

# Groton Daily Independent

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## 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.

## Friday, Nov. 14

Senior Menu: Hamburger cabbage roll hotdish, mixed vegetables, pears, cornmeal muffin.

School Breakfast: Egg wraps.

School Lunch: Chicken ala king, biscuits.

## Saturday, Nov. 15

Groton Legion Turkey Party, 6:30 p.m.

4th-6th grade GBB Tournament at Groton Area, 8 a.m.

MS GBB at North Central Jamboree, 10 a.m.

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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.**

**Breaking news:** President Donald Trump signed legislation yesterday to end the US' longest-ever federal government shutdown (43 days) after the House voted 202-209 to reopen the government.

## Epstein Email Dump

The House Oversight Committee released more than 20,000 pages of subpoenaed documents from its ongoing investigation into the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. The decision followed Democrats' release of three emails by Epstein referencing President Donald Trump.

In a 2011 email, Epstein asserted to co-conspirator Ghislaine Maxwell that Trump "spent hours" in his home with Virginia Giuffre, one of Epstein's victims. In 2016, Giuffre—who has since died by suicide—said she did not witness Trump engaging in inappropriate behavior with minors. A second email from 2011 referred to Trump as "the dog that hasn't barked." In a third email from 2019, Epstein asserted to author Michael Wolff that Trump "knew about the girls." Trump maintains his friendship with Epstein ended in the early 2000s, prior to Epstein's 2008 conviction.

Following the documents' release, a group of 218 House members signed a petition to force a floor vote requiring the Justice Department to release more documents.

## Purdue Hearings Begin

Hearings began yesterday to finalize Purdue Pharma's \$7.4B bankruptcy plan. If approved, the settlement will be the largest to date surrounding the US' decadeslong opioid epidemic.

Purdue released OxyContin, a powerful prescription painkiller, in 1996. The drug has since been blamed for fueling the opioid epidemic, resulting in more than 645,000 US deaths. Purdue filed for bankruptcy in 2019 to settle thousands of lawsuits accusing the company of downplaying the drug's addictive nature. However, the Supreme Court blocked a \$6B settlement last year on the grounds that bankruptcy courts cannot prevent future lawsuits against third parties not covered by the bankruptcy. This latest deal—settling civil claims by all 50 states and US territories—does not preclude individuals from bringing future lawsuits.

As part of the settlement, Purdue Pharma is creating a new company, Knoa Pharma, that will provide addiction treatment and medicines at cost. Settlement money will also be used to fund state-run addiction treatment and prevention programs.

## A Penny Spurned

The US Mint in Philadelphia pressed its final penny yesterday. President Donald Trump ordered an end to penny production earlier this year as costs neared 4 cents per 1-cent coin.

The first penny, minted in 1793, was pure copper, featured Lady Liberty, and could be used to buy a piece of candy. President Theodore Roosevelt directed the Mint to place Abraham Lincoln on the coin in 1909, and rising copper prices prompted the Mint to start making the penny primarily of zinc in 1982. Though inflation and digital transactions have rendered pennies less necessary, the Mint issued over 3.2 billion last year, accounting for over half of US coin production. The Treasury expects to save about \$56M annually by discontinuing the penny, which saw production costs rise over 20% last year.

Merchants have been rounding prices and requiring exact change amid recent penny shortages. A bipartisan bill proposes rounding cash transactions to the nearest nickel, which is illegal in at least 10 states.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games Day 1 to feature most-ever women's finals on a single day, including women's track and field 100-meter and triathlon.

NBA announces changes to 2026 NBA All-Star Game featuring two teams of US players and one team of international players.

Paul Skenes wins MLB Cy Young Award for best pitcher; Most Valuable Player announced tonight.

Actor James Van Der Beek, 48, to auction "Dawson's Creek" memorabilia to help pay for his Stage 3 colorectal cancer treatments.

Singer Adele to make acting debut in movie by fashion mogul and filmmaker Tom Ford.

## Science & Technology

Intense solar storms foil second launch attempt of Blue Origin rocket carrying twin Mars orbiters for NASA; first attempt Sunday called off due to Earth weather.

Neuroscientists change neural connections in brains of mice with Down syndrome; breakthrough could yield new treatments for neurodevelopmental disorders.

Researchers discover Epstein-Barr virus can infect white blood cells and trigger lupus; finding could lead to better treatments for autoimmune disease.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 +0.1%, Dow +0.7%, Nasdaq -0.3%); Dow closes at record high for second consecutive day.

October jobs and inflation reports unlikely to be released due to shutdown, White House says.

Anthropic to spend \$50B on US AI infrastructure, beginning with custom data centers in Texas and New York.

Kim Kardashian's shapewear brand Skims valued at \$5B after securing \$225M in funding round led by Goldman Sachs.

## Politics & World Affairs

Colombian military kills at least 19 people in rebel group accused of trafficking drugs; airstrikes come amid US military's ongoing campaign against narco-trafficking boats in the Caribbean.

Ukrainian investigators raid home of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's former business partner, other top aides as part of \$100M corruption investigation.

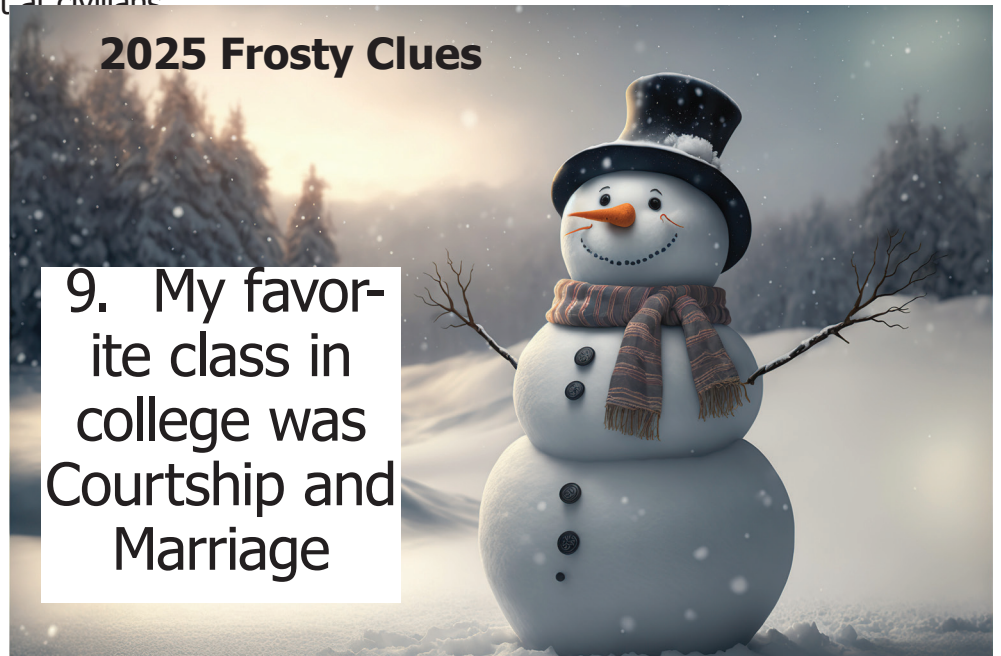
Italian public prosecutor opens investigation into allegations Italian citizens paid large amounts to travel to Bosnia-Herzegovina and shoot at civilians.

