7.0 inches in Murdo and near Victor; and 6.0 inches near Onida, Faulkton, Highmore, and Leola.

November 12, 2003: High winds brought down a 70-foot gas station sign in Kennebec. The sign fell onto a shed, causing considerable damage to the shed. A 25-foot radio tower on the Kennebec courthouse was also knocked down by the winds.

1906 - The mercury soared to 106 degrees at Craftonville, CA, a November record for the U.S. (The Weather Channel)

1959 - Between Noon on the 11th and Noon on the 12th, a winter storm buried Helena, MT, under 21.5 inches of snow, which surpassed their previous 24 hour record by seven inches. (The Weather Channel)

1968 - A severe coastal storm produced high winds and record early snows from Georgia to Maine. Winds reached 90 mph in Massachusetts, and ten inches of snow blanketed interior Maine. (David Ludlum)

1970: The deadliest tropical cyclone ever recorded, and one of the deadliest natural disasters in modern times occurred on this day in East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. The Bhola Cyclone first formed over the Bay of Bengal on November 8 and traveled north. This cyclone reached peak intensity, Category 3, on the 11, and made landfall on the coast of East Pakistan the following afternoon. The Bhola Cyclone killed an estimated 500,000 people and caused nearly \$90 million in damage (1970 USD).

1974 - A great Alaska storm in the Bering Sea caused the worst coastal flooding of memory at Nome AK with a tide of 13.2 feet. The flooding caused 12 million dollars damage, however no lives are lost. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Heavy snow spread across much of New England. Totals in Massachusetts ranged up to 14 inches in Plymouth County. The seven inch total at the Logan Airport in Boston was their highest of record for so early in the season, and the 9.7 inch total at Providence RI was a record for November. Roads were clogged with traffic and made impassable as snowplow operators were caught unprepared for the early season snowstorm. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather in the Lower Mississippi Valley during the afternoon and early evening hours. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Bovina MS. Morning thunderstorms drenched Atlanta TX with more than four inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thirty-three cities reported record high temperatures for the date as readings soared into the 70s and 80s from the Southern and Central Plains to the Southern and Middle Atlantic Coast Region. The afternoon high of 80 degrees at Scottsbluff NE was a record for November, and highs of 76 degrees at Rapid City SD and 81 degrees at Chattanooga TN were the warmest of record for so late in the season. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2003 - Thunderstorms developed in southern California and produced torrential downpours across parts of the Los Angeles area. More than 5 inches of rain fell in just 2 hours in southern Los Angeles, producing severe urban flooding. Small hail also accompanied the storms, accumulating several inches deep in some areas of the city. Nearly 115,000 electrical customers lost power as the storms affected the area (Associated Press).



## Vision Without Boundaries

**If we choose to trust God, we'll be amazed at what He will accomplish through us.**

John 20:29-31: 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe[a] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

What do you think goes through the mind of runners in a marathon? Naturally, they carefully consider the challenges of the course and strategize how best to meet each one. But if they dwelled only on how hard the race would be, they could easily fail. So runners typically also picture themselves crossing the finish line.

We would be wise to follow a similar thought pattern. God's vision is for us to share His message of hope with the whole world (Luke 24:47). Like a marathon, that's a huge task, and some Christians avoid the call because they feel "all the nations" is too big an assignment. Other believers stop because of a language barrier, or perhaps because they just don't know how to start. But we can't let fear or hesitation hold us back.

It's important to identify limitations we have placed on ourselves and remember that the Lord has promised to be with us "to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). We also need to rely on the Holy Spirit's empowerment. Remember, Jesus said that what would be impossible with man is possible with God (Luke 18:27).

Once we realize we have nothing to fear, it becomes easier to embrace our mission and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Then we'll be amazed at what God will accomplish through us.

*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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## Upcoming Groton Events

- 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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 The following will be used for your log-in information.  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Password \_\_\_\_\_



## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.11.25

10 13 40 42 46 1

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$965,000,000**

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 59  
DRAW: Mins 59 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.10.25

6 14 17 26 28 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$6,800,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 14 Mins 59  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.11.25

12 25 30 40 42 15

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 15 Hrs 29 Mins 59  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.08.25

19 20 26 33 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$79,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 29 Mins 59  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.10.25

26 39 43 47 66 19

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 58 Mins 59  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.10.25

6 28 44 48 58 23

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$512,000,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 58 Mins 59  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### PREP VOLLEYBALL

SDHSAA Playoffs=

SoDak 16=

Class A=

Clark-Willow Lake def. Aberdeen Roncalli, 21-15, 25-21, 25-18

Dakota Valley def. Platte-Geddes, 25-9, 25-8, 23-25, 25-11

Dell Rapids def. Todd County, 25-9, 25-10, 25-9

Hamlin def. West Central, 25-23, 12-25, 16-25, 25-19, 15-9

McCook Central-Montrose def. Sioux Falls Christian, 25-21, 25-9, 23-25, 25-11

Rapid City Christian def. Groton, 25-18, 26-28, 25-21, 20-25, 15-8

St Thomas More def. Miller, 25-23, 22-25, 25-21, 25-18

Wagner def. Winner, 25-21, 18-25, 25-16, 25-11

Class B=

Bennett County def. Lemmon High School, 25-18, 25-21, 25-20

Chester def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-11, 25-11, 25-10

Gayville-Volin High School def. Kadoka, 23-25, 22-25, 25-21, 25-13, 15-13

Harding County def. Wolsley-Wessington, 25-22, 17-25, 25-22, 25-21

Herreid-Selby def. Burke, 25-18, 12-25, 25-23, 21-25, 15-13

Northwestern def. Castlewood, 25-16, 25-15, 25-21

Parkston def. Ipswich, 25-22, 25-16, 25-21

Warner def. Colman-Egan

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

## A historic shutdown is nearly over. It leaves no winners and much frustration

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The longest government shutdown in history could conclude as soon as Wednesday, Day 43, with almost no one happy with the final result.

Democrats didn't get the health insurance provisions they demanded added to the spending deal. And Republicans, who control the levers of power in Washington, didn't escape blame, according to polls and some state and local elections that went poorly for them.

The fallout of the shutdown landed on millions of Americans, including federal workers who went without paychecks and airline passengers who had their trips delayed or canceled. An interruption in nutrition assistance programs contributed to long lines at food banks and added emotional distress going into the holiday season.

The agreement includes bipartisan bills worked out by the Senate Appropriations Committee to fund parts of government — food aid, veterans programs and the legislative branch, among other things. All other funding would be extended until the end of January, giving lawmakers more than two months to finish additional spending bills.

Here's a look at how the shutdown started and is likely to end:

What led to the shutdown

Democrats made several demands to win their support for a short-term funding bill, but the central one was an extension of an enhanced tax credit that lowers the cost of health coverage obtained through Affordable Care Act marketplaces.

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The tax credit was boosted during the COVID-19 pandemic response, again through President Joe Biden's big energy and health care bill, and it's set to expire at the end of December. Without it, premiums on average will more than double for millions of Americans. More than 2 million people would lose health insurance coverage altogether next year, the Congressional Budget Office projected.

"Never have American families faced a situation where their health care costs are set to double — double in the blink of an eye," said Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

While Democrats called for negotiations on the matter, Republicans said a funding bill would need to be passed first.

"Republicans are ready to sit down with Democrats just as soon as they stop holding the government hostage to their partisan demands," Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said.

Thune eventually promised Democrats a December vote on the tax credit extension to help resolve the standoff, but many Democrats demanded a guaranteed fix, not just a vote that is likely to fail.

Thune's position was much the same as the one Schumer took back in October 2013, when Republicans unsuccessfully sought to roll back parts of the Affordable Care Act in exchange for funding the government. "Open up all of the government, and then we can have a fruitful discussion," Schumer said then.

### Democratic leaders under pressure

The first year of President Donald Trump's second term has seen more than 200,000 federal workers leave their job through firings, forced relocations or the Republican administration's deferred resignation program, according to the Partnership for Public Service. Whole agencies that don't align with the administration's priorities have been dismantled. And billions of dollars previously approved by Congress have been frozen or canceled.

Democrats have had to rely on the courts to block some of Trump's efforts, but they have been unable to do it through legislation. They were also powerless to stop Trump's big tax cut and immigration crackdown bill that Republicans helped pay for by cutting future spending on safety net programs such as Medicaid and SNAP, formerly known as food stamps.

The Democrats' struggles to blunt the Trump administration's priorities has prompted calls for the party's congressional leadership to take a more forceful response.

Schumer experienced that firsthand after announcing in March that he would support moving ahead with a funding bill for the 2025 budget year. There was a protest at his office, calls from progressives that he be primaried in 2028 and suggestions that the Democratic Party would soon be looking for new leaders.

This time around, Schumer demanded that Republicans negotiate with Democrats to get their votes on a spending bill. The Senate rules, he noted, requires bipartisan support to meet the 60-vote threshold necessary to advance a spending bill.

But those negotiations did not occur, at least not with Schumer. Republicans instead worked with a small group of eight Democrats to tee up a short-term bill to fund the government generally at current levels and accused Schumer of catering to the party's left flank when he refused to go along.

"The Senate Democrats are afraid that the radicals in their party will say that they caved," House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., said at one of his many daily press conferences.

### The blame game

The political stakes in the shutdown are huge, which is why leaders in both parties have held nearly daily press briefings to shape public opinion.

Roughly 6 in 10 Americans say Trump and Republicans in Congress have "a great deal" or "quite a bit" of responsibility for the shutdown, while 54% say the same about Democrats in Congress, according to the poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

At least three-quarters of Americans believe each deserves at least a "moderate" share of blame, underscoring that no one was successfully evading responsibility.

Both parties looked to the Nov. 4 elections in Virginia, New Jersey and elsewhere for signs of how the shutdown was influencing public opinion. Democrats took comfort in their overwhelming successes. Trump called it a "big factor, negative" for Republicans. But it did not change the GOP's stance on negotiating. Instead, Trump ramped up calls for Republicans to end the filibuster in the Senate, which would pretty

much eliminate the need for the majority party to ever negotiate with the minority.

Damage of the shutdown

The Congressional Budget Office says that the negative impact on the economy will be mostly recovered once the shutdown ends, but not entirely. It estimated the permanent economic loss at about \$11 billion for a six-week shutdown.

Beyond the numbers, though, the shutdown created a cascade of troubles for many Americans. Federal workers missed paychecks, causing financial and emotional stress. Travelers had their flights delayed and at times canceled. People who rely on safety net programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program saw their benefits stopped, and Americans throughout the country lined up for meals at food banks.

"This dysfunction is damaging enough to our constituents and economy here at home, but it also sends a dangerous message to the watching world," said Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan. "It demonstrates to our allies that we are an unreliable partner, and it signals to our adversaries that we can't work together to meet even the most fundamental responsibilities of Congress."

## Turkish military plane crash in Georgia kills all 20 on board

By SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — All 20 personnel on board a Turkish military cargo plane that crashed in Georgia were killed, Turkey's defense minister announced on Wednesday.

The C-130 plane was flying from Ganja, Azerbaijan to Turkey when it crashed in Georgia's Signaghi municipality, close to the Azerbaijani border, on Tuesday. The cause of the crash is being investigated.

A Turkish accident investigation team reached the crash site and was inspecting the wreckage of the plane, in coordination with the Georgian authorities, the National Defense Ministry said.

Georgian Interior Minister Gela Geladze said authorities have so far recovered the remains of 18 of the victims and efforts were continuing to locate the other two.

Speaking at the crash site, Geladze said details concerning the accident would be released "in stages" in coordination with the Turkish authorities, due to military sensitivities.

The wreckage was spread across a plain that includes farmland and is surrounded by hills, Turkish private broadcaster NTV reported from the site. Debris from the aircraft was scattered across multiple locations, the report said.

"Our heroic comrades-in-arms were martyred on November 11, 2025, when our C-130 military cargo plane, which had taken off from Azerbaijan en route to our country, crashed near the Georgia-Azerbaijan border," Defense Minister Yasar Guler said in a message posted on X, together with photographs of the military personnel that were killed.

On Tuesday, Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency quoted the Georgian aviation authority as saying that contact with the plane was lost a few minutes after it entered Georgia's airspace. The plane had not issued a distress signal, it said.

C-130 military cargo planes are widely used by Turkey's armed forces for transporting personnel and handling logistical operations.

Turkey and Azerbaijan maintain close military cooperation.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and other Turkish officials attended Azerbaijan's Victory Day celebrations in Baku on Saturday, marking Azerbaijan's 2020 military success over Armenia over control of the Karabakh region, known internationally as Nagorno-Karabakh, a conflict that had lasted nearly four decades.

It was not immediately clear if the military personnel on the plane had attended the ceremonies.

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and Georgian Foreign Minister Maka Botchorishvili extended their condolences to their Turkish counterparts over Tuesday's crash.

"We are deeply shocked," Aliyev said in a message, according to the Anadolu Agency.

U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Tom Barrack offered his condolences and affirmed Washington's solidarity

with Ankara. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte also extended his sympathies, honored the military personnel who were killed, and thanked all NATO personnel for their service.

There was no information on funeral arrangements or when the remains would be returned to Turkey.

Sozcu newspaper said the aircraft belonged to the 12th Air Base Command in Kayseri, central Turkey. It had departed Kayseri on Monday, flown to Azerbaijan to pick up personnel in Ganja, and was en route to Merzifon, in northern Turkey.

The plane was manufactured in 1968 and initially served in Saudi Arabia. It was added to the Turkish Armed Forces inventory in 2010, Sozcu reported.

## Pakistan investigates the suicide bombing that killed 12 outside an Islamabad court

By MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan opened a probe Wednesday into the suicide bombing outside an Islamabad district court that left 12 dead the day before, underscoring the challenges facing the government as it struggles with militant attacks, border tensions and a fragile ceasefire with Afghanistan.

The attack at the court, located on the edge of the city and next to a residential area, also raised alarms that despite multiple operations by the security forces to crush the militants, they are still capable of mounting high-profile bombings — even in the Pakistani capital.

Pakistan has struggled with a surge in militant attacks in recent years but until Tuesday's bombing, Islamabad has largely been considered a safer place.

Forensic teams and police were combing Wednesday through debris at the site of the blast, which had been sealed to preserve evidence. Across the city, grief-stricken relatives were receiving the bodies of their slain loved ones at an Islamabad hospital.

Later, funeral prayers got underway for some of the slain victims. Most of the 27 people wounded in the bombing had been released home after treatment.

Pakistan's accusations

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi alleged in the immediate aftermath of Tuesday's bombing that the attack was "carried out by Indian-backed elements and Afghan Taliban proxies" linked to the Pakistani Taliban.

He offered no evidence for his claim and also said authorities were "looking into all aspects" of the explosion.

India and Afghanistan's Taliban-led government, which both reject Pakistan's accusations, have been working to increase ties in areas like business and humanitarian aid, despite not having formal diplomatic relations.

Naqvi also blamed the Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP, for the attack. Pakistan has long claimed that the Afghan Taliban have been sheltering TTP leaders and fighters, a claim Kabul denies.

The TTP denied involvement on Tuesday while a breakaway faction, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, claimed responsibility, only to have one of its commanders later contradict that claim.

Jamaat-ul-Ahrar split from the TTP after its leader was killed in Afghanistan in 2022; some members have since rejoined the TTP while others remain independent, underscoring deep divisions within Pakistan's militant networks.

The Islamabad attack drew widespread condemnation from the international community.

Defense Minister Khawaja Asif told Geo News that the Islamabad bombing was "a message for Pakistan" meant to show insurgents can carry out attacks deep inside the country.

Asked whether Pakistan would retaliate and possibly target TTP hideouts in Afghanistan, he said "it cannot be ruled out" and again urged Kabul to rein in militants operating from there.

Attack on a military-run college

On Monday night, four militants targeted an army-run college for cadets in the northwestern city of Wana. The police said four of the attackers — including a suicide car bomber — were killed and more

than 600 people, including 525 cadets, their teachers and other staff, were safely rescued during the overnight assault.

The attack unfolded when a suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the college gate. Troops quickly fanned out across the campus to prevent the attackers from reaching the buildings where cadets and staff had taken shelter.

Footage aired on Pakistani news channels Wednesday showed soldiers evacuating students using wooden ladders and breaking windows to get inside the dormitories. The evacuees were later transported to safety in armored vehicles, officials said.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack.

Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said the attackers appeared to be attempting a repeat of the 2014 Peshawar school massacre — the deadliest assault on a school in the country — when a breakaway TTP faction killed 154 people, mostly children, at an army-run school in Peshawar.