## 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

9. My favorite class in college was Courtship and Marriage



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**

## School board discusses upcoming election changes, property tax proposals by Elizabeth Varin

At its meeting Tuesday morning, the Groton Area School Board reviewed recent proposals from the state's comprehensive property tax task force and discussed changes coming to school district elections.

Superintendent Joe Schwan briefed the board on discussions from the statewide comprehensive property tax task force. While some of the group's ideas would have little effect on the district, several proposals could directly impact local school budgets.

Among the potential changes proposed were:

- Reducing the maximum annual budget increase for K-12 school districts from 3% to 2.5%.
- Creating a dedicated fund for state aid to education, directing all revenues from video lottery into general and special education funding.
- Repealing authorization for capital outlay transfers to the general fund, which could limit flexibility in how districts allocate resources.
- Calling on the executive branch to propose a 5% spending cut as part of the 2026 budget plan.

The task force's proposals are recommendations at this stage. Any changes would require legislative approval, and Schwan noted that how the bills are written will be critical in determining their impact on school districts.

"These are just proposals from the committee to the legislators," he said. "Sometimes with these things, the devils in the details."

Some of the proposals may happen, and some may not, Schwan said. It's a combination of things that might change when the legislative session starts.

Board elections may see changes

District Business Manager Becky Hubsch explained some of the impacts of House Bill 1130, state legislation that will require municipal and school district elections to be held in either June or November, aligning them with state and federal election dates. Groton Area faces a unique challenge as the district boundaries span multiple counties.

Hubsch said the district includes territory in five counties, meaning it would need to coordinate with all of them to combine election efforts. Some counties have expressed hesitation about entering into such agreements.

To simplify the process, an option would be to change polling locations, Hubsch said. Instead of using the district's four existing precincts, one option would be to host all voting at the school site.

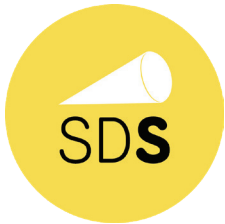
Board members raised concerns about closing those precincts, with Heather Lerseth-Fliehs asking if a person would have to vote for some things in their community and then have to travel to Groton to vote in the school district election.

Tigh Fliehs also expressed concerns, saying, "the outlying community would be pretty upset I would think."

Hubsch emphasized that these are just options and issues she is running into. She added that the last board member election the district has had was almost a decade ago as there haven't been more people running for the board than the number of board positions available.

- Middle/High School Principal Shelby Edwards told the board about moving the B.A.G.S. for Tomorrow program from the elementary school to the high school. Currently Elementary School Principal Brett Schwan is handling operations of the program that provides bags of food for students signed up for the program in order to supplement their weekend food intake. The program will now be combined with the Comfort Closet set up at the high school that provides essential and comfort items, such as hygiene products, clothing and school supplies, for those in need. This change allows the district to provide a little more on-site for kids who need it.

- The board approved volunteer coaches for winter sports.
  - o Justin Hanson for girls basketball
  - o Ryan Tracy for boys basketball
  - o Jeremy Krueger for girls wrestling



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **Government reopens after 43 days: Trump signs bill ending record shutdown**

**BY: JENNIFER SHUTT, ARIANA FIGUEROA AND SHAUNEEN MIRANDA**

WASHINGTON — The longest shutdown in U.S. history ended Wednesday night when President Donald Trump signed a spending package that reopens the government and funds most of it through January.

The Oval Office ceremony came just hours after the House voted to approve the legislation, which senators passed earlier in the week.

"I hope we can all agree that the government should never be shut down again," Trump said, before urging Senate Republicans to eliminate the rule that requires bills to garner the support of at least 60 lawmakers to advance. "Terminate the filibuster."

The 222-209 vote marked the first time that chamber took up a bill since mid-September, when Republican leaders recessed after members approved a stopgap spending measure they knew couldn't advance in the Senate.

That stalemate, centered around sharply rising health care costs, led to a 43-day shutdown that affected nearly every corner of the country through delayed funding for nutrition programs for millions of Americans, no pay for federal workers, flight delays tied to staffing shortages and much more.

But after nearly six weeks of failed procedural votes, seven centrist Senate Democrats and one independent broke with party leaders on Sunday to advance the reworked spending package and then voted to approve the legislation Monday.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., who said throughout the shutdown he was interested in a bipartisan path forward on health insurance costs after the shutdown ended, committed to hold a floor vote on a Democratic bill "no later than the second week in December."

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., said repeatedly throughout the funding lapse GOP lawmakers have ideas to improve the health care system. However, he didn't detail any of those publicly and hasn't committed to a floor vote.

"We have volumes of ideas on how to do this, on how to fix it, on how to drive costs down and how to increase access to care and quality of care, and you're going to see all that vigorous debate," Johnson said during a brief press conference after the vote.

House debate on the spending package that will reopen government was largely along party lines, though Republican Reps. Thomas Massie of Kentucky and Greg Steube of Florida voted against the bill.

Democratic Reps. Henry Cuellar of Texas, Don Davis of North Carolina, Jared Golden of Maine, Adam Gray of California, Marie Gluesenkamp Perez of Washington state and Tom Suozzi of New York voted for passage.

Appropriations Committee Chairman Tom Cole, R-Okla., urged support for the legislation ahead of the vote, saying "history reminds us that shutdowns never change the outcome."

"Over the last 43 days the facts did not shift, the votes required did not shift, the path forward did not change," Cole said. "The only thing that did move was the level of pain Democrats inflicted on the nation."

### **Much higher premiums predicted**

Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro, the top Democrat on the spending panel, rejected the legislation and said it does nothing to address the rising cost of health care.

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"More than 20 million Americans will have to pay double, even triple, their monthly insurance premium in just a matter of weeks," DeLauro said. "And this bill leaves families without even a glimmer of hope that their costs might go down."

The Senate significantly reworked the stopgap bill the House originally passed in mid-September into what is now a 394-page package, adding in three of the full-year government funding bills and changing the date of the stopgap measure to Jan. 30, among many other provisions. The original stopgap was set to last through Nov. 21.

The updated measure gives Congress a couple more months to work out agreement on the remaining nine appropriations bills that were supposed to become law before the start of the current fiscal year on Oct. 1.

Lawmakers could create a partial government shutdown if they're unable to agree on approving the remaining appropriations bill before the new government funding deadline at the end of January.

## Democratic discharge petition

Trump will turn his attention toward the rising cost of health care that Democrats highlighted during the shutdown, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said at a Wednesday briefing, though she didn't put a firm timeline on when he'll release any plans.

"Once the government reopens, the president, as he's always maintained, is absolutely open to having conversations about health care," Leavitt said. "And I think you'll see the president putting forth some really good policy proposals that Democrats should take very seriously to fix, again, the system that they broke."

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries told reporters following a closed-door meeting that Democrats will try to get the necessary signatures on a discharge petition to force a floor vote on legislation to extend tax credits for three years for people who buy their health insurance from the Affordable Care Act marketplace.

The New York Democrat said the extension mirrors how long the enhanced tax credits were set to last initially in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

Temporary health care subsidies were originally passed as part of the COVID-19-era American Rescue Plan in 2021 for two years. The Inflation Reduction Act, the signature climate policy bill from the Biden administration, then extended those health care subsidies for three years, expiring at the end of December 2025.

"The legislation that we will introduce in the context of a discharge petition will provide that level of certainty to working-class Americans who are on the verge of seeing their premiums, co-pays and deductibles skyrocket," Jeffries said.

Democrats will need the support of at least a handful of Republicans in order to get the 218 signatures needed to force a vote on the bill. The discharge petition was released mid-afternoon.

## What's in the new bill

The spending package wraps in several different bills and provisions, such as the three full-year funding bills that cover the Agriculture Department, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Legislative Branch, military construction projects and Department of Veterans Affairs.

Included are:

A stopgap spending bill that will keep the rest of the federal government running through Jan. 30; \$30 million for the U.S. Capitol Police to enhance protections for lawmakers, \$30 million for the U.S. Marshals Service to bolster security for members of the judicial and executive branches, and \$28 million for enhanced safety for Supreme Court justices;

Language requiring the Trump administration to reinstate the thousands of workers it sent layoff notices to during the shutdown and preventing officials from firing those workers through January;

Provisions mandating the Trump administration provide back pay to all federal workers, including those furloughed during the shutdown. Trump at one point during the shutdown had threatened to yank that

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back pay, though it is required by law.

The Trump administration issued a Statement of Administration Policy a few hours before the House voted, saying the administration strongly supports the bill, describing the measure as "a fiscally responsible package that provides the full-year funding necessary to support the Nation's veterans, farmers, and rural communities."

The package also "ends disruptions to programs the American people rely on and ensures the thousands of Federal employees who have been forced to work without a paycheck, such as air traffic controllers, will be promptly paid," the administration added.

The Agriculture and Military Construction-VA spending bills include tens of billions of dollars in earmarks requested by lawmakers from both political parties, important to them as midterm elections loom in 2026.

## 'Legislative self-dealing' in Senate attacked

But not every Republican on Capitol Hill is happy with how the full-year bills turned out.

Speaker Johnson announced mid-afternoon that the House would take a separate vote later this month to remove language from the package that will allow senators to file suit against the federal government if their data is subpoenaed.

"We are putting this legislation on the fast track suspension calendar in the House for next week," Johnson wrote in a social media post.

The provision, tucked into the full-year Legislative Branch spending bill, is retroactive to January 1, 2022, and would apply to the eight senators who had their cell phone records subpoenaed during a 2023 investigation into Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election results.

The FBI reportedly obtained data for cell phone use between Jan. 4 and Jan. 7, 2021, for Sens. Josh Hawley of Missouri, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, Bill Hagerty of Tennessee, Dan Sullivan of Alaska, Tommy Tuberville of Alabama, Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming and Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee, as well as Rep. Mike Kelly of Pennsylvania.

Maryland Democratic Rep. Jamie Raskin said during floor debate the bill "contains the single most corrupt provision for legislative self-dealing that anyone in this chamber today has ever voted on."

"This provision is an affront to our taxpayers, to the rule of law, to everyone who believes that we in public office must be the servants of the people, not the masters of the people who get special legal rights and privileges and multi-million-dollar payoffs," Raskin said.

South Carolina Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham told reporters earlier in the day that he will "definitely" be filing a lawsuit after the new provision becomes law.

"And if you think I'm going to settle this thing for a million dollars? No. I want to make it so painful no one ever does this again," Graham said, later adding he wasn't sure if he'd win such a case.

Dissatisfaction among GOP lawmakers with that provision was on full display on social media, where Florida's Steube responded to Speaker Johnson's post by writing that the "Senate will never take up your 'standalone' bill. This is precisely why you shouldn't let the Senate jam the House."

*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.*

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

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

## Hemp products will be 'ripped away' by federal legislation, SD businesses fear

**Industry members say seltzers, lotions and other products are jeopardized by provision in spending bill**

**BY: JOSHUA HAIAR**

Beer distributor Byron Schafersman said the availability of buzz-inducing "THC" seltzers that South Dakotans are increasingly finding at bars and liquor stores across the state is jeopardized by a provision in congressional legislation to reopen the federal government.

"What I can tell you is consumers said loud and clear that they want this product," said Schafersman, of Global Distributing, based in Renner. "And now it's getting ripped away."

The provision could wipe out a whole range of hemp-based products ranging from those seltzers to lotions used for arthritis pain, according to Katie Sieverding, who lobbies on behalf of both the hemp industry and beer wholesalers in South Dakota.

"My fear is that we're going to sweep in products that we weren't even thinking about," she said.

The language in the U.S. Senate's stopgap spending package — which was expected to gain approval from the House and President Trump on Wednesday night — caps the allowable high-inducing compound (known as THC) in any hemp-derived consumer product at 0.4 milligrams per container. That's a fraction of what's found in the 5- to 10-milligram beverages and gummies, for example, now sold in stores. It's also less than what is found in many of the non-high-inducing "CBD" products, often sold as pain-relieving oils, lotions and balms, according to Josh Schneider, the policy adviser for the National Industrial Hemp Council.

Schneider said the U.S. hemp industry generates roughly \$26 billion annually, with "well over \$25 billion" tied to hemp-derived compounds like CBD and THC. Schneider said the new cap would dismantle those markets, eliminate hundreds of thousands of jobs, and strand years of investment in processing and extraction facilities.

### **Hemp in South Dakota**

While Sieverding said most of the hemp grown in South Dakota is for grain and fiber, a small share of South Dakota hemp farmers do rely on CBD and hemp-derived THC products.

Production of hemp, which is low in THC, was federally authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill, which defined hemp as cannabis with no more than 0.3% THC by dry weight. The intent was to legalize non-intoxicating uses like hemp fiber for things like clothing and CBD for things like joint pain relief. But critics say it also created a loophole: manufacturers have found ways to convert legal hemp plants into potent forms of synthetic marijuana. Since then, hemp-derived products with intoxicating effects have taken off.

In South Dakota, hemp became legal to grow in 2021, and the state now harvests more hemp for fiber than any other.

Ken Meyer, a board member of the South Dakota Industrial Hemp Association and co-chair of the U.S. Hemp Roundtable's Farmer Advisory Council, said most South Dakota hemp is grown for grain and fiber, not for use in intoxicating products. Regardless, he said the change would devastate small retailers that serve clients who don't want to obtain a patient card for medical marijuana, which has been allowed in South Dakota since the state started its medical marijuana program in 2021.

"These are adults who don't want to go to dispensaries," Meyer said. "They just want something to help them relax or manage pain."

### **'Every AG is seeing it'**

A Nov. 4 letter from 39 state attorneys general, including South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley, urged Congress to close the hemp-derived THC "loophole."

"This is something that we in the attorney general community have been dealing with, especially with the sale of these products to minors," Jackley said. "Every AG is seeing it."

South Dakota legislators passed a law in 2024 that closed a portion of the loophole by banning chemically synthesized versions of THC, sold under names like Delta-8 and THC-O, sometimes called "diet weed."

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Jackley's office recently conducted a sting and found five smoke shops allegedly in violation of that law. Jackley said South Dakota's hemp industry should remain focused on agricultural and industrial uses, not the sale of "these dangerous chemicals marketed to minors." He said people in need of those products can apply for a medical marijuana card.