Escalation with Afghanistan

Tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan have risen since last month, when Kabul accused Islamabad of carrying out drone strikes on Oct. 9 that killed several people in the Afghan capital.

The strikes sparked cross-border clashes that left dozens of soldiers, civilians, and militants dead before Qatar brokered a cease-fire on Oct. 19. Two rounds of follow-up peace talks in Istanbul ended without progress after Kabul refused to provide written assurances that militants would not use Afghan soil to stage attacks in Pakistan.

The TTP, which is allied with but separate from the Afghan Taliban, has been emboldened since the Taliban 2021 takeover of Afghanistan.

As Pakistan's tensions with both India and Afghanistan remain high, New Delhi and Kabul have upgraded ties.

India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and acting Afghan Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, who obtained a temporary exemption from travel ban under U.N. sanctions, met in New Delhi in September. And last month, India said its technical mission in Kabul would become a full embassy — the first high-level diplomatic engagement since the Taliban took power.

## Women riding the streets of Tehran on motorbikes is the latest sign of Iran's societal change

By MEHDI FATTAHI Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — When Merat Behnam first gathered enough courage to ride her yellow scooter through the gridlocked streets of Iran's capital to the coffee shop she runs, traffic wasn't her main worry.

She instead girded herself for disapproving looks, verbal abuse and even being stopped by the police for being a woman riding a motorbike in Tehran, something long frowned upon by hard-liners and conservative clerics in Iran.

But Behnam, 38, found herself broadly accepted on the road — and part of a wider reconsideration by women about societal expectations in Iran.

It's not all encompassing, particularly as hard-line politicians call for laws on the hijab or headscarf to be enforced as Iran cracks down on intellectuals in the wake of the 12-day Iran-Israel war in June — but it does represent a change.

"It was a big deal for me," Behnam told The Associated Press after riding up to her café on a recent day. "I didn't really know how to go about it. In the beginning I was quite stressed, but gradually the way people treated me and their reactions encouraged me a lot."

'Exposed to the wind'

Two things in the past prevented women from driving motorbikes or scooters. First of all, police regulations in Iran's Farsi language specifically refer to only "mardan" or "men" being able to obtain motorcycle licenses. It's a very gender-specific wording in Farsi, which broadly is a gender-neutral language gram-

matically.

"This issue is not a violation but a crime, and my colleagues will deal with these individuals, since none of these women currently have a driver's license and we cannot act against the law," Gen. Abulfazl Mousavipoor, Tehran's traffic police chief, said in a report carried by the semiofficial ISNA news agency in September.

Then there's the cultural aspect. While women can now hold jobs, political office and a car license, since its 1979 Islamic Revolution the country has imposed a strictly conservative, Shiite Islam understanding of conduct by women. That includes Iran's mandatory hijab law, which sparked mass demonstrations in 2022 after the death of Mahsa Amini, who had allegedly been detained over not wearing a headscarf to the liking of authorities.

In the beliefs of some conservative clerics and hard-liners, a woman riding a scooter or a motorbike is "tabarruj," or an excessive flaunting of her beauty prohibited by Islam.

"Keeping proper covering for women while riding a motorcycle is very important," hard-line lawmaker Mohammad Seraj told the semiofficial ILNA news agency in September. "A woman sitting on a motorcycle cannot maintain the modest attire expected of her, since both of her hands are occupied with steering the vehicle and she is exposed to the wind."

Avoiding congestion charges

For many, the motorbike ban runs directly into the reality of Tehran's streets, crowded with an estimated over 4 million cars and another 4 million motorcycles on the road daily. For decades, women in the all-encompassing black chador could be seen riding side-saddle on motorbikes driven by men.

But after women began forgoing the hijab, more women began taking the risk and riding their motorbikes through Tehran as well, avoiding the congestion charges levied on cars that run over 20 million rial (\$20) a month. While still a small percentage of the overall traffic, their presence on the road has become more common.

"There is not any political manifesto or social agenda here," Behnam said. "It's just that since my workplace is downtown and I had to commute every day from (the western neighborhood of) Sattarkhan, the traffic there — and the parking issue, plus the traffic zone restrictions — were driving me crazy."

'Symbol of choice and independence'

But for others, it is a political issue. There's been speculation the administration of reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian, who campaigned on openness to the West before the war, may try to change the regulations to allow women to be licensed. Reformists — those who seek to change Iran's theocracy from within — also have called for the change.

"It's time to move past the invisible walls of cultural judgment and bureaucratic rules," the Shargh newspaper said in September. "For women, riding a motorcycle is not just a way to commute but a symbol of choice, independence and equal presence in society."

Benham, says riding her motorbike also gave her the first positive interaction she's had with the police.

"For the first time, a police officer — well, actually, a traffic officer — made me feel encouraged and safer. I could feel that there was some kind of support," she said. "Even the times they gave me warnings, they were technical ones — like where to park, not to do certain things or to always wear a helmet."

## Top diplomats from G7 countries meet in Canada as trade tensions rise with Trump

By ROB GILLIES and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, Ontario (AP) — Top diplomats from the Group of Seven industrialized democracies are converging on southern Ontario as tensions rise between the U.S. and traditional allies like Canada over defense spending, trade and uncertainty over President Donald Trump's ceasefire plan in Gaza and efforts to end the Russia-Ukraine war.

Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand said in an interview with The Associated Press that "the relationship has to continue across a range of issues" despite trade pressures as she prepared to host U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and their counterparts from Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Japan on

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Tuesday and Wednesday.

"We're tackling a range of critical issues with one main focus: putting the safety and security of Americans FIRST," Rubio said in a social media post.

Anand also invited the foreign ministers of Australia, Brazil, India, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, South Korea, South Africa and Ukraine.

Anand said critical priorities for discussion Tuesday night include talks on advancing long-term peace and stability in the Middle East.

"The peace plan must be upheld," Anand said.

The diplomats will meet with Ukraine's foreign minister early Wednesday. Britain says it will send 13 million pounds (\$17 million) to help patch up Ukraine's energy infrastructure as winter approaches and Russian attacks intensify. The money will go toward repairs to power, heating and water supplies and humanitarian support for Ukrainians.

U.K. Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper, who made the announcement before the meeting, said Russian President Vladimir Putin "is trying to plunge Ukraine into darkness and the cold as winter approaches," but the British support will help keep the lights and heating on.

Canada recently made a similar announcement.

Canada's G7 hosting duties this year have been marked by strained relations with its North American neighbor, predominantly over Trump's imposition of tariffs on Canadian imports. But the entire bloc of allies is confronting major turbulence over the Republican president's demands on trade and various proposals to halt worldwide conflicts.

One main point of contention has been defense spending. All G7 members except for Japan are members of NATO, and Trump has demanded that the alliance partners spend 5% of their annual gross domestic product on defense. While a number of countries have agreed, others have not. Among the G7 NATO members, Canada and Italy are furthest from that goal.

Anand said Canada will reach 5% of GDP by 2035.

There have also been G7 disagreements over the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, with Britain, Canada and France announcing they would recognize a Palestinian state even without a resolution to the conflict. With the Russia-Ukraine war, most G7 members have taken a tougher line on Russia than Trump has.

The two-day meeting in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Lake Ontario near the U.S. border comes after Trump ended trade talks with Canada because the Ontario provincial government ran an anti-tariff advertisement in the U.S. that upset him. That followed a spring of acrimony, since abated, over Trump's insistence that Canada should become the 51st U.S. state.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney apologized for the ad and said last week that he's ready to resume trade talks when the Americans are ready.

Anand said she will have a meeting with Rubio but noted that a different minister leads the U.S. trade file. The U.S. president has placed greater priority on addressing his grievances with other nations' trade policies than on collaboration with G7 allies.

"Every complex relationship has numerous touch points," Anand said in the interview, "On the trade file, there is continued work to be done — just as there is work to be done on the numerous touch points outside the trade file, and that's where Secretary Rubio and I come in because the relationship has to continue across a range of issues."

Anand said Rubio asked her during a breakfast meeting in Washington last month to play a role in bringing countries to the table to ensure that Trump's Gaza ceasefire plan has longevity, including with a future Gaza reconstruction conference.

U.S. officials said Rubio, who also may have meetings with other G7 counterparts and at least one of the invited non-G7 foreign ministers, would be focused on initiatives to halt fighting in Ukraine and Gaza, maritime security, Haiti, Sudan, supply chain resiliency and critical minerals.

Canada's priorities include ending the war in Ukraine, Arctic security and security in Haiti. There will be a working lunch on energy and critical minerals that are needed for anything from smartphones to fighter

jets. Canada has 34 critical minerals and metals that the Pentagon is eager for and investing in for national security.

## Space forecasters say severe solar storms could hit Earth and trigger auroras

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Space weather forecasters issued an alert on Tuesday for incoming severe solar storms that could produce colorful northern lights and temporarily disrupt communications.

In the past few days, the sun has burped out several bursts of energy called coronal mass ejections that could reach Earth Tuesday night and early Wednesday. The potential severe geomagnetic storms could disrupt radio and GPS communications, according to forecasters with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

How bright the auroras are and how far south they are visible will depend on when the solar bursts get here and how they interact with Earth's atmosphere. The vibrant displays could be visible across much of the northern U.S., and as far south as Alabama and Northern California.

How northern lights happen

The sun is at the maximum phase of its 11-year activity cycle, making the light displays more common and widespread. Colorful northern lights have decorated night skies in unexpected places and space weather experts say there are more auroras still to come.

Aurora displays known as the northern and southern lights are commonly visible near the poles, where charged particles from the sun interact with Earth's atmosphere.

Skygazers are spotting the lights deeper into the United States and Europe because the sun is going through a major face-lift. Every 11 years, its poles swap places, causing magnetic twists and tangles along the way.

Last year, the strongest geomagnetic storm in two decades slammed Earth, producing light displays across the Northern Hemisphere. And soon afterward, a powerful solar storm dazzled skygazers far from the Arctic Circle when dancing lights appeared in unexpected places including Germany, the United Kingdom, New England and New York City.

The sun's active spurt is expected to last at least through the end of this year, though when solar activity will peak won't be known until months after the fact, according to NASA and NOAA.

How solar storms affect Earth

Solar storms can bring more than colorful lights to Earth.

When fast-moving particles and plasma slam into Earth's magnetic field, they can temporarily disrupt the power grid. Space weather can also interfere with air traffic control radio and satellites in orbit. Severe storms are capable of scrambling other radio and GPS communications.

In 1859, a severe solar storm triggered auroras as far south as Hawaii and set telegraph lines on fire in a rare event. And a 1972 solar storm may have detonated magnetic U.S. sea mines off the coast of Vietnam.

Space weather experts aren't able to predict a solar storm months in advance. Instead, they alert relevant parties to prepare in the days before a solar outburst hits Earth.

How to see auroras

Northern lights forecasts can be found on NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Center website or an aurora forecasting app.

Consider aurora-watching in a quiet, dark area away from city lights. Experts recommend skygazing from a local or national park. And check the weather forecast because clouds can cover up the spectacle entirely.

Taking a picture with a smartphone camera may also reveal hints of the aurora that aren't visible to the naked eye.

## Small grocers and convenience stores feel an impact as customers go without SNAP benefits

By DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writer

A little more than a year ago, Ryan Sprankle welcomed President Donald Trump to one of the three grocery stores his family owns near Pittsburgh. Trump was on the campaign trail; they talked about high grocery prices, and the Republican nominee picked up a bag of popcorn.

But these days, Sprankle would have a different message if Trump or any lawmakers visited his store. He wants them to know that delayed SNAP benefits during the government shutdown hurt his customers and his small, independent chain.

"You can't take away from the most needy people in the country. It's inhumane," Sprankle said. "It's a lack of empathy and it's on all their hands."

The Trump administration froze funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program at the end of October, impacting food access for some 42 million Americans. On Monday, the U.S. Senate passed legislation that would reopen the federal government and replenish SNAP funds, but the U.S. House of Representatives still must consider the bill. It's unclear when SNAP payments might resume if the government reopens.

In 2024, SNAP recipients redeemed a little more than \$96 billion in benefits, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which administers the program. The majority – 74% -- was spent at superstores and supermarkets, a category that includes big chains like Walmart and Kroger but also some independent stores like Sprankle's.

Around 14% was spent at smaller grocery and convenience stores, businesses often tucked into neighborhoods and more easily accessible to SNAP beneficiaries.

A stalled economic engine

Etharin Cousin, a former director of the United Nations World Food Program and founder of the nonprofit Food Systems for the Future, said the cutoff of SNAP benefits had immediate impacts on grocers and convenience stores of all sizes, most of which operate on slim profit margins of 1% to 2%.

"SNAP isn't just a social safety net for families. It's also a local economic engine," Cousin said. "SNAP benefits flow directly into neighborhoods, stores, regional distributors and community jobs."

Walmart declined to comment on the impact of the SNAP funding lapse but noted that it has been lowering prices and donating to local food banks. Kroger also declined to comment.

Shoppers not receiving their food benefits affects all retailers but becomes "a big problem more quickly" at small chains, Sprankle said. His Kittanning, Pennsylvania, store gets 25% of its revenue from SNAP, but customers who don't get government assistance also are worried about the shutdown, according to Sprankle. They're spending less, trading down to cheaper goods or heading to food banks, he said.

Sprankle said lower sales cut into the overtime he can offer to the chain's 140 employees. Many are worried about losing their jobs, he said.

"They have families to feed, they have kids for buy gifts for," he said. "If I have to sell my truck, we're going to give Christmas bonuses."

Liz Abunaw, the owner and operator of Forty Acres Fresh Market in Chicago, recently saw a customer putting back a full cart of groceries because she couldn't afford them without SNAP.

Abunaw opened the supermarket in September after years spent selling produce at pop-up markets and in delivery boxes. Only about 12% of Abunaw's revenue comes from SNAP benefits right now, she said. But without it -- or if SNAP recipients spend less money in her store -- it will slow Forty Acres' growth and make it harder to pay the workers, suppliers and farmers who depend on her, she said.

"SNAP is currency. I get money I then use in this economy. It's not a food box," Abunaw said. "The economic impact of SNAP is larger than the dollars spent."

From neighborhood shops to food pantries

The suspended food aid also had an immediate impact on Kanbe's Markets, a nonprofit that stocks produce

in coolers at 110 convenience stores around Kansas City, Missouri. Kanbe's distributes a mixture of donated food and food purchased from wholesalers to keep prices low, founder and CEO Maxfield Kaniger said.

Kanbe's also distributes free food to 50 food pantries and soup kitchens around the city.

Kaniger said some of the convenience stores he works with saw their sales drop 10% in the days after Nov. 1, when SNAP benefits weren't paid. At the same time, the food pantries he supplies asked for double or triple their usual orders.

Because it's giving away more food than usual, Kanbe's has to spend more buying produce for the coolers it stocks. It's frustrating for Kaniger, who must make decisions quickly before food spoils.

"It should be enough that people are going without food. Period, end of sentence. People going without food is wrong," he said.

Babir Sultan sells berries, lemons, potatoes, bananas and other produce from Kanbe's at his four FavTrip convenience stores in the Kansas City area. His stores are in food deserts, far from other groceries or big retailers, he said, so it's important to him to stock fresh produce for those neighborhoods.

Sultan said foot traffic at his stores fell 8% to 10% in early November after SNAP funding ceased. He decided to offer \$10 of free produce to SNAP beneficiaries but said he's also happy to help out other customers who might be struggling right now.

"If you're in need, just ask, we'll take care of you," Sultan said. "Everybody is affected whenever the customer is feeling the pinch."

## **Alabama promised to improve psychiatric care for men charged with crimes. They still wait years**

By SAFIYAH RIDDLE Associated Press/Report For America

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Fernando Clark spent the last 10 months of his life in a jail cell, waiting for psychiatric treatment a court ordered he undergo after he'd been arrested for stealing cigarettes and some fruit from a gas station.

He died while waiting for the treatment that never arrived, found unresponsive in his jail cell.

Clark was just one of hundreds of people across Alabama awaiting a spot in the state's increasingly limited facilities, despite a consent decree requiring the state to address delays in evaluating and providing care for people suffering from mental illness who are charged with crimes.

Seven years since the federal agreement, the problem is only worse. The waitlist for the state's sole secure psychiatric facility is almost five times longer than when it the decree was issued, according to court documents released in September.

Sometimes arrestees are waiting years for placement in a facility designed to treat their illness and ensure they are healthy to go to court, a problem faced by many states around the country.

In Alabama, that means people charged with less serious crimes, like Clark, "spend more time waiting for a bed than if they had just pled guilty," said Bill Van Der Pol, a lawyer with the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program, which won the federal consent decree.