## News welcomed by medical marijuana industry

Ned Horsted runs 605 Cannabis, which grows medical marijuana and has a medical dispensary in the state. He called the federal legislation "encouraging," given that his industry is tightly regulated and tested — which is costly — and he views it as unfair that comparable legal standards for hemp-derived intoxicating products were not being applied.

"We need a free and fair market," he said.

Horsted was involved with an unsuccessful past effort to legalize the recreational use of marijuana. He said if that effort had succeeded, today's "loophole" would not have transformed into the market it has in South Dakota.

"Our bill said you would have to be 21 to buy any of this, and there would be far more oversight and regulation than what is on the products that are currently alleviating consumers' demand for THC," he said.

Horsted noted that South Dakota's Medical Marijuana Oversight Committee has heard numerous complaints during its last two meetings that "smoke shops" are selling illegal and intoxicating products, often getting into the hands of minors.

At its Nov. 4 meeting, members approved a motion urging the creation of an interim study committee to investigate the issue and another recommending that sales of THC products be limited to licensed medical marijuana dispensaries.

## Smoke shops and CBD

Caleb Rose helps run what some people describe as a "smoke shop," selling hemp-derived THC products ranging from CBD to gummies and vapes. He is part-owner of Black Hills Vapors and Black Hills CBD.

Rose said that because the proposed THC cap applies per container, it will mean many non-intoxicating CBD products he sells will no longer be available.

"We're going to lose a lot of those topical products that are completely non-psychoactive," he said.

He said there would still be legal CBD options, but they would be costly and may be less effective.

Rose estimated a 30% hit to his business and argued that the biggest losers are people using THC seltzers and gummies as "better alternatives" to things like drinking alcohol or pain-relieving pharmaceuticals.

## Bad for beverage sales

Schafersman's Global Distributing sells 5- to 10-milligram, hemp-derived THC seltzers. He emphasized that the products are low-dose, contrasting them with some higher-milligram vapes and edibles sold at "smoke shops."

He also said beverages are a safer, more controllable way to consume THC than gummies or vapes, particularly due to the physical limits on overconsumption, noting, "a child can't just go and chug 10 of these at a time." The company has turned down offers to sell drinks with higher milligram levels.

"We've concluded smaller milligrams is a key to us making sure that people have a good experience and they're not overconsuming," Schafersman said.

He said the nation's alcohol distribution model is already designed to keep products out of kids' hands.

"I'm not selling this to anybody who doesn't have a liquor license. Nobody who doesn't have a beer license. I'm not selling it to the little pot shops," he said.

Schafersman said that while demand for alcohol has decreased, especially among younger people, there is growing adult consumer demand for THC beverages. He said the federal legislation will force layoffs if it becomes law.

"It's going to be a huge, huge negative for us at Global Distributing," he said. "This is a multi-million dollar market in the state."

*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.*

## **Regionalization, telehealth, data-sharing: SD applies for \$1 billion from federal rural health fund**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER**

If South Dakota is awarded the \$1 billion it's seeking from a new federal rural health fund, half of that money will be used to modernize telehealth and data-sharing efforts.

All 50 states applied to the \$50 billion Rural Health Transformation Program. Congress included it in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, in response to concerns that the bill's Medicaid cuts will hurt rural health providers. Medicaid is a federal-state program that provides health insurance for people with disabilities or low incomes.

According to KFF, federal Medicaid spending in rural areas in South Dakota over the next decade will decrease by a projected \$487 million, due largely to new work requirements in the federal law that will cause some people to lose coverage.

Half of the Rural Health Transformation Program — \$25 billion — will be distributed equally to states with approved applications, regardless of each state's proportion of rural hospitals or population. That means South Dakota will receive at least \$500 million, if approved.

The remaining half will be allocated based on the number of rural residents and rural health facilities in a state, as well as the state's spending plans and policies, among other factors. Applications will be approved by the end of the year.

A key component of South Dakota's application is a \$500 million health infrastructure modernization proposal, which would include creation of a "South Dakota Health Data Atlas." It would allow health care systems throughout the state to access health data in one "single, accessible platform." The atlas would address telecommunications needs, equipment, emergency preparedness and cybersecurity concerns.

"The Rural Data Atlas will enable outcome tracking at the community level, allowing providers and health departments to identify gaps, target interventions and measure impact," the proposal said.

The modernization effort, including grants for providers, would expand health providers' use of electronic health records and telehealth platforms in the state.

About 77% of the state's critical access hospitals are in eastern South Dakota, with western communities facing up to 120 miles one-way to reach care. Because of that, the application focuses heavily on regionalization, prevention, and technology and self-monitoring efforts.

Many efforts "are intended to recognize that real innovation comes from the providers themselves," said Laura Ringling, senior policy adviser for Gov. Larry Rhoden, in an emailed statement.

"The state is not able to dictate every solution that will work in every community, but we can create the conditions that make innovation possible," Ringling said.

South Dakota's application includes the following proposals.

### **Sustainability grants**

\$125 million to fund grants incentivizing South Dakota health care providers to explore regional assessments and partnerships to "strengthen coordination and sustainability." Providers could also use the grants to improve professional and management services that could impact a facility's bottom line.

Such partnerships will "drive sustainable improvements" and "allow hospitals and clinics to coordinate services, offer complementary care, and achieve measurable quality gains and strengthen financial stability," the proposal said.

Ringling told South Dakota Searchlight the grants will allow providers "the flexibility to innovate while still contributing to a more connected statewide system."

## **Emergency Medical Services regionalization**

\$64 million to incentivize the creation of regional emergency medical service hubs to reduce response times and offer professional development and improved technology. The state has already dedicated millions of dollars toward technology upgrades for emergency medical services, and issued a report on emergency medical service sustainability recommendations in recent years.

South Dakota officials hope funding for the effort will improve emergency response times and increase the emergency medical services workforce by 15% over the next two years.

## **New Medicaid payment model**

\$62.6 million to support a new Medicaid payment model that would provide more predictable revenue to health care systems, reward quality and allow facilities to maintain comprehensive services in rural areas of the state.

## **Recruit rural health professionals**

\$62.5 million to provide recruitment incentives, such as sign-on bonuses, relocation assistance and rural service stipends, to remove barriers and make rural health care positions more competitive. The program would include five-year sign-on commitments for the incentives and expand apprenticeship programs. State officials hope to recruit 500 rural professionals by 2030.

## **Certified community behavioral health clinics**

South Dakota does not have any certified community behavioral health clinics in the state, which provide mental health and substance use services to anyone who seeks them, regardless of insurance or their ability to pay.

Using \$56.4 million, the state would establish at least one health clinic in each of the state's behavioral health regions to improve access to care statewide. The initiative would also establish one mobile crisis team and one crisis stabilization facility per region to reduce emergency room visits and jail holds.

## **Chronic disease management**

\$45 million to improve chronic disease management across the state. That would include funding rural health care providers, pharmacies and schools to implement chronic disease management and interventions. It would also include improving remote patient monitoring technology use, such as implementing a blood pressure monitoring program and management workshops throughout the state, and offering more resources and support to caregivers in the state.

## **Establish regional maternal and infant health hubs**

\$24 million to analyze maternal health gaps — service shortages, social services and supports, workforce needs, and regulatory and payment barriers — and then fund three health care entities to create regional maternal health hubs. The hubs would use a combination of telehealth and remote monitoring technologies in addition to in-person visits to address transportation and accessibility issues in rural and tribal areas of the state.

## **Create a health care training and resource hub**

\$4.7 million to provide physicians, nurses, community health workers, emergency medical service providers, doulas and other health care workers with online training and events. Some training would be specific to rural needs — including behavioral health, telehealth, chronic disease prevention, and maternal and child health.

## Strengthen community health worker numbers

\$3.5 million to support the growth of community health workers in the state's health care system, including helping with Medicaid claims and creating Medicare billing pathways for the providers. South Dakota has 180 certified community health workers, who help patients navigate health care systems due to language or cultural barriers, and the state hopes to increase that to 300 by 2030.

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

## Trump administration to mostly pay full SNAP benefits 'within 24 hours' of shutdown end

BY: JACOB FISCHLER

The Trump administration will release full benefits for most participants in the nation's major federal nutrition program within 24 hours of the reopening of the federal government, a U.S. Department of Agriculture spokesperson said Wednesday.

Many of the roughly 42 million Americans who rely on USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, to help afford groceries have faced uncertainty for weeks about their November benefits, which President Donald Trump and other top administration officials said could not be paid while the government was shut down.

A USDA spokesperson answered an afternoon email from States Newsroom inquiring about when benefits would restart with a single sentence:

"Upon the government reopening, within 24 hours for most States," the spokesperson wrote.

Politico first reported the department's 24-hour timeline.

While the federal government funds SNAP benefits, states are responsible for their administration, meaning an array of different processes across the country.

The U.S. House was set to vote Wednesday evening to clear a bill to reopen the government after a record 43-day shutdown, after the Senate acted earlier this week. Trump is expected to sign it into law as early as Wednesday night.

The enactment of the bill — and the subsequent renewal of federal payments — would resolve a dizzying weeklong saga over SNAP that placed the roughly 1 in 8 Americans who use the program in the middle of a political and legal battle playing out across every level of the federal judiciary.

Since the shutdown began Oct. 1, the USDA has reversed its own position, the U.S. Supreme Court paused lower court orders and Trump himself expressed contradicting views.

In the most recent chapter, USDA said it would authorize states to pay 65% of benefits for November, and the Supreme Court paused until Thursday night lower court orders compelling full payments.

The department had previously told a Rhode Island federal court it could take weeks or even months for beneficiaries to receive the partial allotments and the administration continued to fight rulings to immediately release full funding, even as the shutdown crept toward its conclusion.

*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.*

## South Dakota governor seeks applicants for parole board

BY: JOHN HULT

South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden is looking for parole board applicants.

Rhoden needs to appoint a replacement for Ken Albers, the former Lincoln County sheriff, state lawmaker and 15-year parole board member who announced his retirement from the board last week.

Had he stayed, the governor could have reappointed him to another four-year term on the nine-member board in January.

Albers was one of three members appointed through the governor's office. The attorney general's office chooses three members, as does the chief justice of the state Supreme Court.

Appointments require the advice and consent of the state Senate.

To be considered for the board, a candidate must be a resident of South Dakota.

The board meets for one week each month to decide on parole, and to make recommendations to the governor for commutations or pardons.

A press release from Rhoden's office says anyone interested in the position can reach out to Katie Hruska at [katie.hruska@state.sd.us](mailto:katie.hruska@state.sd.us). The deadline for applications is Nov. 21.

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

## US House Dems say newly released Epstein emails show Trump knew about abuse

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — U.S. House Democrats investigating the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein released emails Wednesday they say show President Donald Trump knew about the financier's abuse of underage girls as far back as 2011.

The three emails released by Democrats on the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform were among 23,000 pages of documents turned over to the committee by Epstein's estate, according to Democrats.

In a 2011 correspondence with the now-convicted sex offender Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein wrote that Trump "spent hours at my house" with a victim whose name is redacted from the email. In the same email, Epstein refers to Trump as the "dog that hasn't barked."

In a 2015 email exchange between Epstein and journalist Michael Wolff, Wolff tells Epstein that he's heard CNN will ask Trump about his relationship with the financier. The two have an exchange about how to hypothetically "craft an answer" for Trump.

Wolff responds, "If he says he hasn't been on the plane or to the house, then that gives you a valuable (public relations) and political currency."

In a January 2019 email, also to Wolff, Epstein referenced a victim's name, redacted, as having been at Trump's Florida estate and private club, Mar-a-Lago, and wrote "Trump said he asked me to resign, never a member ever. Of course he knew about the girls as he asked ghislaine to stop."

Trump has said he had a falling out with Epstein and kicked him out of his club over allegations Epstein poached young women workers from the club's spa.

### Emails raise more questions, leading Dem says

House Oversight Committee Ranking Member Robert Garcia said in a statement Wednesday the emails "raise glaring questions about what else the White House is hiding and the nature of the relationship between Epstein and the President."

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"The Department of Justice must fully release the Epstein files to the public immediately. The Oversight Committee will continue pushing for answers and will not stop until we get justice for the victims," Garcia continued.

Within hours of the committee Democrats' release of the emails, committee Republican leaders issued a brief press release linking to "an additional 20,000 pages of documents received from the estate of Jeffrey Epstein" contained on Google Drive and Dropbox clouds.

During Wednesday's press briefing, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said, "These emails prove absolutely nothing other than the fact that President Trump did nothing wrong."

Leavitt added that Trump and Epstein both lived in Palm Beach, Florida.

"Jeffrey Epstein was a member at Mar a Lago until President Trump kicked him out because Jeffrey Epstein was a pedophile and he was a creep," she said.

## Congress investigates after FBI backtracks

The bipartisan committee investigation began shortly after the FBI released a July memo stating the Department of Justice would not be releasing any further information on the government's sex trafficking investigation into Epstein.

Epstein was found dead, apparently by suicide, in August 2019 in a Manhattan jail cell where he was awaiting federal trial.

The FBI's announcement that the agency would not release further details caused a firestorm of demands to release all investigative material, even among Trump's supporters in Congress and far-right media influencers, including Megyn Kelly and the late Charlie Kirk.

Trump campaigned on releasing what are often referred to as the "Epstein files."

A bipartisan effort in the House of Representatives is aiming to force a vote on the release of the files as soon as this week after House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., swears in Arizona Democrat Adelita Grijalva.

Grijalva has pledged to be the final signature needed on a discharge petition by Reps. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., and Ro Khanna, D-Calif., that will compel a floor vote on a bill to release all Epstein investigation files.

Massie and Khanna hosted a press conference on Capitol Hill in early September featuring several women who told stories of abuse by Epstein and Maxwell.

Since the FBI memo, a magnifying glass has been fixed on Trump's past relationship with Epstein.

The president sued The Wall Street Journal for reporting on a 50th birthday card Trump allegedly gave to Epstein. The card featured a cryptic message and a doodle of a naked woman with Trump's apparent signature mimicking pubic hair.

The Journal also reported that Attorney General Pam Bondi briefed the president in May that his name appeared in the Epstein case files. The context in which his name appeared is unclear.

Trump has denied the reports.

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

## States hope to use rural health money to keep doctors, combat chronic disease

**Rural leaders say the infusion of federal dollars is welcome — but isn't enough to offset Medicaid cuts**

**BY: NADA HASSANEIN**

In their competition for rural health care dollars from a new federal fund, states are seeking money to bolster emergency services, address chronic diseases, and recruit and train more doctors and nurses.