Delayed progress

In 2010, the Department of Mental Health had its budget cut by \$40 million in the wake of the recession. At least 10 state-run psychiatric facilities have closed over the past three decades, leaving only three inpatient facilities with 504 total beds, and just one where men facing criminal charges can receive treatment to restore them to competency.

The lawsuit that led to the consent decree was filed in 2016, alleging delays at every point in the process that violated constitutional due process.

First, there was a wait for psychiatric evaluations. Then if deemed unfit for trial, there was a wait for a spot at the lone secure facility that serves men: Taylor Hardin Secure Medical Facility. Finally, anyone deemed unable to be restored to competency for trial had to wait for longer-term treatment at community based facilities.

The 2018 consent decree gave the state two years to complete all mental health evaluations and reports

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within 60 days of a court order. A man deemed incompetent for trial should go to Taylor Hardin within 30 days after that.

The state was also required to expand the number of beds for more permanent care if someone cannot be rehabilitated.

Taylor Hardin's waitlist has grown to 273 men, according to an August court filing. That's up from approximately 60 men in 2017. The average wait is well over a year, and more than 30 people on the list have languished more than two years. The state is still in mediation with the plaintiffs.

A national issue

Nationally, the number of state hospital beds for adults with serious mental health issues reached a historic low in 2023 with 36,150 beds, more than half of them occupied by people who were committed to the hospital through the criminal legal system, according to the nonprofit Treatment Advocacy Center. That's a 17% decline in beds from 2017, the organization found.

"There really isn't any state where this hasn't become an increasingly visible problem — and it's actually expanding in scope rapidly over the last decade," Lisa Daly, the executive director of the Treatment Advocacy Center said.

In Nevada, for example, one county was ordered in April to pay \$500 per day because defendants did not receive timely treatment. Officials estimated at the time that the payout would be \$3.6 million for fiscal years 2026 and 2027, based on the current caseload and wait times, a county memo shows.

In some ways, the worsening trend is part of an intractable paradox, Daly said. Courts are "doing a better job over time of identifying when mental illness appears to be a factor in why somebody might've been arrested or why somebody might be facing criminal charges."

For example, one study in Colorado found that the number of court-ordered restorations increased from 87 in 2001 to 900 in 2017, according to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

That is a good thing, Daly said. But the infrastructure — the beds available at secure treatment facilities, along with the staffing levels to make those beds operational — has not adjusted to the increasing demand.

In other words, instead of waiting for evaluations, now people are waiting for treatment.

"Really what that does is it changes where the bottleneck is," Daly said.

Noticeable improvements

Alabama has taken steps to address that bottleneck.

Construction is underway to add 80 beds to Taylor Hardin, which currently has 140 beds and serves just over 200 people, according to an annual report published in 2024.

However, there is a significant staffing shortage and the added beds will only be usable if "proper staffing is obtained," the report said. Only about half of the mental health technician and nursing positions are filled at the facility, Alabama Department of Mental Health Commissioner Kim Boswell said at a board meeting in August 2024, according to The Alabama Reflector. Boswell said an average pay increase of roughly \$6 an hour in 2024 is helping with recruitment and retention.

The department has trained 94 people for competency restoration programs in jails to relieve the burden on Taylor Hardin, court records show. Programs now exist in five of Alabama's 67 counties and are slated to expand to three more.

Alabama also has spent \$175 million over five years to build six crisis centers with 180 beds across the state to provide a "more appropriate alternative to incarceration or emergency room visit" for people suffering a mental health crisis, a September audit shows. Those centers have conducted 22,297 evaluations, Boswell testified in September.

Boswell said at a recent budget hearing that her agency is working with the judges presiding over the consent decree to improve the time it takes to get evaluated and then treated.

A spokesperson for the Alabama Department of Mental Health declined to comment in response to multiple e-mailed requests.

Impossible to get out

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Jennifer Tompkins, an Alabama criminal defense attorney, said the root of the problem is not only the number of beds. It can take decades to get released from Taylor Hardin — either to court, if the mental health crisis has been treated, or into an outpatient program offering more permanent support.

“It’s almost like you’re guilty because you’re mentally ill and in poverty,” Tompkins said.

One of her clients charged with murder over 10 years ago is still awaiting trial while he remains at a secure facility, where state psychiatrists have issued numerous conflicting assessments of his mental capacity. There is similar backlog for the community-based facilities like the one Clark was waiting for.

Boswell acknowledged those challenges at a recent budget hearing, saying that her agency was working with the judges presiding over the consent decree to improve turnover.

Nowhere to go for help

Clark, who was 40 when he died, was known as “Pooch,” a nickname his mom gave him as a kid because he was small and sweet like a puppy.

But he was troubled, with a long history of petty crimes and severe mental health issues.

His sisters said he was often picked up wandering aimlessly miles away from where he lived with family in Montgomery. Permanent treatment was often hard to come by because many facilities would refuse to treat his psychiatric issues because he also took drugs, and he needed to be sober to receive treatment.

“It’s a lot. We just had so many different incidents,” Kawanda Key, one of Clark’s older sisters said. Clark did short stints in hospitals, where he would call his sisters and ask them to bring him chocolate. Whenever one of them encountered him on the side of the road, they would try to convince him to come home where he could eat and shower.

Last year, Clark went missing again, skipping out on a 2022 burglary charge. His sisters asked the police to help find him, despite their fear he’d end up in a jail unable to handle his needs. He was eventually found and put in jail in February 2024, and it wasn’t until September of that year that his mental illness was deemed untreatable, and he was ordered to stay in jail until a bed could be found for him to receive care.

“He wasn’t aggressive” Subrina Hamilton, one of Clark’s other sisters said, but “these people in the jail don’t know that.”

His sisters wanted to see him but they weren’t on his list of visitors. Another sister, Tameka Clark, would call the jail regularly to check up on him, assured by jail staff that her younger brother was “fine.”

But on Dec. 11, 2024, Clark was found unresponsive in his cell. The temperature in the cell had risen to 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3 degrees Celsius) at a time when boiler repairs were being done. His autopsy lists congestive heart failure as his cause of death, but Tom Andrew, a forensic pathologist who reviewed the autopsy for The Associated Press, said it left “more questions than answers.”

Clark’s autopsy said he had access to water but didn’t give specifics. Given the temperature in his cell, Andrew said, it was “problematic” that the autopsy didn’t record Clark’s internal body temperature or rule out other signs of dehydration.

Additionally, Andrew noted, jail staff was giving Clark antipsychotic medication at the time of his death that sometimes impairs the body’s ability to regulate temperature, making him especially vulnerable to overheating.

Burden on jails

The state law enforcement agency investigating Clark’s death declined to comment, citing an ongoing investigation. Montgomery County Sheriff Derrick Cunningham also declined to comment specifically on Clark’s death.

Cunningham said jails are ill-equipped to deal with men like Clark as they wait for psychiatric beds. Jails have difficulty identifying mental health issues, administering medication and navigating complicated behavioral issues, he said.

Even with the significant improvements the department is making, Cunningham said, jails will continue to struggle.

“If you look at the number of beds we got and then the wait time, I mean, it’s still not enough,” he said.

## Record-low temperatures shock the Southeast US while snowfall blankets parts of the Northeast

By HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

The first major cold spell of the season plunged parts of the southeastern U.S. into record-low temperatures Tuesday, delivering a shock for 18 million people under a freeze warning across Alabama, Florida and Georgia. Meanwhile, several inches of snow blanketed areas along the eastern Great Lakes as the blast of cold air moved through.

The direct shot of Arctic air affecting the eastern two-thirds of the country migrated east — and far southeast — from the Northern Plains, which was hit with gusty chills and snow over the weekend. For much of the Southeast on Tuesday, that meant an abrupt transition into wintry temperatures after reaching well into the 70s and 80s (21 to 27 Celsius) in recent days.

Some daily records were “absolutely shattered,” said meteorologist Scott Kleebauer, including a low of 28 degrees Fahrenheit (-2 Celsius) at the airport in Jacksonville, Florida, on Tuesday morning. That broke the previous record low of 35 degrees set in 1977.

The southeastern U.S. will face a few more colder-than-normal days before warming up later in the week. Florida faces a ‘falling iguana advisory’

Iguanas begin to “freeze” and fall from trees when temperatures dip to 40 degrees (4 Celsius) or below, according to Kleebauer, a forecaster with the National Weather Service’s Weather Prediction Center. Those temperatures were widespread upstate in Florida on Tuesday.

“Iguanas, because of their reptilian nature, they go into this kind of survival mode, and their system basically shuts down,” he said. “They’re not used to those types of temperatures. They only see those only a handful of times a year, if that.”

Posts of the stunned reptiles trickled in on social media as Floridians also faced unfamiliar weather.

“A lot of times you kind of sneak into fall and then you eventually get winter,” Kleebauer said. “This was more — it was warm there for a long time and then all of a sudden it’s a shock to the system with how cold the shot was.”

Visitors to Orlando’s theme parks might have thought they were back in the northern destinations they had left behind for a warm vacation, forcing them to bundle up as low temperatures neared freezing. As far south as Fort Lauderdale and Miami, early-morning temperatures dipped into the upper 40s. Even in the sunshine, the temperature wasn’t expected to reach 70 degrees (21 Celsius) on Tuesday.

Agriculture officials in Florida said they hadn’t heard of any problems due to the cold front, but they were holding their breaths until Wednesday morning following one more cold night.

Across West Virginia, a predawn coating of snow and ice contributed to dozens of accidents Tuesday before the sun came out and road conditions improved.

More than 14 inches (37 centimeters) of snow on Monday and Tuesday enabled the White Grass Ski Touring Center in the northern mountain’s Canaan Valley to open for cross-country skiing.

Lake effect piles on inches in the first significant snowfall

The cold air over the Great Lakes’ relatively warmer waters created ripe conditions for significant snowfall in some communities along the Great Lakes and downwind, farther inland in Pennsylvania and New York. The lake-effect snow was expected to add inches Tuesday, and forecasters said a new storm system would bring additional snowfall Wednesday.

Barbara Butch is the village clerk and librarian for the town of Ubyly in the center of eastern Michigan’s thumb region. The village was socked with snow Monday, getting nearly 8 inches by Tuesday morning, according to the National Weather Service.

“It just kept coming down,” Butch said.

Along with the snow came intense cold and strong winds, dropping the wind chill to well below freezing — weather not usually seen so early in the season. Temperatures were expected to rise into the 50s by the end of the week.

“We’ll end up with a sloppy, slushy mess,” Butch joked. “It’s just part of living where we live.”

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Communities downwind of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario also woke up under a winter weather advisory Tuesday, with the National Weather Service predicting anywhere from 2 to 6 inches (5 to 15 centimeters) of snow in some New York cities, including Niagara Falls, Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse and Jamestown. For many, they are the first few inches of snow in a season that typically delivers around 100 inches (2.5 meters) or more by spring.

The day's highest totals, around 6 to 9 inches (15 to 23 centimeters), were expected across the traditionally snowy Tug Hill Plateau that sits between Lake Ontario and the Adirondack Mountains in northern New York.

High, gusty winds and heavy snowfall caused dangerous driving conditions late Monday, including a snow squall warning along Interstate 80 in central Pennsylvania.

Farther northeast, parts of Vermont got up to 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snow, making for a messy evening commute Monday.

Risk of flash flooding in California

On the West Coast, an atmospheric river taking aim at California was expected to bring heavy rains and mountain snow later this week. The long plume of tropical moisture that formed over the Pacific Ocean will begin drenching the San Francisco Bay Area starting Wednesday before quickly moving south. More than a foot of snow was predicted for parts of the Sierra Nevada.

About 2 million Californians were at marginal risk of excessive rain on Wednesday but that advisory swells to include more than 21 million people by Thursday as the storm shifts south, Kleebauer said. The Thursday total includes the city of Los Angeles, but it's more likely that the surrounding terrain areas north and northwest of the city would be impacted.

Forecasters also warned that heavy rainfall isn't well absorbed into soil burned by wildfires, so those communities, as well as low-lying areas, are vulnerable to runoff, mudslides or flowing debris.

## Asian shares are mixed in cautious trading after a mixed day on Wall Street

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares were mixed Wednesday in cautious trading after most U.S. stocks rose, settling back to where they were before last week's swoon over the future of artificial intelligence.

U.S. futures edged higher while oil prices declined.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 inched less than 0.1% lower to 50,823.52.

SoftBank Group's shares plunged as much as 9% and was down 6.6% by midday. It said Tuesday that it sold its entire stake in the AI chip company Nvidia for \$5.83 billion last month, raising funds for other investments.

A big question has been whether investors will push the frenzy around AI stocks further. Their sensational growth has been one of the top reasons the U.S. market has hit records despite a slowing job market and still-high inflation. But their prices have shot so high that critics say they're reminiscent of the 2000 dot-com bubble, which ultimately burst and dragged the S&P 500 down by nearly half.

Elsewhere in Asia, Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose 0.7% to 26,871.02, while the Shanghai Composite lost 0.2% to 3,993.35.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 inched up less than 0.1% to 8,822.00. South Korea's Kospi added 0.7% to 4,136.14.

On Tuesday, the S&P 500 added 0.2% to 6,846.61. It's been bouncing around lately, coming off Monday's vigorous rebound following its first losing week in four.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average surged 1.2%, to a record close of 47,927.96, surpassing its prior all-time high set two weeks ago. The Nasdaq composite lagged the market as Nvidia slipped 3% due to continued concerns that stocks caught up in the artificial-intelligence frenzy may have become too expensive. The Nasdaq dipped 0.3% to 23,468.30.

Helping to lead the market was Paramount Skydance, whose shares jumped 9.8% even though the entertainment giant reported revenue and profit for the latest quarter that fell short of Wall Street's expectations. It was the company's first earnings report since Skydance closed its acquisition of Paramount in early August.

Close behind was FedEx, which climbed 5.4% after it increased its forecast for profit in the current quarter. Instead of expecting growth from just the summer, the delivery company now also expects profit to rise in this year's holiday-shopping season from last year's.

In the U.S. bond market, trading was closed for the Veterans Day holiday.

What's making the Fed's job potentially more difficult is that the U.S. government's shutdown has delayed important updates on jobs and other areas of the economy. The Senate has made moves to end what's become the longest-ever shutdown, but it's not assured.

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude declined 17 cents to \$60.87 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, lost 18 cents to \$64.98 a barrel.

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar edged up to 154.30 Japanese yen from 154.04 yen. The euro cost \$1.1582, down from \$1.1587.

## Turkish military plane with 20 on board crashes in Georgia

ANKARA. Turkey (AP) — A Turkish military cargo plane with 20 people on board crashed in Georgia near the border with Azerbaijan on Tuesday, authorities said, but they gave no immediate confirmation of feared casualties.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and top officials from Georgia and Azerbaijan signaled that at least some of those aboard were believed to have been killed, without providing details.

Video footage aired on Turkish news outlets appeared to show the aircraft spiraling down and leaving a trail of white smoke.

The C-130 plane had taken off from Azerbaijan and was on its way back to Turkey when it crashed, Turkey's Ministry of National Defense said on X.

The ministry said there were 20 military personnel on board, including crew members. Georgian authorities reached the crash site at around 5 p.m., Turkey's Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said, adding that a search and rescue operation was continuing.

The Georgian Interior Ministry said the aircraft crashed in Georgia's Sighnaghi municipality, close to the Azerbaijani border, adding that an investigation has begun.

Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency quoted the Georgian aviation authority as saying that contact with the plane was lost a few minutes after it had entered Georgia's airspace. The plane had not issued a distress call, it said.

Turkey's military deployed an unmanned aerial vehicle to support the rescue operation while an accident investigation team was making preparations to leave for Georgia, private news broadcaster NTV reported.

Erdogan said he was "deeply saddened" by the crash and expressed his condolences for the "martyrs."

"God willing we will overcome this accident with the least amount of setbacks possible," Erdogan said.

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and Georgian Foreign Minister Maka Botchorishvili also extended their condolences to their Turkish counterparts over the crash.

"We are deeply shocked by the news of the loss of life of our soldiers in the accident that occurred on Georgian soil," Aliyev said in a message according to the Anadolu Agency.

C-130 military cargo planes are widely used by Turkey's armed forces for transporting personnel and handling logistical operations.

Turkey and Azerbaijan maintain close military cooperation.

Erdogan and other Turkish officials had attended Azerbaijan's Victory Day celebrations in Baku on Nov. 8, marking Azerbaijan's military success in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war.