All 50 states submitted their applications to the federal government last week to get shares of the \$50

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billion Rural Health Transformation Program.

Congress created the program in response to concern from rural health care providers — as well as lawmakers on both sides of the aisle — about the effects of Medicaid cuts in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act that President Donald Trump signed this summer.

A Stateline analysis of 10 states' proposals to the Rural Health Transformation Program found common focus areas, including expanding mobile health care access and bolstering emergency medical services. States also focused on chronic disease prevention programs, technological advancements and rural clinician recruitment.

Stateline examined proposals from states that had large rural populations or had released their proposals. Missouri, North Carolina and Oklahoma are among a dozen states that have expanded Medicaid and would be hardest hit by rural Medicaid cuts — each seeing at least \$4.5 billion in reductions over 10 years. The other states whose proposals were examined are: Colorado, Maryland, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Dakota, Washington state and West Virginia.

Rural health care leaders told Stateline that states had to rush to develop the pitches. After the official funding notice was announced by the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), states had about seven weeks to put together their applications. Many held listening sessions with hospitals, clinics and community members, and opened public comment periods to help inform priorities. Others created advisory or working groups.

State officials and medical groups said the federal infusion of money is welcome, but isn't enough to offset billions in Medicaid losses, and won't be a magic bullet to solve a structural problem: a health care payment system that favors patient volume and doesn't work for sparsely populated rural America. The new law cuts \$911 billion from Medicaid over the next decade — with rural communities slated to lose about \$137 billion, according to health policy research group KFF. The new rural health program could offset just over a third of cuts in rural areas, KFF estimates.

"It's going to be a Band-Aid," Toniann Richard, CEO of HCC Network, which runs six Missouri rural community health clinics, said about the grants. "How do we make sure that it's not just a one-time Band-Aid — that it's maybe a waterproof Band-Aid?"

More than 700 hospitals — roughly a third of rural U.S. hospitals — are at risk of closing because of financial problems, while rural labor and delivery units struggle to stay open and residents grapple with higher rates of chronic illness but live far from care.

Half of the Rural Health Transformation Program — \$25 billion — will be distributed equally to states with approved applications, regardless of each state's proportion of rural hospitals or population. The remaining half will be allocated by CMS based on the number of rural residents and rural health facilities in a state, as well as the state's spending plans and policies, among other factors. CMS said it will decide on applications by the end of the year.

## **From mental health to tech innovation**

CMS outlined priorities for the program, with each state developing its own approach to fulfilling them. Those include technological improvements, an expanded and sustainable workforce, new ways of coordinating care and chronic disease prevention. Rural residents are more likely to die early from conditions such as heart disease. Some states proposed new screening or telehealth initiatives for those conditions.

Helping rural areas keep clinicians also was a focus across the grant proposals. Several states said they would use funds to expand rural residencies and apprenticeships for medical school graduates to try to draw more providers to their areas.

Every rural and low-population Colorado county contains areas considered EMS deserts, the state said, proposing \$45 million to \$55 million over the next five years to expand rural EMS.

Colorado and other states proposed increasing remote patient monitoring for rural patients living far from care. That's a form of telehealth that helps doctors track patients' health while they're at home, such as through devices to monitor weight, blood pressure or blood sugar levels that send results digitally to

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clinicians. Doctors can then monitor for unmanaged blood sugar or sudden weight gain and discuss a plan with patients without “forcing folks to have to drive into the clinic,” said Michelle Mills, CEO of the Colorado Rural Health Center, the state’s nonprofit rural health office.

Overdose and suicide rates are often higher in rural communities; behavioral and mental health were addressed in several state applications.

West Virginia has the highest rate of opioid overdose deaths. The state released a grant proposal summary that has little information on mental health and drug use initiatives, but says addiction treatment would be “enhanced” to support a “drug-free workforce.”

North Carolina said it would grow community mental health clinics and integrate behavioral health within “regional care networks.” Colorado, New Mexico, North Dakota and Washington also proposed initiatives focused on rural behavioral health care access or suicide prevention.

New Mexico proposed establishing a grant program that would allow rural communities to apply for and create pilot projects tailored to their own specific needs, and a program for specialists to consult with each other across the state. The state also proposed \$363 million toward specialty care and chronic disease management for high-risk rural groups, including planning regionalized “specialty and maternal care networks.”

West Virginia said it would create a new rural transportation system that would fund rideshare and other transportation services, as well as coordinate with EMS and hospitals to more efficiently transport rural patients to care.

States are also taking varied approaches on how they would split the funds or connect care among regions. For example, Missouri and North Carolina would divide states into regional rural “hubs,” to target different communities’ needs. Missouri would integrate rural clinics, pharmacies and public health agencies by coordinating care for patients and sharing data.

Heidi Lucas, executive director of the Missouri Rural Health Association, advised the state on its application. One advantage of that regional model, she said, is that it allows low-income community health centers — also called federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) — to take the lead in specific regions that don’t have hospitals.

“In the southeast corner of the state, we’ve had multiple hospital closures, and so there, the FQHC is the only provider,” Lucas said.

“We’ve been screaming for decades about the need for money just like this to come in — but it’s under the cloud of all of the other cuts that are coming, potentially with Medicaid. ... Knowing that that freight train is coming at us over the next decade,” she continued.

Oklahoma hasn’t provided details about its application. But Rich Rasmussen, president of the Oklahoma Hospital Association, said his team likewise proposed the state create a network of regional rural hospital hubs, through which hospitals could apply for resources. Each hub would have funding pools that could help pay for a range of services, from help for indigent patients to data services and workforce support.

North Dakota’s application said nearly 75% of its rural counties lack enough primary care clinicians. The state proposed retention and recruitment grants meant to incentivize practitioners to stay in rural areas, expanding rural housing and rotations for clinicians in training, and offering on-site child care at rural health facilities. It also aims to target maternal health care deserts by training EMS workers to better respond to rural maternal health emergencies.

New Mexico, North Dakota and Washington proposed specific initiatives to support rural tribal communities. For example, North Dakota wants to revamp electronic health records systems in tribal communities, as many rural, underfunded tribal health facilities use outdated systems that make it harder to transfer and access patient records.

Democratic state Rep. Jayme Davis is a member of the state’s Rural Health Transformation Committee, a group of lawmakers that recommended draftstate legislation based on the grant application. She said she helped advocate for tribal communities’ needs. Native people make up about 5% of North Dakota’s population.

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"I have an elderly parent and aunts and uncles, and going to Fargo is a strain on them," she said of her family, who live in Rolette, 3 1/2 hours from Fargo.

Maryland's plan is divided into three initiatives: recruiting and training new rural health providers and students; creating more sustainable ways for patients to access care, such as mobile health care units dedicated to each rural region; and nutrition and food programs that connect local farm harvests with rural hunger "hot spots."

## Hospitals' concerns

Health care officials in several states said they worry that the new program will not be enough to offset looming Medicaid cuts.

In Oklahoma, about 63% of rural hospitals are at risk of closure, and more than a quarter are at immediate risk. Ahead of the grant application, the state's hospital association provided financial vulnerability assessments of the hospitals to help inform the state's application priorities.

Rasmussen, of the Oklahoma hospital association, said one of his biggest concerns is the new law's decrease of state-directed payment programs have helped struggling hospitals offset low reimbursement rates.

"It's the rural hospitals that took the cuts by Congress," he said, noting that over the next decade, Oklahoma would lose \$6.7 billion due to Medicaid cuts. "Whatever our state receives is not going to come anywhere close to offsetting those costs."

The rural grant program restricts how awarded funds can be spent. Dollars allocated to states must be used for specific purposes, meaning states cannot dole out direct funds to rural hospitals or rural clinics. For example, funds can't be used for new construction and services already reimbursable by programs such as Medicaid.

CMS has also put limits on how much can be used for each approved purpose. There is a 15% cap on how much of the award can go directly to providers.

"That cap is fairly low from a lot of folks' perspective," said Carrie Cochran-McClain, chief policy officer of the National Rural Health Association, which represents rural health care providers. "It is in no way direct payments to rural hospitals or rural clinics, and it's not even necessarily a guarantee in every state that those entities will be receiving funding, although I would hope so, given the general intent of the program."

Weatherford Regional Hospital in western Oklahoma is the only critical access hospital still delivering babies in the state, according to the Oklahoma Hospital Association.

"For our hospital, we barely make a profit," said Darin Farrell, president and CEO of the hospital, who added that he worries his facility won't be able to maintain obstetrics after Medicaid cuts down the line. "If they don't put something else to fill the gap of those cuts that are coming, then we're all going to have to decide what services are the most vital."

In West Virginia, more than half of the population lives in a rural area and about a dozen rural hospitals are at risk of closure, according to a report by the Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform. Jim Kaufman, president and CEO of the West Virginia Hospital Association, which met with Republican Gov. Patrick Morrisey's office to provide feedback ahead of the application deadline, said the fund will not be enough to offset Medicaid cuts.

"We're estimating we're going to lose more than a billion dollars once all the cuts are fully implemented, just from the hospitals in West Virginia," he said. "So while this rural health application does provide some opportunity to look at transforming rural health care, it will not replace the dollars that the hospitals are losing alone."

*Stateline reporter Nada Hassanein can be reached at [nhassanein@stateline.org](mailto:nhassanein@stateline.org).*

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

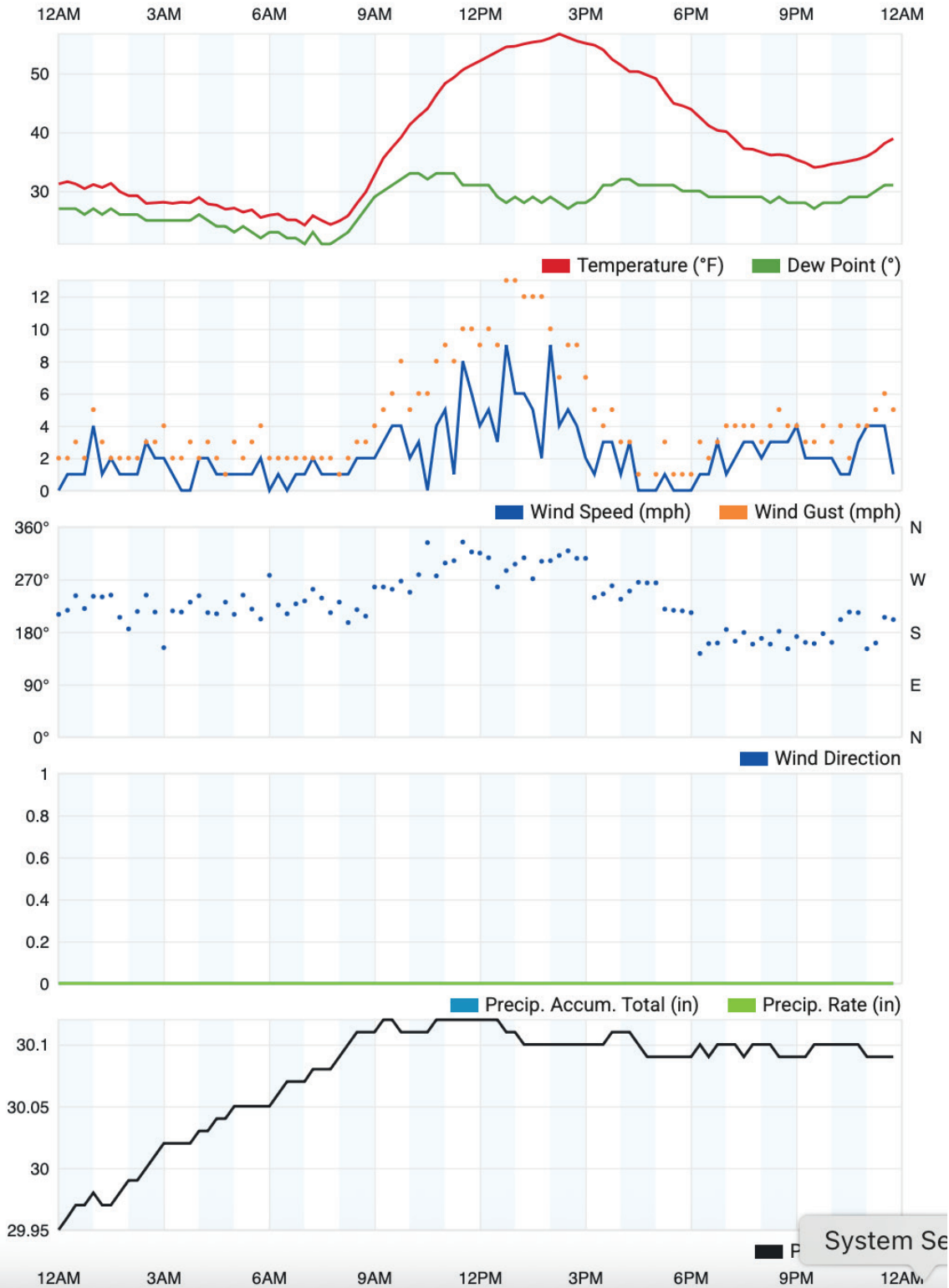
*Nada Hassanein is a health care reporter for Stateline with a focus on inequities.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