## Colombia to suspend intelligence cooperation with US over strikes on drug vessels

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — Colombian President Gustavo Petro ordered his nation's security forces Tuesday to stop sharing intelligence with the United States, until the Trump administration stops its strikes on suspected drug traffickers in the Caribbean, as relations deteriorate between the nations that were once close partners in the fight against drug trafficking.

In a message on X, Petro wrote that Colombia's military must immediately end "communications and other agreements with U.S. security agencies" until the U.S. ceases its attacks on speedboats suspected of carrying drugs, that critics have likened to extrajudicial executions.

Petro wrote that "the fight against drugs must be subordinated to the human rights of the Caribbean people." It wasn't immediately clear what kind of information Colombia will stop sharing with the United States. The White House had no immediate response to Petro's latest statements.

At least 75 people have been killed by the U.S. military in strikes in international waters since August, according to figures supplied by the Trump administration. The strikes began in the southern Caribbean, near Venezuela's shores, but have shifted recently to the eastern Pacific, where the U.S. has targeted boats off Mexico.

Petro has called for U.S. President Donald Trump to be investigated for war crimes over the strikes, which have affected citizens of Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia and Trinidad and Tobago.

The leftist leader has long been a critic of U.S. drug policy, and has accused the Trump administration of going after peasants growing coca, the base ingredient of cocaine, instead of targeting major drug traffickers and money launderers. On Sunday, Petro said that met with the family of a Colombian fisherman who was allegedly killed in one of the strikes.

"He may have been carrying fish, or he may have been carrying cocaine, but he had not been sentenced to death" Petro said during a summit between Latin American and European Union leaders hosted by Colombia on Sunday. "There was no need to murder him."

The Trump administration has accused Petro of being soft on traffickers, and has criticized the Colombian president's decision to spare Colombian rebel leaders involved in the drug trade from extradition to the United States.

In October, the administration placed financial sanctions on Petro and members of his family, over accusations of involvement in the global drug trade.

Petro "has allowed drug cartels to flourish and refused to stop this activity," Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a statement after the sanctions were issued Oct 24. "President Trump is taking strong action to protect our nation and make clear that we will not tolerate the trafficking of drugs into our nation."

The heightened tensions between the United States and Colombia are taking place as the U.S. ramps up its naval presence in the southern Caribbean, with eight warships, a submarine, fighter jets and marines deployed to the region. An aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald Ford, is also expected to arrive in the Caribbean this month.

Venezuela's government has described the naval buildup as a threat to its sovereignty, with officials in that nation saying that the U.S. military is preparing to launch strikes against the embattled government of Nicolas Maduro.

The Trump administration has said its deployment is aimed at curbing drug traffickers, though Trump has also hinted there could be strikes on target within Venezuela, whose leader has been described by officials in Washington as the head of a drug cartel.

Venezuelan Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino López announced Tuesday that military personnel, members of a civilian militia, police officers and ruling-party organizers would be mobilized for a training exercise to protect the country's airspace. He delivered his remarks, broadcast on state television, standing by a surface-to-air missile system in a military base in the capital, Caracas, but no training activities could be seen elsewhere in the city.

## Masked Israeli settlers attack 2 Palestinian villages in the West Bank

By JOSEF FEDERMAN, SHLOMO MOR and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Dozens of masked Israeli settlers attacked a pair of Palestinian villages in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday, setting fire to vehicles and other property before clashing with Israeli soldiers sent to halt the rampage, Israeli and Palestinian officials said.

It was the latest in a series of attacks by young settlers in the West Bank.

Israeli police said four Israelis were arrested in what it described as “extremist violence,” while the Israeli military said four Palestinians were wounded. Police and Israel’s Shin Bet internal security agency said they were investigating.

Videos on social media showed two charred trucks engulfed in flames, with a nearby building on fire. Settler violence has surged since the war in Gaza erupted two years ago. The attacks have intensified in recent weeks as Palestinians harvest their olive trees in an annual ritual.

Earlier on Tuesday, tens of thousands of Israelis attended the funeral of an Israeli soldier whose remains had been held in Gaza for 11 years, overflowing and blocking surrounding streets as somber crowds stood with Israeli flags.

The burial of Lt. Hadar Goldin was a moment of closure for his family, which had traveled the world in a public campaign seeking his return. The huge turnout also reflected the importance for the broader public in Israel, where Goldin became a household name.

Hamas returned his remains on Sunday as part of the U.S.-brokered ceasefire deal that began last month. The bodies of four hostages taken in the Hamas-led attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, are still in Gaza.

Settler violence in the West Bank

The U.N. humanitarian office last week reported more Israeli settler attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank in October than in any other month since it began keeping track in 2006. There were over 260 attacks, the office said.

Palestinians and human rights workers accuse the Israeli army and police of failing to halt attacks by settlers. Israel’s government is dominated by West Bank settlers, and the police force is overseen by Cabinet minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, a hardline settler leader.

In Tuesday’s incident, the army said soldiers initially responded to settler attacks in the villages of Beit Lid and Deir Sharaf. It said the settlers fled to a nearby industrial zone and attacked soldiers sent to the scene and damaged a military vehicle.

Palestinian official Muayyad Shaaban, who heads the government’s Commission against the Wall and Settlements, said the settlers set fire to four dairy trucks, farmland, tin shacks and tents belonging to a Bedouin community.

He said the attacks were part of a campaign to drive Palestinians from their land and accused Israel of giving the settlers protection and immunity. He called for sanctions against groups that “sponsor and support the colonial settlement terrorism project.”

French President Emmanuel Macron denounced the attacks during his meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Paris on Tuesday, saying that “settler violence and the acceleration of settlement projects are reaching new heights, threatening the stability of the West Bank.”

Palestinians in Gaza still struggling to access food

Displaced Palestinians in central Gaza said they continue to rely heavily on charity kitchens for their only daily meal, as soaring market prices and the lack of income leave them struggling.

Scores of people, most of them children, lined up with empty pots at a charity kitchen in Nuseirat refugee camp on Tuesday waiting to be served rice — the only food available that day.

“The rockets and planes stopped but increasing living costs has been the hardest weapon used against us,” said Mohamed al-Naqlah, a displaced Palestinian.

On Tuesday, Gaza’s Health Ministry said the number of Palestinians killed in Gaza has risen to 69,182. Its count, generally considered by independent experts as reliable, does not distinguish between militants

and civilians, but the ministry says more than half of those killed were women and children.

The latest war began with the 2023 Hamas-led attack on Israel when around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed, and 251 people were kidnapped.

Close adviser to Netanyahu resigns

Cabinet Minister Ron Dermer, one of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's closest confidants, announced his resignation on Tuesday, citing family reasons.

In a letter, Dermer said he had promised his family to serve two years but extended his term by an additional year to deal with Iran's nuclear program and "to end the war in Gaza on Israel's terms and bring our hostages home."

The U.S.-born Dermer is a former Israeli ambassador to Washington. As strategic affairs minister, he served as Netanyahu's envoy throughout the war in dealing with the United States and ceasefire negotiations.

Funeral for soldier whose remains were held 11 years

Goldin was 23 when he was killed two hours after a ceasefire took effect in the 2014 war between Israel and Hamas. For years before the 2023 attack, posters with the faces of Goldin and Oron Shaul, another soldier whose body was abducted in the 2014 war, stared down from intersections.

Israel's military long ago determined that Goldin had been killed based on evidence found in the tunnel where his body was taken, including a blood-soaked shirt and prayer fringes. On Tuesday, it announced it had dismantled the tunnel shaft where his body was found. The military retrieved Shaul's body in January.

Eulogies from Goldin's siblings, parents, and former fiancée at his funeral never mentioned Netanyahu, who was prime minister when Goldin was kidnapped and for most of the period since. They thanked the Israeli military, including reserve soldiers, who tirelessly searched for Goldin's body over the years.

Netanyahu did not attend the funeral, though Israel's military chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir, gave a eulogy on behalf of the military.

For years, Israel had four hostages in Gaza: Goldin, Shaul, and two Israelis with mental health issues who had crossed into Gaza on their own and were held since 2014 and 2015. All four were returned in the past year.

## Shutdown leaves a mark on an already-struggling economy, from lost paychecks to canceled flights

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The longest federal government shutdown in U.S. history appears to be nearing an end, but not without leaving a mark on an already-struggling economy.

About 1.25 million federal workers haven't been paid since Oct. 1. Thousands of flights have been canceled, a trend that is expected to continue this week even as Congress moves toward reopening the government. Government contract awards have slowed and some food aid recipients have seen their benefits interrupted.

Most of the lost economic activity will be recovered when the government reopens, as federal workers will receive back pay. But some canceled flights won't be retaken, missed restaurant meals won't be made up, and some postponed purchases will end up not happening at all.

"Short-lived shutdowns are usually invisible in the data, but this one will leave a lasting mark," Gregory Daco, chief economist at accounting giant EY said, "both because of its record length and the growing disruptions to welfare programs and travel."

The Congressional Budget Office estimated that a six-week shutdown will reduce growth in this year's fourth quarter by about 1.5 percentage points. That would cut growth by half from the third quarter. The reopening should boost first-quarter growth next year by 2.2 percentage points, the CBO projected, but about \$11 billion in economic activity will be permanently lost.

The previous longest government shutdown, in 2018-2019, lasted 35 days but only partially shut the government because many agencies had been fully funded. It only nicked the economy by about 0.02% of GDP, the CBO said then.

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The current shutdown is adding to the economy's existing challenges, which include sluggish hiring, stubbornly elevated inflation, and President Donald Trump's tariffs, which have caused uncertainty for many businesses. Still, few economists foresee a recession.

About 650,000 federal workers didn't work during the shutdown, which will likely boost the unemployment rate by about 0.4 percentage points in October, or to 4.7% from 4.3% in August, when the last report was released. Those workers would all then be counted as employed once the government reopens.

Here are the ways the government closure is weighing on the economy:

## Missed paychecks

All told, federal workers will have missed about \$16 billion in wages by mid-November, the CBO estimates. That has meant less spending at stores, restaurants, and likely reduced holiday travel. Large purchases will probably be postponed, slowing the broader economy.

Trump had threatened during the shutdown to not provide back pay but the deal struck in Congress would replace those lost wages once the government reopens.

The shutdown has added to the Washington, D.C. area's economic woes, where the unemployment rate was already 6% before the shutdown, after Trump's cuts to the federal workforce this spring caused job losses. While the Washington, D.C. area — including the nearby suburbs in Virginia and Maryland — has the highest concentration of federal workers, most live and work outside of the nation's capital.

Federal workers make up about 5.5% of Maryland's workforce, according to the Bipartisan Policy Center. But they also comprise 2.9% of New Mexico's workers, 2.6% of Oklahoma's, and 3.8% of Alaska's.

Then there are the federal contractors. Bernard Yaros, an economist at Oxford Economics, estimates they could total as many as 5.2 million, and they are not guaranteed back pay once the shutdown ends.

## Flight disruptions

Airlines scrapped more than 2,000 flights by Monday evening after canceling 5,500 since Friday on orders from the Federal Aviation Administration, which is seeking to reduce the burden on overworked air traffic controllers, who have now missed two paychecks.

Even before the flight cancellations, Tourism Economics, an economic consulting firm, estimated that the shutdown would reduce travel spending by \$63 million a day, which means a six-week standoff would cost the travel industry \$2.6 billion.

The canceled flights also mean less business for hotels, restaurants, and taxi drivers. And federal employees have already pulled the plug on upcoming trips, according to Tourism Economics, which may not be able to be rescheduled even when the government does reopen.

## Consumer sentiment

The shutdown has worsened Americans' outlook on the broader economy. Declining consumer sentiment can over time reduce spending and slow growth, though in recent years Americans have kept shopping even when their outlooks turned grim.

Consumer sentiment dropped to a three-year low and close to the lowest point ever recorded in a survey by the University of Michigan, reported Friday, with pessimism over personal finances and anticipated business conditions weighing on Americans.

The November survey showed the index of consumer sentiment at 50.4, down a startling 6.2% from last month and a plunge of nearly 30% from a year ago.

## Federal spending

While the shutdown hasn't cut off all federal government spending, it has reduced purchases of equipment and has cut off the issuance of new contracts.

Yaros estimates that about \$800 million in new contracts were at risk of not being awarded each day of the shutdown.

"The federal award spigot has all but turned off at the Department of Defense, NASA, and the Department of Homeland Security," Yaros wrote.

## SNAP benefits

The shutdown delayed the payment of \$8 billion in monthly SNAP food aid to 42 million recipients in November, creating a significant financial disruption for many households that likely reduced spending.

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Some states have managed to pay full benefits for this month, though the Trump administration is still fighting over the issue in court.

The deal currently under consideration in Congress to reopen the government includes full funding of SNAP benefits.

Interest rate cuts

The government shutdown cut off the flow of economic data on unemployment, inflation, and retail spending that the Federal Reserve depends on to monitor the economy's health. Even as the government reopens, some of that data will still be delayed. As a result, the Fed may not deliver a third interest rate cut at its December meeting, which was widely expected before the shutdown.

"What do you do if you're driving in the fog? You slow down," Fed Chair Jerome Powell said at a news conference late last month.

Powell said the Fed's interest-rate setting committee is deeply divided over whether to reduce its key rate, partly because the economy's health is unusually cloudy right now. The government has missed two monthly jobs reports and the October inflation data, scheduled to be published Thursday, will likely never be issued.

Powell said a rate cut in December was not a "foregone conclusion" and added that the lack of data could contribute to a decision by the Fed to skip a rate cut at its next meeting December 9-10. Fewer rate cuts could discourage borrowing and spending and weigh on the economy in the coming months.

## In Trump-dominated media world, editing video takes on new significance — as BBC uproar shows

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

In the space of a few months, one of the more straightforward journalistic tasks — editing tape for broadcast — has been behind a \$16 million legal settlement, a network's change in how it offers interviews on a news show and, now, the resignation of two top leaders at the BBC.

The other common denominator: President Donald Trump.

Britain's BBC is reeling this week following the resignations of its director-general, Tim Davie, and news chief Deborah Turness amid accusations of bias in the editing of last year's documentary, "Trump: A Second Chance." The BBC admitted filmmakers spliced together quotes from different sections of the speech Trump made before the Jan. 6, 2021, storming of the U.S. Capitol to make it seem like he was directly urging violence.

Trump sued CBS' parent company over a "60 Minutes" edit of Kamala Harris' interview, resulting in this summer's settlement, and the complaints of his Homeland Security secretary, Kristi Noem, about her "Face the Nation" interview in August caused a policy change.

In a different time, the BBC episode would likely have led to a quick admission of a mistake, a correction, apology and everyone would have moved on, said Mark Lukasiewicz, a former NBC News executive and now dean of Hofstra University's School of Communication.

"But in an era where every editing decision taken in a newsroom is now under a microscope and can be weaponized for political purposes," he said, "it's got to be something that is causing real caution in newsrooms all over the world now."

Editing decisions were once largely behind the scenes

Questioning edits is another tool for the president to strike back at journalists who displease him. He has restricted access by The Associated Press after its decision not to follow his lead in renaming the Gulf of Mexico, sued outlets like The New York Times and Wall Street Journal and stripped funding for public broadcasting because he doesn't like its news coverage.

Much like print reporters who search through notebooks for the perfect quote, video editors often labor to identify footage that will advance a story.

Sometimes the perfect image does not exist, or a quote isn't as succinct or sharp as a medium under

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constant time constraints demands. That can lead to the temptation to rearrange or even manipulate.

NBC News got in trouble more than a decade ago for a story about George Zimmerman — who fatally shot Trayvon Martin, a young man who was in his Florida gated community. It quoted Zimmerman talking to a police dispatcher about Martin, saying “this guy looks like he’s up to no good. He looks Black.”

In reality, Zimmerman’s description of Martin’s activities last longer, and his speculation about Martin’s race was a direct response to a police dispatcher’s question about it. Zimmerman sued NBC News for libel, a case later thrown out by a judge. NBC apologized to its viewers.

Katie Couric apologized in 2016 when an editor for her “Under the Gun” documentary inserted an eight-second pause after footage of Couric questioning guns right activists about background checks. The activists actually responded right away.

Quotes artificially compressed in BBC documentary

In the BBC edit, different parts of Trump’s 2021 Capitol speech are edited to appear as a single quote: “We’re going to walk down to the Capitol and I’ll be there with you. And we fight. We fight like hell.”

But the second two sentences of that quote were actually said nearly an hour later than the first sentence, and part of his speech where he said he wanted supporters to demonstrate peacefully was omitted.

In an interview that aired Tuesday on Fox News, Trump said, “I guess I have to” sue the BBC. “Because I think they defrauded the public and they’ve admitted it.”

In teaching video editing to students at Syracuse University, Jamie Hoskins said she repeatedly emphasizes the need not to be misleading. She’s a former news producer who worked in New York City, Washington, D.C. and Buffalo, New York.

“I talk about that in every class at every level,” she said. “You don’t want to mischaracterize what people are saying or change their meaning by piecing things together.”

The proliferation of video — ever shorter, ever snappier — on TikTok and Instagram adds to pressure placed on journalists. The ability of AI to manufacture completely false video is yet another complication. Fake, racist video of Black food assistance recipients complaining about missing benefits due to the government shutdown spread online; a Fox News digital story linked to some of the videos earlier this month and had to be corrected.

“We live in a world now where people can get content from everywhere,” Hoskins said. “There is a difference between content and journalism.”

A new way to protect against complaints

At the root of Trump’s complaint about “60 Minutes” was an exchange between correspondent Bill Whitaker and Kamala Harris, the president’s opponent in last year’s election. CBS aired two different reports — on “60 Minutes” and “Face the Nation” — depicting Harris giving two different answers to a Whitaker question about the war in the Mideast.

CBS News said both responses were part of Harris’ long-winded answer to the same question. But to people who saw both broadcasts, the effect was jarring; other news outlets say they have a strict policy, when they show an interviewer posing a question, that the immediate, direct response is aired.

CBS News defended it as routine editing. But it gave Trump an opening to charge that it was done to benefit Harris’ campaign.

“I don’t think the practices and standards are worse today than they were a few years ago,” Lukasiwicz said. “I think the consequences of mistakes are more serious than perhaps they used to be,” he said, because of the ability and willingness of politicians to seize on them.

In Noem’s pretaped talk with “Face the Nation” moderator Margaret Brennan this summer, the Homeland Security secretary complained CBS News had “shamefully edited the interview to whitewash the truth.” The network had shortened the interview, removing some accusations Noem had made about Kilmar Abrego Garcia, the immigrant deported by the Trump administration.

In response, the network said that it would only air interviews on “Face the Nation” that were conducted live or, if taped in advance, would have to air in full.

More often, networks are defusing potential editing controversies by posting online full, unedited tran-

scripts of key interviews, Lukasiewicz said. CBS News did that immediately when it aired a pre-taped edited interview with Trump on Nov. 2, along with video. The network didn't release a transcript of its Harris interview for more than three months — not until Trump had sued and the FCC launched an investigation of the news division.

The Trump transcript release created its own issues, with dozens of amateur editors comparing the transcript to the shorter, edited interview that aired on "60 Minutes" to see what producers had decided to leave out.

This time, though, Trump had no complaints.

## Newsom tells AP the eight senators who struck the shutdown deal aren't alarmed enough about Trump

By MEG KINNARD and SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press

BELEM, Brazil (AP) — California Gov. Gavin Newsom said Tuesday he is stunned by eight senators' decision to break with Democrats and end the government shutdown and warned they are not alarmed enough about President Donald Trump's political norm-shattering.

"I'm not coming in to punch anybody in the face, but I'm not pleased that, in the face of this invasive species that is Donald Trump, who's completely changed the rules of the game, that we're still playing by the old rules of the game," Newsom told The Associated Press in an interview at the COP30 UN Climate Conference in Brazil. "And in my core, I'm stunned."

Newsom was asked what he would say to the group of seven Democrats and one independent senator who joined with Republicans in the Senate late Monday to pass legislation to reopen the government, bringing the longest shutdown in history closer to an end. Along with the ratified deal came searing criticism for the moderates from other Democrats, frustrated by what they said amounted to caving to the GOP without achieving lasting progress toward extending health care subsidies set to expire Jan. 1.

As news of potential compromise neared ahead of a procedural Sunday night vote to advance the overall funding legislation, Newsom's press office wrote on X, "Pathetic. This isn't a deal. It's a surrender. Don't bend the knee!" After the same eight senators — seven Democrats and independent Sen. Angus King of Maine, who caucuses with Democrats — joined with Republicans in that procedural vote, he called their conciliation "capitulation and a betrayal of working Americans."

The group of defectors consisted of several senators who are retiring next year, as well as a number of former governors. Since making their moves, several have acknowledged they viewed the deal as imperfect but necessary to end the shutdown, which has meant missed paychecks, stoppages in federal food aid and travel headaches for millions across the country.

Asked by AP about his own efforts to counter Trump, from a bombastic social media presence to last week's successful passage of U.S. House maps for California aimed at countering Trump-backed efforts to do the same for Republicans in other states, Newsom reiterated what he framed as his commitment to go further than others in his party.

"I'm really more alarmed than it appears the eight members of my party are in the United States Senate," Newsom said. "I'm much more alarmed about the future of our country and the world we're trying to build than they are."

The Trump administration did not send an official delegation to COP30 in Brazil this week. Newsom, whose state represents the world's fourth-largest economy, is expected to meet with officials from some of the 195 global governments in attendance.

## Suicide bomber kills 12 outside Islamabad court as Pakistan violence rises

By MUNIR AHMED and ISHTIAQ MAHSUD Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — A suicide bomber struck outside a court in Pakistan's capital Tuesday, detonating his explosives next to a police car and killing 12 people in the latest of an uptick in violence across the country.

Witnesses described mayhem. The blast, which also wounded 27 people, was heard for miles and came at a time of day when the area outside the district court in Islamabad is typically crowded with hundreds of visitors.

A breakaway faction of the Pakistani Taliban, the Jamaat-ul-Ahrar group, claimed responsibility for the attack, in messages to reporters from the group's leader, Omar Mukkaram Khurasani. However, an influential commander within the group, Sarbakaf Mohmand, also sent messages disavowing any claim to the attack.

The group quit the Pakistani Taliban, or TTP, after the head of Jamaat-ul-Ahrar was killed in a blast in Afghanistan in 2022. Though some members recently rejoined the TTP, others keep their distance, indicating continuing differences among the insurgents.

The TPP is separate from, but allied with, the Afghan Taliban that leads the neighboring country.

Jamaat-ul-Ahrar has staged smaller attacks in the past but its ability to hit the Pakistani capital is likely to further compound the struggles of the Pakistani government as it faces a resurgent Pakistani Taliban, border tensions and a fragile ceasefire with Afghanistan.

Without giving evidence, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi alleged the attack was "carried out by Indian-backed elements and Afghan Taliban proxies" linked to the Pakistani Taliban. Still, he said authorities are "looking into all aspects" of the explosion.

New Delhi rejected the allegation as baseless. "The international community is well aware of the reality and will not be misled by Pakistan's desperate diversionary ploys," Randhir Jaswal, the spokesperson at the Ministry of External Affairs, said in a statement.

The attack drew condemnation, including from the United States, China, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for a full investigation and reiterated that "all perpetrators of terrorism must be held accountable," U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said.

Outside the court

The attacker tried to "enter the court premises but, failing to do so, targeted a police vehicle," Naqvi told journalists. State-run media and two security officials earlier said a car bomb caused the explosion.

The casualties were mostly passersby or those who had arrived for court appointments, according to Islamabad police.

More than a dozen wounded people screamed for help as ambulances rushed to the scene. "People started running in all directions," Mohammad Afzal, who was at the court at the time, told The Associated Press.

Naqvi said the bomber was not included in the death toll of 12. Police said a severed head was identified as the attacker's, which Naqvi said confirmed the blast was a suicide attack. The attacker also was seen in security footage, he said.

Earlier attack at an army-run college

Earlier, Pakistani security forces said they foiled an attempt by militants to take cadets hostage at an army-run college, when a suicide car bomber and five other attackers targeted the facility in a northwestern province.

The authorities blamed TTP. The TTP denied involvement in Monday's attack at the college, and spokesman Mohammad Khurasani also denied involvement in Tuesday's attack.

The school targeted is in Wana, a city in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province near the Afghan border. The area had until recent years been a base for the Pakistani Taliban, al-Qaida and other foreign militants.

According to the local police chief, Alamgir Mahsud, two of the militants were quickly killed by troops while three others managed to enter the compound before being cornered in an administrative block. He said the clearance operation was still underway Tuesday, some 20 hours after the attack.

The block is away from the building housing hundreds of cadets and other staff, who were quickly evacu-

ated to safer places by Pakistani commandos.

There were no immediate reports of casualties among the students or staff. The army has not provided any information about military casualties.

Prime minister promises accountability

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif denounced the two attacks and called for a full investigation. "We will ensure the perpetrators are apprehended and held accountable," he said in a statement.

Sharif described attacks on unarmed civilians as "reprehensible" and added: "We will not allow the blood of innocent Pakistanis to go to waste."

Pakistan's Defense Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif said on X that the country is in a state of war and laid the blame with the Taliban government in Afghanistan, which Islamabad accuses of sheltering the TTP.

Afghanistan "can act to stop terrorism in Pakistan, but bringing this war to Islamabad is a message from Kabul," Asif said and warned that Pakistan "has the strength to respond fully."

Pakistan has outlawed the TTP, also known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, and the United States and the United Nations have designated the group a terrorist organization. The Afghan Taliban takeover in Kabul in 2021 emboldened the TTP, and many of its leaders and fighters are believed to have taken refuge in Afghanistan. Kabul denies it's protecting the TTP.

Militant attacks in Pakistan have surged in recent years. The deadliest assault on a school occurred in 2014, when a breakaway TTP faction killed 154 people, mostly children, at an army-run school in Peshawar. The military claimed the attackers in Wana wanted to repeat the assault.

Afghanistan-Pakistan peace talks stall

Tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan have risen in recent months. Kabul has blamed Islamabad for drone strikes on Oct. 9 that killed several people in the Afghan capital. Ensuing cross-border fighting killed dozens of soldiers, civilians and militants before Qatar brokered a ceasefire on Oct. 19, which remains in place.

Since then, two rounds of peace talks have been held in Istanbul but ended without agreement after Kabul refused to provide a written assurance that the TTP and other militant groups would not use Afghan territory against Pakistan.

An earlier, brief ceasefire between Pakistan and the TTP, brokered by Kabul in 2022, collapsed after the group accused Islamabad of violating it.

## **Supreme Court extends its order blocking full SNAP payments, with shutdown potentially near an end**

By GEOFF MULVIHILL, MARK SHERMAN and MARGERY A. BECK Associated Press

The Supreme Court on Tuesday extended an order blocking full SNAP payments, amid signals that the government shutdown could soon end and food aid payments resume.

The order keeps in place at least for a few more days a chaotic situation. People who depend on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to feed their families in some states have received their full monthly allocations, while others have received nothing.

The order, which is three sentences long and comes with no explanation on the court's thinking, will expire just before midnight Thursday.

The Senate has approved a bill to end the shutdown and the House of Representatives could vote on it as early as Wednesday. Reopening the government would restart the program that helps 42 million Americans buy groceries, but it's not clear how quickly full payments would resume.

Ruling follows path of least legal resistance

The justices chose what is effectively the path of least resistance, anticipating the federal government shutdown will end soon while avoiding any substantive legal ruling about whether lower court orders to keep full payments flowing during the shutdown are correct.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson was the only one of the nine justices to say she would have revived the lower court orders immediately, but didn't otherwise explain her vote. Jackson signed the initial order

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temporarily freezing the payments.

The court's action doesn't do anything to settle uncertainty across the country.

Beneficiaries in some states have received their full monthly allocations while in others they have received nothing. Some states have issued partial payments.

How quickly SNAP benefits could reach recipients if the government reopens would vary by state. But states and advocates say that it's easier to make full payments quickly than partial ones.

Carolyn Vega, a policy analyst at the advocacy group Share Our Strength, also said there could be some technical challenges for states that have issued partial benefits to send out the remaining amount.

An urgent need for beneficiaries

In Pennsylvania, full November benefits went out to some people on Friday. But Jim Malliard, 41, of Franklin, said he had not received anything by Monday.

Malliard is a full-time caretaker for his wife, who is blind and has had several strokes this year, and his teenage daughter, who suffered severe medical complications from surgery last year.

That stress has only been compounded by the pause in the \$350 monthly SNAP payment he previously received for himself, his wife and daughter. He said he is down to \$10 in his account and is relying on what's left in the pantry — mostly rice and ramen.

"It's kind of been a lot of late nights, making sure I had everything down to the penny to make sure I was right," Malliard said. "To say anxiety has been my issue for the past two weeks is putting it mildly."

The political wrangling in Washington has shocked many Americans, and some have been moved to help.

"I figure that I've spent money on dumber stuff than trying to feed other people during a manufactured famine," said Ashley Oxenford, a teacher who set out a "little food pantry" in her front yard this week for vulnerable neighbors in Carthage, New York.

SNAP has been the center of an intense fight in court

The Trump administration chose to cut off SNAP funding after October due to the shutdown. That decision sparked lawsuits and a string of swift and contradictory judicial rulings that deal with government power — and impact food access for about 1 in 8 Americans.

The administration went along with two rulings on Oct. 31 by judges who said the government must provide at least partial funding for SNAP. It eventually said recipients would get up to 65% of their regular benefits. But it balked last week when one of the judges said it must fund the program fully for November, even if that means digging into funds the government said need to be maintained in case of emergencies elsewhere.

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to pause that order in a ruling late Sunday.

An appeals court said Monday that full funding should resume, and that requirement was set to kick in Tuesday night before the top court extended the order blocking full SNAP payments.

Congressional talks about reopening government

The U.S. Senate on Monday passed legislation to reopen the federal government with a plan that would include replenishing SNAP funds. Speaker Mike Johnson told members of the House to return to Washington to consider the deal a small group of Senate Democrats made with Republicans.

President Donald Trump has not said whether he would sign it if it reaches his desk, but told reporters at the White House on Sunday that it "looks like we're getting close to the shutdown ending."

Still, the Trump administration said in a Supreme Court filing Monday that it shouldn't be up to the courts.

"The answer to this crisis is not for federal courts to reallocate resources without lawful authority," Solicitor General D. John Sauer said in the papers. "The only way to end this crisis — which the Executive is adamant to end — is for Congress to reopen the government."

After Tuesday's ruling, Attorney General Pam Bondi posted on social media: "Thank you to the Court for allowing Congress to continue its swift progress."

The coalition of cities and nonprofit groups who challenged the SNAP pause said in a court filing Tuesday that the Department of Agriculture, which administers SNAP, is to blame for the confusion.

"The chaos was sown by USDA's delays and intransigence," they said, "not by the district court's efforts

to mitigate that chaos and the harm it has inflicted on families who need food.”

## Sally Kirkland, stage and screen star who earned an Oscar nomination in ‘Anna,’ dies at age 84

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Sally Kirkland, a one-time model who became a regular on stage, film and TV, best known for sharing the screen with Paul Newman and Robert Redford in “The Sting” and her Oscar-nominated title role in the 1987 movie “Anna,” has died. She was 84.

Her representative, Michael Greene, said Kirkland died Tuesday morning at a hospice in Palm Springs, California.

Friends established a GoFundMe account this fall for her medical care. They said she had fractured four bones in her neck, right wrist and left hip. While recovering, she also developed infections, requiring hospitalization and rehab.

“She was funny, feisty, vulnerable and self deprecating,” actor Jennifer Tilly, who co-starred with Kirkland in “Sallywood,” wrote on X. “She never wanted anyone to say she was gone. ‘Don’t say Sally died, say Sally passed on into the spirits.’ Safe passage beautiful lady.”

Kirkland acted in such films as “The Way We Were” with Barbra Streisand, “Revenge” with Kevin Costner, “Cold Feet” with Keith Carradine and Tom Waits, Ron Howard’s “EDtv,” Oliver Stone’s “JFK,” “Heatwave” with Cicely Tyson, “High Stakes” with Kathy Bates, “Bruce Almighty” with Jim Carrey and the 1991 TV movie “The Haunted,” about a family dealing with paranormal activity. She had a cameo in Mel Brooks’ “Blazing Saddles.”

Her biggest role was in 1987’s “Anna” as a fading Czech movie star remaking her life in the United States and mentoring to a younger actor, Paulina Porizkova. Kirkland won a Golden Globe and earned an Oscar nomination along with Cher in “Moonstruck,” Glenn Close in “Fatal Attraction, Holly Hunter in “Broadcast News” and Meryl Streep in “Ironweed.”

“Kirkland is one of those performers whose talent has been an open secret to her fellow actors but something of a mystery to the general public,” The Los Angeles Times critic wrote in her review. “There should be no confusion about her identity after this blazing comet of a performance.”

Kirkland’s small-screen acting credits include stints on “Criminal Minds,” “Roseanne,” “Head Case” and she was a series regular on the TV shows “Valley of the Dolls” and “Charlie’s Angels.”

Born in New York City, Kirkland’s mother was a fashion editor at Vogue and Life magazine who encouraged her daughter to start modeling at age 5. Kirkland graduated from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and studied with Philip Burton, Richard Burton’s mentor, and Lee Strasberg, the master of the Method school of acting. An early breakout was appearing in Andy Warhol’s “13 Most Beautiful Women” in 1964. She appeared naked as a kidnapped rape victim in Terrence McNally’s off-Broadway “Sweet Eros.”

Some of her early roles were Shakespeare, including the lovesick Helena in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” for New York Shakespeare Festival producer Joseph Papp and Miranda in an off-Broadway production of “The Tempest.”

“I don’t think any actor can really call him or herself an actor unless he or she puts in time with Shakespeare,” she told the Los Angeles Times in 1991. “It shows up, it always shows up in the work, at some point, whether it’s just not being able to have breath control, or not being able to appreciate language as poetry and music, or not having the power that Shakespeare automatically instills you with when you take on one of his characters.”

Kirkland was a member of several New Age groups, taught Insight Transformational Seminars and was a longtime member of the affiliated Church of the Movement of Spiritual Inner Awareness, whose followers believe in soul transcendence.

She reached a career nadir while riding nude on a pig in the 1969 film “Futz,” which a Guardian reviewer dubbed the worst film he had ever seen. “It was about a man who fell in love with a pig, and even by the dismal standards of the era, it was dismal,” he wrote.

Kirkland was also known for disrobing for so many other roles and social causes that Time magazine dubbed her "the latter-day Isadora Duncan of nudobespianism."

Kirkland volunteered for people with AIDS, cancer and heart disease, fed homeless people via the American Red Cross, participated in telethons for hospices and was an advocate for prisoners, especially young people.

The actors union SAG-AFTRA called her "a fearless performer whose artistry and advocacy spanned more than six decades," adding that as "a true mentor and champion for actors, her generosity and spirit will continue to inspire."

## **There's no timeline on when flight cuts will ease up after the government shutdown ends**

By RIO YAMAT, JOSH FUNK and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

Airlines have canceled more than 9,000 flights across the U.S. since the Federal Aviation Administration ordered flight cuts last week to ease demand on control towers, which are short-staffed during the federal government shutdown.

Although the government appears set to reopen in the coming days, airport disruptions, flight cancellations and economic losses won't disappear right away.

Here's how the air travel network is being impacted:

Flights remain disrupted as the shutdown nears an end

Another 1,200 domestic flights were canceled Tuesday as the FAA increased its target for cutting flights at the nation's busiest airports to 6%, up from 4%. There were fewer cancellations than in recent days, which Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy attributed to more air traffic controllers returning to work after news of a shutdown agreement.

Cancellations and delays also piled up due to ripple effects from flight cuts and severe weather. FAA air traffic chief Frank McIntosh said the agency restricted large sections of airspace over the weekend "to slow the entire country down, which forced massive cancellations and delays."

Flight cuts won't end until the FAA sees safety improve

The FAA hasn't said when it will roll back flight limits. Duffy reinforced Tuesday that the cuts will remain — even after the shutdown ends — until safety metrics improve and staffing levels stabilize at air traffic control facilities. The cuts are set to rise to 10% Friday.

Duffy has declined to share the specific safety data that prompted the flight cuts. But in a news conference at Chicago's O'Hare airport, he cited reports of planes getting too close in the air, more runway incursions and pilot concerns about controllers' responses.

Air traffic controller shortages won't go away either

The nationwide shortage of controllers isn't new, but the shutdown likely made it worse, with Duffy saying that 15-20 controllers are retiring every day and some younger controllers leaving the profession.

And it doesn't take many controller absences to create problems. During the shutdown, a number of controllers who weren't being paid called off work as they dealt with increased stress and the need to take side jobs to cover their bills.

Former FAA air traffic control chief Mike McCormick said it's similar to when many controllers left during the pandemic because "when the stressors in the workplace become too much of a challenge then those who can will resign or retire."

Airlines will need to readjust after the flight cuts are lifted

The flight restrictions upended airline operations in just a matter of days. Many planes were rerouted and aren't where they're supposed to be.

McCormick said he expects operations to recover within days, similar to after a major snowstorm. Eric Chaffee, a Case Western Reserve professor who studies risk management, warned the disruptions could last weeks as airlines face "complex operational hurdles" and winter weather complicates recovery before Thanksgiving.

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"It's similar to if you start pulling threads out of a tapestry," Chaffee said. "What you may find is that lots unravels in addition to what you are trying to remove."

Holiday travel outlook darkens amid persistent disruptions

The pace of airline ticket sales for Thanksgiving travel has slowed as travelers reconsider flying. Aviation analytics firm Cirium said ticket sales during the busy late November season are still expected to be up over last year, but only slightly.

Major airports bear the brunt of flight cuts

Hub airports in Denver, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas and the New York area have seen the bulk of the cancellations. They've also been plagued by long delays caused by staffing shortages in regional air traffic control centers and towers. Smaller regional airlines like SkyWest and Republic have been hit hardest because they fly many of the regional routes being dropped by the major airlines.

Trump's post demands controllers get back to work

The head of the air traffic controllers union said controllers were not staging an organized walkout and remain committed to their jobs. However President Donald Trump on Monday blasted those who've taken time off during the shutdown, posting on social media "get back to work, NOW!!!" He also called for docking their pay while giving \$10,000 bonuses for those who stayed.

Duffy said the bonuses would be for controllers who never missed a shift during the shutdown while he may take action against those who continually failed to show up for work. He said that after the shutdown, all controllers should receive 70% of their pay within 48 hours.

Airlines face mounting losses

Canceled flights and mounting delays are adding to big losses for the airlines. The lost revenue is likely to add up to "hundreds of millions of dollars a day," said Greg Raiff, CEO of the Elevate Aviation Group. He expects the toll to show up when the airlines start issuing earnings warnings for the fourth quarter.

Millions of people were affected

An estimated 5.2 million passengers have been affected by staffing-related delays or cancellations since the government shutdown began on Oct. 1, according to Airlines for America, an industry trade group.

Henry Evans, a University of Michigan student, expected to fly Delta to Detroit on Sunday after visiting family in New York.

But after repeated delays the flight was canceled, so Evans rented a car and drove nine hours through the night to make his Monday morning classes in Ann Arbor.

Two rental counters told him they were out of cars that night. "I got a sense that a lot of people were doing a similar thing to me," he said.

## **Mavericks fire GM Nico Harrison 9 months after widely panned Luka Doncic trade**

By SCHUYLER DIXON AP Sports Writer

DALLAS (AP) — The Dallas Mavericks fired general manager Nico Harrison on Tuesday, an admission nine months later that the widely criticized trade of Luka Doncic backfired on the franchise.

The move came a day after Mavericks governor Patrick Dumont attended a 116-114 loss to the Bucks in which fans again chanted "fire Nico," a familiar refrain since the blockbuster deal in February that brought Anthony Davis from the Los Angeles Lakers and angered the Dallas fan base.

The Mavericks appointed Michael Finley and Matt Riccardi as co-interim general managers to oversee basketball operations.

Dumont's hope for goodwill with the fans never came even after Dallas landed No. 1 overall pick Cooper Flagg with just a 1.8% chance to win the draft lottery.

There have been plenty of empty seats in the upper deck of American Airlines Center this season, something not seen consistently since 2018, when the Mavericks traded up to get Doncic with the third overall pick.

Doncic was a 25-year-old generational point guard in his prime when Harrison unloaded him for the oft-

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injured Davis, who has missed 30 of 44 regular-season games since his arrival in February.

Harrison was in his fourth season and had engineered three trades that helped the Mavs go on a run to the Western Conference finals in 2022 and the NBA Finals two years later.

The Doncic trade and a slow start to the first full season without the young superstar led to a stunning downfall for Harrison, who declined to comment to The Associated Press. Dallas is 3-8, and Davis has missed six of the 11 games with a calf injury.

"No one associated with the Mavericks organization is happy with the start of what we all believed would be a promising season," Dumont wrote in a letter to fans. "You have high expectations for the Mavericks, and I share them with you. When the results don't meet expectations, it's my responsibility to act."

While Dumont didn't directly mention the Doncic trade in the letter, he acknowledged the vitriolic reaction of fans, who protested after the shocking deal. The Las Vegas-based Dumont and Adelson families, who bought the Mavericks from Mark Cuban in late 2023, were targets of the criticism as well.

"I understand the profound impact these difficult last several months have had," Dumont wrote. "Please know that I'm fully committed to the success of the Mavericks."

Dumont approved Harrison's decision to trade Doncic, which kept the Mavericks from having to commit to a \$346 million, five-year supermax extension for the Slovenian star.

Harrison tried to defend the deal by repeating a "defense wins championships" line. But with Davis sidelined by a calf injury and star guard Kyrie Irving still out after tearing the ACL in his left knee last March, defense hasn't mattered much because Dallas has one of the worst offenses in the NBA.

With Davis and Irving playing together for just part of one game last season, the Mavericks missed the playoffs a year after Doncic led them to the NBA Finals.

The slow, injury-plagued start to this season for the Mavericks coincided with Doncic joining Wilt Chamberlain as the only NBA players to open a season with three consecutive games of at least 40 points.

Doncic's historic run was interrupted by a three-game injury absence, but the Lakers won twice without him and are 8-3.

Harrison had spent 20 years with Nike and had close relationships with several NBA stars, including the late Kobe Bryant, when Cuban hired him in 2021.

The hiring of Harrison was the first step in trying to restore stability after former general manager Donnie Nelson was fired, then Rick Carlisle resigned as coach a day later. Nelson and Carlisle had been together for 13 years.

Harrison hired Jason Kidd as coach, and the Mavericks reached the Western Conference finals their first season together after Harrison's first blockbuster trade.

He broke up the European pairing of Doncic and Kristaps Porzingis and got Spencer Dinwiddie, who played a key supporting role with Doncic as the Mavericks stunned Phoenix with a Game 7 blowout in the second round before losing to Golden State in five games.

A year later, Dinwiddie was part of the next blockbuster trade, which brought Irving from Brooklyn. The Mavericks faltered the rest of that season largely because of injuries, but they reached their first NBA Finals in 13 years in 2023-24, led by the pair of star guards. Dallas lost to Boston in five games.

That deep playoff run came in the first six months after Cuban sold the team. He said then that he would maintain control of basketball operations, but that didn't happen.

Dumont quickly put full control of the basketball side in the hands of Harrison, who saw Davis as a championship-caliber player in the mold of Bryant. Davis won a title with LeBron James and the Lakers in 2020.

Cuban criticized the trade of Doncic, saying he never would have approved it and adding that he didn't think Dallas got enough in return. Months later, though, Cuban credited Harrison for his salary cap management.

Finley, who was Harrison's top assistant and has been in the Dallas front office for a decade, was a two-time All-Star for the Mavericks in the early 2000s when Hall of Famer Dirk Nowitzki was coming of age.

Finley had moved on to San Antonio when Nowitzki led the Mavericks to the NBA Finals in 2006. Dallas

lost to Miami that year but beat the Heat five years later for the franchise's only championship.

## ByHeart recalls all baby formula sold nationwide as infant botulism outbreak grows

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

ByHeart, a manufacturer of organic baby formula, recalled all of its products sold nationwide Tuesday, days after some batches were recalled in an expanding outbreak of infant botulism.

At least 15 babies in 12 states have been sickened in the outbreak since August, with more cases pending, according to state and federal health officials. All of the infants were hospitalized after consuming ByHeart formula, officials said. No deaths have been reported.

ByHeart officials expanded the voluntary recall from two lots announced Saturday to all products in consumers' homes and in stores. That includes ByHeart Whole Nutrition Infant Formula and Anywhere Pack pouches of powdered formula. The company sells about 200,000 cans of infant formula a month online and in stores such as Target, Walmart, Albertsons and Whole Foods, according to Dr. Devon Kuehn, chief medical officer.

Parents and caregivers who have the formula in their homes "should immediately discontinue use and dispose of the product," Kuehn said.

Company officials said they enacted the unusual recall "in close collaboration" with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration even though no product that was previously unopened tested positive for the contamination. The type of bacteria that produces the toxin is widespread in the environment and could come from sources other than the formula, company officials said.

"This action underscores ByHeart's core mission: protecting babies above all else," the company said in a statement.

California health officials earlier confirmed that a sample from an open can of ByHeart baby formula fed to an infant who got sick contained the toxin-producing type of bacteria.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommended that ByHeart expand its recall because of the number of ill infants that reported consuming the formula, the identification of additional lot codes, the growing case count and the results of the California testing.

The FDA is investigating 84 cases of infant botulism detected since August. Of those, 15 consumed ByHeart formula, the agency said in a statement.

"This information shows that ByHeart brand formula is disproportionately represented among sick infants in this outbreak, especially given that ByHeart represents an estimated 1% of all infant formula sales in the United States," the FDA statement said.

Illnesses began between Aug. 9 and Nov. 10, federal officials said. Cases were reported in Arizona, California, Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas and Washington.

Investigators have not identified any other infant formula brands or other sources of exposure in the outbreak, officials said.

ByHeart produces formula powder at a plant in Allerton, Iowa, and then ships it to a site in Portland, Oregon, for canning and distribution, Kuehn said. U.S. Food and Drug Administration inspectors were at the Portland plant Monday, she added.

In addition to the broad recall, the company said it is testing every batch of formula with an independent third-party laboratory, providing health officials full access to its sites and sharing results with regulators as they become available.

Infant botulism is a rare and serious illness that occurs in babies under age 1, whose gut microbiomes are immature. It is caused when the infants consume bacteria that contain spores that produce a toxin in the gut. Symptoms include constipation, poor feeding, drooping eyelid, weak muscle tone, difficulty swallowing and breathing problems, among others.

Babies who develop those symptoms need immediate medical attention. The sole treatment for the

infection is BabyBIG, an IV medication made from blood plasma of people immunized against botulism.

## Trump's \$1B lawsuit threat casts shadow over the BBC, but it could also be a bluff

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — President Donald Trump's threat to bring a billion-dollar lawsuit against the BBC has cast a shadow over the British broadcaster's future, but it could also be a bluff with little legal merit.

The president's lawyer sent the threat to the BBC over the way a documentary edited his Jan. 6, 2021, speech before a mob of his followers stormed the U.S. Capitol.

Trump's history of suing news media companies — sometimes winning multimillion-dollar settlements — is part of a long-running grievance against the industry he describes as "fake news" that has often focused a critical eye on his actions.

But Trump faces fundamental challenges to getting a case to court, never mind taking it to trial. He would also have to deal with the harsh glare of publicity around his provocative pep talk the day Congress was voting to certify President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 election that Trump falsely alleged was stolen from him.

"If he sues, he opens a Pandora's box and inside is every damning quote he's ever uttered about the 'steal,'" said attorney Mark Stephens, an international media lawyer who practices in the U.S. and U.K.

The BBC documentary

The BBC's "Panorama" series aired the hourlong documentary titled "Trump: A Second Chance?" days before the 2024 U.S. presidential election.

The third-party production company that made the film spliced together three quotes from two sections of the 2021 speech, delivered almost an hour apart, into what appeared to be one quote in which Trump urged supporters to march with him and "fight like hell." Among the parts cut out was a section where Trump said he wanted supporters to demonstrate peacefully.

BBC Chairman Samir Shah apologized Monday for the misleading edit that he said gave "the impression of a direct call for violent action."

Director-General Tim Davie and news chief Deborah Turness quit Sunday over accusations of bias and misleading editing.

From letter to lawsuit

A lawsuit in England is unlikely because the one-year deadline to bring one expired two weeks ago, experts said. If successful in overcoming that barrier, libel awards in the High Court rarely exceed 100,000 pounds (\$132,000), experts said.

Trump could still bring a defamation claim in several U.S. states, and his lawyer cited Florida law in a letter to the BBC.

Filing a lawsuit and demanding money is one thing, but prevailing in court is much different. To succeed, Trump would have to clear many hurdles to get a case before a jury.

Before any of that could happen, Trump faces a more fundamental challenge: The BBC program was not aired in the U.S., and the BBC's streaming service is also not available there. Americans could not have thought less of him because of a program they could not watch, Stephens said.

"The other ticklish problem for Trump's lawyer was that Trump's reputation was already pretty battered after Jan. 6," he said. "Alleging 'Panorama' caused additional harm when your reputation is already in tatters ... is a tough sell."

Trump was impeached on a charge of inciting insurrection over the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol by some of his supporters, though he was acquitted by the Senate.

The demands

Trump's lawyer Alejandro Brito threatened the BBC with a defamation lawsuit for "no less than" \$1 billion. The letter spelled out the figure and used all nine zeros in numeric form.

The letter demanded an apology to the president and a "full and fair" retraction of the documentary

along with other "false, defamatory, disparaging, misleading or inflammatory statements" about Trump. It also said the president should be "appropriately" compensated for "overwhelming financial and reputational harm."

The letter cites Florida's defamation statute that requires a letter be sent to news organizations five days before any lawsuit can be filed.

If the BBC does not comply with the demands by 5 p.m. EST Friday, then Trump will enforce his legal rights, the letter said.

"The BBC is on notice," it said.

Other media lawsuits

While many legal experts have dismissed the president's claims against the media as having little chance of success, he has won some lucrative settlements against U.S. media companies.

In July, Paramount, which owns CBS, agreed to pay \$16 million to settle a lawsuit filed by Trump over a "60 Minutes" interview with former Vice President Kamala Harris. Trump alleged that the interview was edited to enhance how Harris, the Democratic nominee for president in 2024, sounded.

That settlement came as the Trump-appointed head of the Federal Communications Commission launched an investigation that threatened to complicate Paramount's need for administration approval to merge with Skydance Media.

Last year, ABC News said it would pay \$15 million to settle a defamation lawsuit over anchor George Stephanopoulos' inaccurate on-air assertion that the president-elect had been found civilly liable for raping writer E. Jean Carroll. A jury found that he was liable for sexually abusing her. Trump asked the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday to throw out that finding.

Litigation threat could leverage payout

London lawyer David Allen Green dismissed the litigation letter for failing to spell out any actual harm Trump suffered. But he said Trump's willingness to use lawsuits as a form of deal-making could leverage a payout because the edit was indefensible.

"Putting aside the theatrics of a bombastic letter with its senseless \$1 billion claim, there is a power play here which Trump has done many times before," Green said on The Law and Policy Blog. "The real mistake of the BBC (and the production company) was opening itself up to such a play of power."

Stephens said if Trump were somehow to win billions from the BBC, it could crush the news organization that is mostly funded through a fee charged to all television owners in the U.K.

But he said that outcome was unlikely and the broadcaster should stand its ground. He recommended Trump take the public relations win and avoid the damage from revisiting the Jan. 6 events that would be dredged up at trial.

He said Trump was due an apology, which Shah offered, for the BBC not upholding high journalistic standards.

"The question is, 'Did it cause harm in people's minds?'" he said. "Because he was elected afterwards, it doesn't appear it did."

## US Catholic bishops select conservative culture warrior to lead them during Trump's second term

By TIFFANY STANLEY Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — U.S. Catholic bishops elected Oklahoma City Archbishop Paul Coakley as their new president on Tuesday, choosing a conservative culture warrior to lead during President Donald Trump's second term.

The vote serves as a barometer for the bishops' priorities. In choosing Coakley, they are doubling down on their conservative bent, even as they push for more humane immigration policies from the Trump administration.

Coakley was seen as a strong contender for the top post, having already been elected in 2022 to serve

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as secretary, the No. 3 conference official. In three rounds of voting, he beat out centrist candidate Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville, Texas, who was subsequently elected vice president.

Coakley serves as adviser to the Napa Institute, an association for conservative Catholic powerbrokers. In 2018, he publicly supported an ardent critic of Pope Francis, Italian Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, who was later excommunicated for stances that were deemed divisive.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has often been at odds with the Vatican and the inclusive, modernizing approach of the late Pope Francis. His U.S.-born successor, Pope Leo XIV, is continuing a similar pastoral emphasis on marginalized people, poverty and the environment.

The choice of Coakley may fuel tensions with Pope Leo, said Steven Millies, professor of public theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

"In the long conflict between many U.S. bishops and Francis that Leo inherits, this is not a de-escalating step," he said.

Half the 10 candidates on the ballot came from the conservative wing of the conference. The difference is more in style than substance. Most U.S. Catholic bishops are reliably conservative on social issues, but some — like Coakley — place more emphasis on opposing abortion and LGBTQ+ rights.

The candidates were nominated by their fellow bishops, and Coakley succeeds the outgoing leader, Military Services Archbishop Timothy Broglio, for a three-year term. The current vice president, Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore, was too close to the mandatory retirement age of 75 to assume the top spot.

Coakley edged out a well-known conservative on the ballot, Bishop Robert Barron of Minnesota's Winona-Rochester diocese, whose popular Word on Fire ministry has made him a Catholic media star.

In defeating Flores, Coakley won over another strong contender, who some Catholic insiders thought could help unify U.S. bishops and work well with the Vatican. Flores has been the U.S. bishops' leader in the Vatican's synod process to modernize the church. As a Latino leading a diocese along the U.S.-Mexico border, he supports traditional Catholic doctrine on abortion and LGBTQ issues and is outspoken in his defense of migrants.

Flores will be eligible for the top post in three years. His election as vice president indicates that the U.S. conference "may eventually, cautiously open itself to the church's new horizons," said David Gibson, director of Fordham University's Center on Religion and Culture.

The bishops are crafting a statement on immigration during the annual fall meeting. On many issues, they appear as divided and polarized as their country, but on immigration, even the most conservative Catholic leaders stand on the side of migrants.

The question is how strongly the whole body plans to speak about the Trump administration's harsh immigration tactics.

Fear of immigration enforcement has suppressed Mass attendance at some parishes. Local clerics are fighting to administer sacraments to detained immigrants. U.S. Catholic bishops shuttered their longstanding refugee resettlement program after the Trump administration halted federal funding for resettlement aid.

"On the political front, you know for decades the U.S. bishops have been advocating for comprehensive immigration reform," Bishop Kevin Rhoades, of Indiana's Fort Wayne-South Bend diocese, said during a news conference.

Rhoades serves on Trump's Religious Liberty Commission, and he leads the bishops' committee on religious liberty. He said bishops are very concerned about detained migrants receiving pastoral care and the sacraments.

"That's an issue of the right to worship," he said. "One doesn't lose that right when one is detained, whether one is documented or undocumented."

The bishops sent a letter to Pope Leo from their meeting, saying they "will continue to stand with migrants and defend everyone's right to worship free from intimidation."

The letter continued, "We support secure and orderly borders and law enforcement actions in response to dangerous criminal activity, but we cannot remain silent in this challenging hour while the right to worship and the right to due process are undermined."

Pope Leo recently called for "deep reflection" in the United States about the treatment of migrants held in detention, saying that "many people who have lived for years and years and years, never causing problems, have been deeply affected by what is going on right now."

## Speaker Johnson faces an unruly House as lawmakers return for shutdown vote

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — After refusing to convene the U.S. House during the government shutdown, Speaker Mike Johnson is recalling lawmakers back into session — and facing an avalanche of pent-up legislative demands from those who have largely been sidelined from governing.

Hundreds of representatives are preparing to return Wednesday to Washington after a nearly eight-week absence, carrying a torrent of ideas, proposals and frustrations over work that has stalled when the Republican speaker shuttered the House doors nearly two months ago.

First will be a vote to reopen the government. But that's just the start. With efforts to release the Jeffrey Epstein files and the swearing in of Arizona's Rep.-elect Adelita Grijalva, the unfinished business will pose a fresh test to Johnson's grip on power and put a renewed focus on his leadership.

"It's extraordinary," said Matthew Green, a professor at the politics department at The Catholic University of America.

"What Speaker Johnson and Republicans are doing, you have to go back decades to find an example where the House — either chamber — decided not to meet."

Gaveling in after two months gone

When the House gavels back into session, it will close this remarkable chapter of Johnson's tenure when he showed himself to be a leader who is quietly, but brazenly, willing to upend institutional norms in pursuit of his broader strategy, even at the risk of diminishing the House itself.

Rather than use the immense powers of the speaker's office to forcefully steer the debate in Congress, as a coequal branch of the government on par with the executive and the courts, Johnson simply closed up shop — allowing the House to become unusually deferential, particularly to President Donald Trump.

Over these past weeks, the chamber has sidestepped its basic responsibilities, from passing routine legislation to conducting oversight. The silencing of the speaker's gavel has been both unusual and surprising in a system of government where the founders envisioned the branches would vigorously protect their institutional prerogatives.

"You can see it is pretty empty around here," Johnson, R-La., said on day three of the shutdown, tour groups no longer crowding the halls.

"When Congress decides to turn off the lights, it shifts the authority to the executive branch. That is how it works," he said, blaming Democrats, with their fight over health care funds, for the closures.

An empty House as a political strategy

The speaker has defended his decision to shutter the House during what's now the longest government shutdown in U.S. history. He argued that the chamber, under the GOP majority, had already done its job passing a stopgap funding bill in September. It would be up to the Senate to act, he said.

When the Senate failed over and over to advance the House bill, more than a dozen times, he refused to enter talks with the other leaders on a compromise. Johnson also encouraged Trump to cancel an initial sit-down with the Democratic leaders Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Hakeem Jeffries to avoid a broader negotiation while the government was still closed.

Instead, the speaker, whose job is outlined in the Constitution, second in line of succession to the presidency, held almost daily press conferences on his side of the Capitol, a weekly conference call with GOP lawmakers, and private talks with Trump. He joined the president for Sunday's NFL Washington Commanders game as the Senate was slogging through a weekend session.

"People say, why aren't you negotiating with Schumer and Jeffries? I quite literally have nothing to negotiate," Johnson said at one point.

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"As I've said time and time again, I don't have anything to negotiate with," he said on day 13 of the shutdown. "We did our job. We had that vote."

And besides he said of the GOP lawmakers, "They are doing some of their best work in the district, helping their constituents navigate this crisis."

Accidental speaker delivers for Trump

In many ways, Johnson has become a surprisingly effective leader, an accidental speaker who was elected to the job by his colleagues after all others failed to win it. He has now lasted more than two years, longer than many once envisioned.

This year, with Trump's return to the White House, the speaker has commandeered his slim GOP majority and passed legislation including the president's so-called "one big beautiful bill" of tax breaks and spending reductions that became law this summer.

Johnson's shutdown strategy also largely achieved his goal, forcing Senate Democrats to break ranks and approve the funds to reopen government without the extension of health care subsidies they were demanding to help ease the sticker shock of rising insurance premium costs with the Affordable Care Act.

Johnson's approach is seen as one that manages up — he stays close to Trump and says they speak often — and also hammers down, imposing a rigid control over the day-to-day schedule of the House, and its lawmakers.

Amassing quiet power

Under a House rules change this year, Johnson was able to keep the chamber shuttered indefinitely on his own, without the usual required vote. This year his leadership team has allowed fewer opportunities for amendments on legislation, according to a recent tally. Other changes have curtailed the House's ability to provide a robust check on the executive branch over Trump's tariffs and use of war powers.

Johnson's refusal to swear-in Grijalva is a remarkable flex of the speaker's power, leading to comparisons with Senate GOP Leader Mitch McConnell's decision not to consider President Barack Obama's Supreme Court nominee, said David Rapallo, an associate professor and director of the Federal Legislation Clinic at Georgetown University Law Center. Arizona has sued to seat her.

Marc Short, who headed up the White House's legislative affairs office during the first Trump administration, said of Johnson, "It's impressive how he's held the conference together."

But said Short, "The legislative branch has abdicated a lot of responsibility to the executive under his watch."

Tough decisions ahead for the Speaker

As lawmakers make their way back to Washington, the speaker's power will be tested again as they consider the package to reopen government.

Republicans are certain to have complaints about the bill, which funds much of the federal government through Jan. 30 and keeps certain programs including agriculture, military construction and veterans affairs running through September.

But with House Democratic leaders rejecting the package for having failed to address the health care subsidies, it will be up to Johnson to muscle it through with mostly GOP lawmakers — with hardly any room for defections in the chamber that's narrowly split.

Jeffries, who has criticized House Republicans for what he called an extended vacation, said, "They're not going to be able to hide this week when they return."

## What to know about the 4 hostages whose remains are still in Gaza

By MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Since the U.S.-brokered ceasefire in Gaza began on Oct. 10, Palestinian militants have released the remains of 24 hostages held for the past two years. But the process of returning the bodies of the four remaining hostages, as called for under the truce deal, is progressing slowly.

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Hamas says it has not been able to reach all of the remains because they are buried under rubble left by Israel's two-year offensive in Gaza. Israel has accused the militants of dragging their feet and threatened to resume military operations or withhold humanitarian aid if all remains are not returned.

In the most recent release, Hamas returned the remains of Hadar Goldin, a soldier killed in Gaza in 2014.

In return, Israel has released the bodies of 300 Palestinians back to Gaza. Israel has not provided details on their identities, and it is unclear if they were people killed in Israel during the Oct. 7 attack, Palestinian detainees who died in Israeli custody or bodies taken from Gaza by Israeli troops during the war.

Health officials in Gaza have struggled to identify the bodies without access to DNA kits and have identified 89 of the bodies.

Here's a look at the hostages whose remains have not been returned.

Meny Godard, 73

Meny Godard was a professional soccer player before enlisting in the Israeli military and serving in the 1973 Mideast War, according to Kibbutz Be'eri. He served in a variety of different positions in the kibbutz, including at its printing press.

On the morning of Oct. 7, Godard and his wife, Ayelet, were forced out of their home after it was set on fire. She hid in the bushes for a number of hours before militants discovered her and killed her. She was able to tell her children that Meny had been killed before she died. The family held a double funeral for the couple. They are survived by four children and six grandchildren.

Ran Gvili, 24

Ran Gvili, who served in an elite police unit, was recovering from a broken shoulder he sustained in a motorcycle accident but rushed to assist fellow officers on Oct. 7. After helping people escape from the Nova music festival, he was killed fighting at another location and his body was taken to Gaza. The military confirmed his death four months later. He is survived by his parents and a sister.

Dror Or, 52

Dror Or was a father of three who worked at the dairy farm on Kibbutz Be'eri for 15 years, rising to the position of manager. He was an expert cheesemaker, according to family and friends. On Oct. 7, the family was hiding in their safe room when militants lit the house on fire. Dror and his wife, Yonat, were killed. Two of their children, Noam, who was then 16, and Alma, then 13, were abducted and released during the November 2023 ceasefire.

Sudthisak Rinthalak

Sudthisak Rinthalak was an agricultural worker from Thailand who had been employed at Kibbutz Be'eri. According to media reports, Rinthalak was divorced and had been working in Israel since 2017. A total of 31 workers from Thailand were kidnapped on Oct. 7, the largest group of foreigners to be held in captivity. Most of them were released in the first and second ceasefires. The Thai Foreign Ministry has said in addition to the hostages, 46 Thais have been killed during the war.

## White House's 50-year mortgage proposal has one notable benefit but a number of drawbacks

By KEN SWEET AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The White House says it is considering backing a 50-year mortgage to help alleviate the home affordability crisis in the country. But the announcement drew immediate criticism from policymakers, social media and economists, who said a 50-year mortgage would do little to resolve other core problems in the housing market, such as a lack of supply and high interest rates.

Bill Pulte, director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, said on X over the weekend that a 50-year mortgage would be "a complete game changer" for homebuyers. FHFA is the part of the federal government that oversees Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which buy and insure the vast majority of mortgages in the country.

The 30-year mortgage is a uniquely American financial product and the default way to buy a home since the New Deal. Politicians and policymakers at the time wanted to create a standardized mortgage that

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borrowers could afford and pay off during their working years, when the average lifespan for an American was 66 years old.

Lower payment

Extending the life of a mortgage to 50 years does decrease a borrower's monthly payment.

The average selling price of a home in the U.S. was \$415,200 in September, according to National Association of Realtors. Assuming a standard 10% down payment and an average interest rate of 6.17%, the monthly payment on a 30-year mortgage would be \$2,288 while the payment on a 50-year mortgage would be \$2,022. That's presuming a bank would not require a higher interest rate on a 50-year mortgage, due to the longer duration of the loan.

But significantly higher interest

Because even more of the monthly payment on a 50-year mortgage would go toward interest on the loan, it would take 30 years before a borrower would accumulate \$100,000 in equity, not including home price appreciation and the down payment. That's compared to 12-13 years to accumulate \$100,000 in equity when paying off a 30-year mortgage, excluding the down payment.

A borrower would pay, roughly, an additional \$389,000 in interest over the life of a 50-year mortgage compared to a 30-year mortgage, according to an AP analysis.

Other analysts came to a similar conclusion.

"Extending a mortgage from 30 years to 50 years could double the (dollar) amount of interest paid by the homebuyer on a median priced home over the life of the loan and significantly slow equity accumulation," wrote John Lovallo with UBS Securities.

Broader housing issues

A 50-year mortgage does nothing to solve one critical issue when it comes to housing affordability — the lack of supply of homes. States like California and cities like New York have recently passed legislation or made regulatory changes to allow builders to build homes faster with less regulatory red tape.

There's also the raw cost of homebuilding in the country. Products such as steel, lumber, concrete, copper and plastics that go into home construction are now subject to tariffs under President Trump. Further, many construction jobs were being done by undocumented workers, particularly in the Southwest, where deportations are impacting the ability for homebuilders to find enough labor to build homes.

"Many of the big things that would address supply right now are going in the wrong direction," said Mike Konczal, senior director of policy and research at the Economic Security Project.

Pulte said on X that the introduction of a 50-year mortgage was just a "potential weapon," among other solutions the White House has considered to combat high housing prices.

Americans don't live long enough

The average age of a first-time homebuyer has been creeping up for years and is now roughly 40 years of age. A 50-year mortgage would be difficult to underwrite for a bank for a 40-year-old first-time homebuyer, who would be 90 years old by the time that home is paid off. The average life expectancy of an American is now roughly 79 years, meaning there's 11 years of life expectancy not covered in a 50-year loan.

"It's typically not a goal of policymakers to pass on mortgage debt to a borrowers' children," Konczal said.

Others have tried longer loans

Other parts of the financial system have extended loan terms, to mixed results. The seven-year auto loan has become increasingly common as car prices have risen and Americans keep their cars longer. Despite longer loan terms, auto loan delinquencies have been rising, and the average price of a new car is now \$49,740 compared to a price of \$38,948 for a new vehicle five years ago.

Student loans were originally designed to be paid off in 10 years, and now there are multiple payment options that extend repayment out to 20 years.

Economists pointed out that a 50-year mortgage may do the opposite of helping with home affordability by causing home price inflation by introducing more potential buyers into a market struggling with supply.

Trump downplays idea

After significant criticism, President Trump seemed less enthused about the 50-year mortgage. When asked by Laura Ingraham of Fox News about the idea, President Trump said it "might help a little bit" but

seemed to brush it off.

Under the Dodd-Frank Act, the mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac cannot insure a mortgage that is longer than 30 years, so any 50-year mortgage would be considered a "non-qualifying mortgage" and would be more difficult to sell to investors. Congress would have to amend U.S. financial laws in multiple places to allow for 50-year mortgages, and there seems to be little appetite for Congress to take this on immediately.

## **Russian court extends jailing of teenage singer over street performance of anti-war songs**

By The Associated Press undefined

A Russian court Tuesday extended the jailing of an 18-year-old street singer on charges seen as punishment for performing anti-war songs, an action denounced by human rights activists as part of a rampant crackdown on free speech over the war in Ukraine.

Diana Loginova was ordered held for another 13 days by the court in St. Petersburg on charges of violating public order with her October performance. It was the third consecutive sentence for Loginova, who has remained in custody since her initial arrest on Oct. 15.

Loginova, a music student who goes by the stage name Naoko in the band Stoptime, also was ordered to pay fines for "discrediting the Russian armed forces."

Alexander Orlov, a fellow Stoptime member, has been handed repeated sentences along with Loginova. They denied any wrongdoing.

Amnesty International said the repeated detentions, which it called "carousel arrests," were intended to keep them in custody without filing more serious criminal charges.

Human rights activists say Loginova and fellow Stoptime band members have been targeted for performing songs by other musicians who had opposed the Kremlin's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine and left Russia. Videos of the performance with crowds joining in by singing lyrics critical of the Kremlin and the war have been widely viewed online, triggering calls from pro-Kremlin activists for police to take action.

"The repeated arrests of Naoko and her bandmates are punishment for their public performance, which have become a breath of fresh air in a country gasping under repression and self-censorship," said Denis Krivosheev, Amnesty International's deputy director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

"Authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Naoko and Aleksandr Orlov and other street musicians detained for acts of anti-war protest, simply exercising their right to freedom of expression," he said in a statement. "Their only 'crime' is singing songs that challenge the suffocating official narrative."

The Stoptime case triggered similar performances in solidarity in some Russian cities, leading to arrests and fines for several performers.

Russian authorities have ramped up their crackdown on dissent and free speech after the Kremlin sent troops into Ukraine, relentlessly targeting rights groups, independent media, members of civil society organizations, LGBTQ+ activists and some religious groups. Hundreds of people have been jailed and thousands of others have fled the country.

## **After brutal torture and 2.5 years of captivity, Israeli-Russian researcher is grateful to survive**

By MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Ta'aliq — "to hang" in Arabic — is Iraqi slang for a torture technique that hoists victims into the air, their hands handcuffed above their heads. Akrab, or "scorpion," is the more painful version, in which the victim's hands are handcuffed together behind their back.

Elizabeth Tsurkov experienced both, and other excruciating torture, during 2 1/2 years held captive in Iraq by an Iranian-backed militia.

The 38-year-old Israeli-Russian doctoral student at Princeton, who speaks fluent Arabic and has researched

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the Middle East for over a decade, was studying social political movements in Iraq in March 2023 when she was forced into an SUV, blindfolded, sexually assaulted and beaten, then taken to a torture facility on the outskirts of Baghdad.

Her release in September was announced by President Donald Trump.

Now she is recovering in Israel as Iraqis head to the polls Tuesday for a parliamentary election that includes candidates linked to the militia Tsurkov says kidnapped her, Kataib Hezbollah.

A \$600 million ransom demanded

Israelis are prohibited by law from traveling to Iraq, which Israel classifies as an "enemy country."

In an interview with The Associated Press, Tsurkov said she knew the risks but thought she took sufficient precautions, entering on her Russian passport and avoiding contact with militias. She hadn't counted on Kataib Hezbollah's deep penetration of activist circles in Baghdad.

She said her captors didn't know she was Israeli at first. She believes they kidnapped her to try to get a large ransom for a foreigner. While Kataib Hezbollah has never publicly claimed her kidnapping, it has released social media statements that include fake information she gave during torture, a sign of its involvement.

The group, an ally of Hezbollah in Lebanon, is part of a coalition of Iranian-backed militias that are officially part of Iraq's armed forces but often act on their own. The U.S. has listed Kataib Hezbollah as a terrorist organization since 2009.

A month into Tsurkov's captivity, her captors found Hebrew messages and other evidence she was Israeli on her phone. That's when the torture began, she said, as they accused her of being a spy. Their starting ransom demand was \$600 million, she was told by Israeli officials.

"The torture was incredibly brutal," said Tsurkov, now recovering at a friend's home near Tel Aviv.

"They electrocuted me. They constantly touched me inappropriately. They forced me into positions that were very painful to me because of my herniated" discs, she said, adding she had back surgery just eight days before the kidnapping.

The AP generally does not identify victims of sexual abuse except in cases where they publicly identify themselves or share their stories openly.

Tsurkov's captors used a plastic whip, especially on her feet, because feet heal slowly. They threatened to kill her with a gun stamped property of the Iraqi security services. She would pray to pass out to end the torture sessions.

She said she made up false confessions to appease the torturers, careful to avoid implicating Iraqi acquaintances.

After 4 1/2 months, Tsurkov was moved to what she believes is a Kataib Hezbollah base on the border with Iran, where the torture stopped. She was allowed sufficient food and water, and eventually a TV, while kept in solitary confinement in a windowless cell.

Hopes for release plummeted after the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led attack on southern Israel, when Tsurkov became just one of over 250 hostages of concern to Israel.

Shedding light on militias

The torture has left Tsurkov with likely permanent nerve damage. Between doctor's appointments and physical therapy, she mostly reclines on a couch, shifting positions to try to find relief.

The details of the torture facility are impossible to forget, she said: Splashes of blood on the walls, desperate scrawls of people held in the cell before her. It's uncomfortable to share them publicly.

"Any human being doesn't want the details about their worst experiences in their life to be known," Tsurkov said.

Still, she knows that as a Westerner she is in a unique position to shed light on Iraqi militias. Few people survive Iraq's torture facilities, and the Iraqis who do are terrified speaking out could endanger them or their families.

Iraqi militias are not as familiar globally because they are mostly active inside Iraq. Iraqi militias targeted U.S. forces in the region after the Oct. 7 attack because of Washington's support for Israel, but that largely stopped after a U.S. retaliatory attack killed a high-ranking Kataib Hezbollah commander.

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"Their focus is overwhelmingly just oppressing their own people," Tsurkov said.

She knew the militia was well-funded, she said, because of the plush leather and new-car smell of the luxury vehicles that transported her blindfolded.

Suffering a third generation incarceration

Tsurkov, who was born in Russia, moved to Israel around age 4. Before that her parents were imprisoned in Russia for opposing the communist government.

Her mother was incarcerated for three years, her father for seven, plus two years of hard labor in Siberia. For a few months, Tsurkov's father was held in a cell with former Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky, who later became an Israeli cabinet minister. Her grandfather was imprisoned under Stalin.

Tsurkov's family fought for her release, launching a campaign focused mostly on the U.S. Her sister, Emma Tsurkov, is married to a U.S. citizen.

Israel also invested "great efforts and many resources" to help secure Tsurkov's release, said an Israeli official who was not authorized to speak to the media and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Russian Foreign Ministry didn't respond to an AP request for comment.

US exerts pressure

As far as she knows, Tsurkov was not exchanged for any prisoners.

Her release followed significant pressure from Adam Boehler, the Trump administration's special envoy for hostage affairs who held multiple meetings and regularly took to social media to demand Tsurkov's freedom.

White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly said that with Tsurkov's Princeton enrollment and other ties to the U.S., Trump "was willing to leverage our country's strength and his negotiating skills to intervene."

Tsurkov also credits the involvement of an Iraqi-American businessman and Trump donor Mark Savaya. As she was recuperating in Israel, Tsurkov said Savaya told her he had warned Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani during a meeting to release her or the Trump administration would attack Kataib Hezbollah. Savaya was later named the U.S. special envoy for Iraq.

Tsurkov's release came after Israel decimated many of Iran's proxies and hit Iran hard during a devastating 12-day war, a campaign so intense that Tsurkov said she felt the building shake where she was held over the border in Iraq.

The Iraqi government and Kataib Hezbollah did not respond to AP requests for comment. But militia security chief Abu Ali al-Askari wrote on Telegram that the Iraqi government demanded Tsurkov's release to avoid a possible strike against Iraq.

A Shiite political official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media, confirmed militia leaders worried they would be targeted by the U.S.

About a week after Tsurkov believes Savaya met with al-Sudani, she was brought to Baghdad and handed over to an Iraqi security official in a nondescript garage.

At the U.S. Embassy, she had an ecstatic video chat with her family before returning to Israel.

Rebuilding a life

Before her kidnapping, Tsurkov was frequently quoted in Israeli media for her expertise on the Syrian civil war. She traveled twice to Syria and has tattoos supporting the Syrian uprising, which she said angered her torturers. She has been vocal in her criticism of the Israeli government and supportive of Palestinians, prompting online vitriol since her release.

Now she is rebuilding her life. She plans to finish her doctorate at Princeton. She is overjoyed to experience small things like seeing the sea or feeling the sun warm her skin.

Once she has healed enough, she hopes to return to research, especially field work highlighting marginalized groups.

"It often feels like a nightmare that I woke up from," she said. "It feels so surreal to have undergone, and overcome, such brutality."

MLB, sportsbooks cap bets on individual pitches in response to pitch-rigging scandal

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

Major League Baseball said its authorized gaming operators will cap bets on individual pitches at \$200

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and exclude them from parlays, a day after two Cleveland Guardians players were indicted and accused of rigging pitches at the behest of gamblers.

MLB said Monday the limits were agreed to by sportsbook operators representing more than 98% of the U.S. betting market. The league said in a statement that pitch-level bets on outcomes of pitch velocity and of balls and strikes "present heightened integrity risks because they focus on one-off events that can be determined by a single player and can be inconsequential to the outcome of the game."

"The risk on these pitch-level markets will be significantly mitigated by this new action targeted at the incentive to engage in misconduct," the league said. "The creation of a strict bet limit on this type of bet, and the ban on parlaying them, reduces the payout for these markets and the ability to circumvent the new limit."

MLB said the agreement included Bally's, Bet365, BetMGM, Bet99, Betr, Caesars, Circa, DraftKings, 888, FanDuel, Gamewise, Hard Rock Bet, Intralot, Jack Entertainment, Mojo, Northstar Gaming, Oaklawn, Penn, Pointsbet, Potawatomi, Rush Street and Underdog.

Cleveland pitchers Emmanuel Clase and Luis Ortiz were indicted Sunday in U.S. District Court in Brooklyn on charges they took bribes from sports bettors to throw certain types of pitches. They were charged with wire fraud conspiracy, honest services wire fraud conspiracy, conspiracy to influence sporting contests by bribery and money laundering conspiracy. The indictment says they helped two unnamed gamblers in the Dominican Republic win at least \$460,000 on bets placed on the speed and outcome of certain pitches, including some that landed in the dirt.

Ortiz's lawyer, Chris Georgalis, said in a statement that his client was innocent and "has never, and would never, improperly influence a game — not for anyone and not for anything." A lawyer for Clase, Michael J. Ferrara, said his client "has devoted his life to baseball and doing everything in his power to help his team win. Emmanuel is innocent of all charges and looks forward to clearing his name in court."

The U.S. Supreme Court in 2018 ruled the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act of 1992 was unconstitutional, allowing states to legalize sports betting.

Ortiz appeared Monday in federal court in Boston. U.S. Magistrate Judge Donald L. Cabell granted Ortiz his release on the condition he surrender his passport, restrict his travel to the Northeast U.S. and post a \$500,000 bond, \$50,000 of it secured. Ortiz was ordered to avoid contact with anyone who could be viewed as a victim, witness or co-defendant.

Last month, more than 30 people, including Portland Trail Blazers head coach and Basketball Hall of Famer Chauncey Billups and Miami Heat guard Terry Rozier, were arrested in a takedown of two sprawling gambling operations that authorities said rigged poker games backed by Mafia families and leaked inside information about NBA athletes.

Billups' attorney, Chris Heywood, issued a statement denying the allegations. Rozier's lawyer, Jim Trusty, said in a statement his client is "not a gambler" and "looks forward to winning this fight."

## Today in History: November 12, Ellis Island closes its doors

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Nov. 12, the 316th day of 2025. There are 49 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Nov. 12, 1954, Ellis Island officially closed as an immigration station and detention center. More than 12 million immigrants arrived in the United States via Ellis Island between 1892 and 1954.

Also on this date:

In 1927, Josef Stalin became the undisputed ruler of the Soviet Union as Leon Trotsky was expelled from the Communist Party.

In 1936, the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge opened as President Franklin D. Roosevelt pressed a telegraph key in Washington, D.C., and gave the green light to traffic.

In 1936, American playwright Eugene O'Neill received the Nobel Prize in Literature.

In 1948, Japanese general and former Prime Minister Hideki Tojo and several other World War II Japanese leaders were sentenced to death by a war crimes tribunal; he was executed in December 1948.

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In 1970, the Bhola cyclone struck East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. The deadliest tropical cyclone on record claimed the lives of an estimated 300,000-500,000 people.

In 2001, American Airlines Flight 587, en route to the Dominican Republic, crashed after takeoff from New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, killing all 260 people on board and five people on the ground.

In 2019, Venice saw its worst flooding in more than 50 years, with the water reaching 6.14 feet (1.87 meters) above average sea level; damage was estimated in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

In 2021, a judge in Los Angeles ended the conservatorship that had controlled the life and money of pop star Britney Spears for nearly 14 years.

In 2024, a federal judge sentenced Jack Teixeira, a Massachusetts Air National Guard member, to 15 years in prison for leaking classified military documents about the war in Ukraine; Teixeira had pleaded guilty to willful retention and transmission of national defense information under the Espionage Act, nearly a year after his arrest in the most consequential national security breach in years.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-playwright Wallace Shawn is 82. Rock musician Booker T. Jones is 81. Sports-caster Al Michaels is 81. Singer-songwriter Neil Young is 80. Author Tracy Kidder is 80. Democratic Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island is 76. Actor Megan Mullally is 67. Olympic gold medal gymnast Nadia Comăneci is 64. Olympic gold medal swimmer Jason Lezak is 50. Pakistani filmmaker and journalist Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy is 47. Actor Ryan Gosling is 45. Actor Anne Hathaway is 43. Golfer Jason Day is 38. NBA point guard Russell Westbrook is 37.