November 12, 2025



System Se

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Today



High: 58 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 34 °F

Mostly Clear

Friday



High: 66 °F

Mostly Sunny

Friday Night



Low: 38 °F

Mostly Cloudy

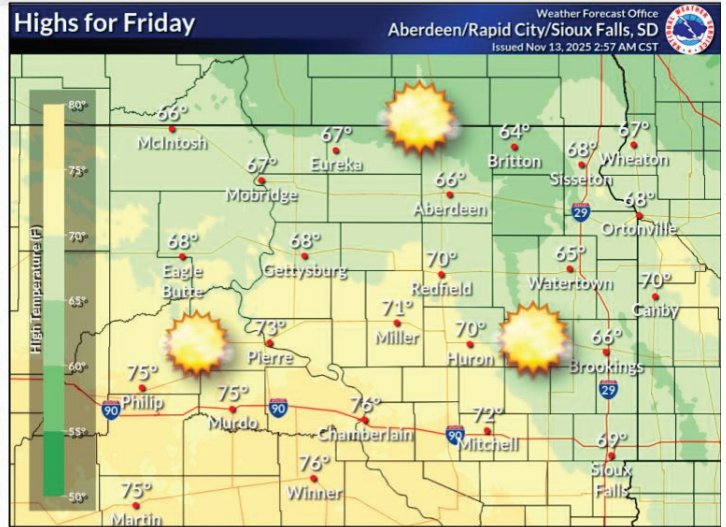
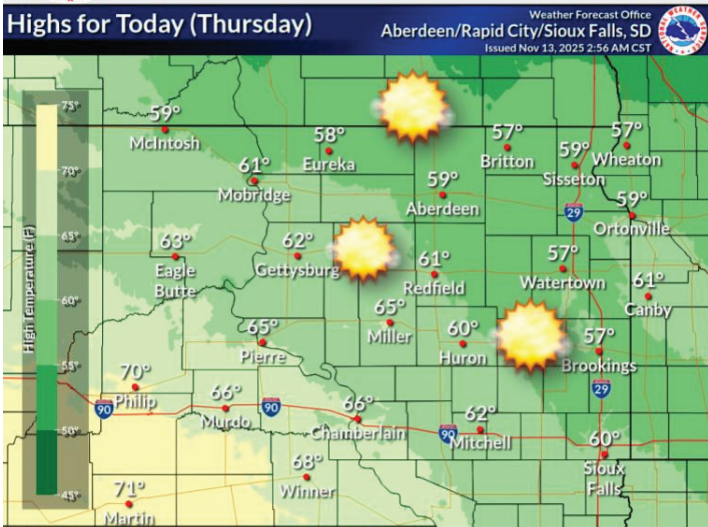
Saturday



High: 48 °F

Mostly Sunny

## Warm Temperatures Through Friday November 13, 2025 3:06 AM



- Above normal temperatures through the end of the week
- **Near record to record highs possible Friday!**



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Overall sunny and dry today and Friday with temperatures above average for this time of year, as much as 20 to 30 degrees above average Friday! Near record to record highs are possible.

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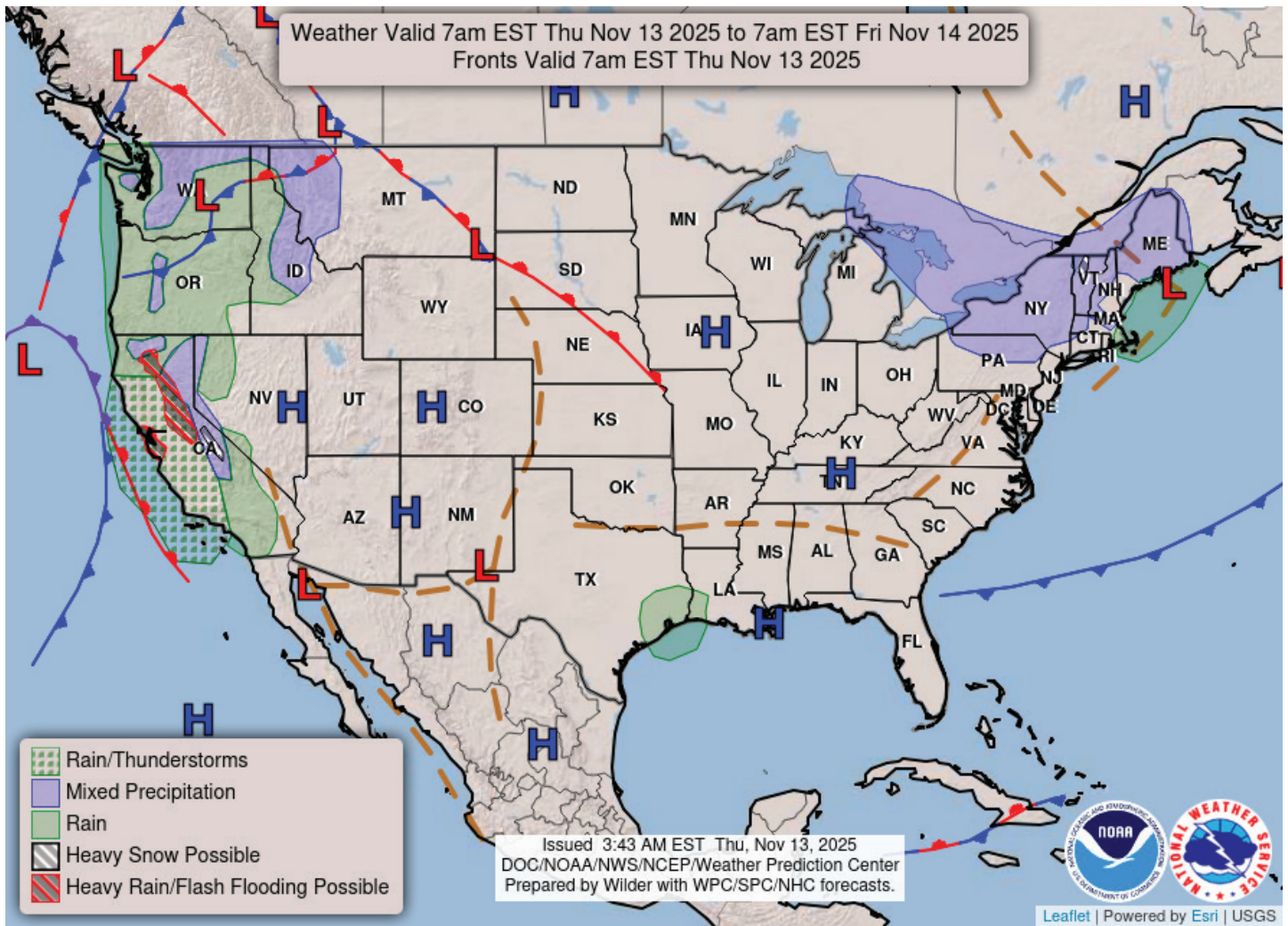
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 57 °F at 2:12 PM**  
**Low Temp: 24 °F at 7:50 AM**  
**Wind: 14 mph at 12:52 PM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

## Today's Info

Record High: 71 in 2016  
Record Low: -11 in 1919  
Average High: 44  
Average Low: 20  
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.38  
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00  
Average Precip to date: 20.85  
Precip Year to Date: 23.51  
Sunset Tonight: 5:04 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:30 am



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## Today in Weather History

November 13, 1985: Snowfall of 4 to 8 inches spread from the southwest part of South Dakota on the morning of the 13th to the northeast part of the state by early morning on the 14th. Winds gusted to 35 mph in the western half of the state and produced considerable blowing and drifting snow, which significantly reduced visibilities. The snowfall caused many accidents, including a four-vehicle pileup that occurred three miles east of De Smet in Kingsbury County, during the afternoon of the 13th. Some snowfall amounts include; 7.0 inches in Britton; 5.5 inches in Timber Lake and 5.0 inches in Leola.

1833: In 1833, observers were familiar with the Leonid meteor shower, but the event that year was very intense and leads to the first formulation of a theory on the origin of meteors. By some estimates, the 1833 Leonid meteor shower had 240,000 meteors in a nine-hour period.

1933 - The first dust storm of the great dust bowl era of the 1930s occurred. The dust storm, which had spread from Montana to the Ohio Valley the day before, prevailed from Georgia to Maine resulting in a black rain over New York and a brown snow in Vermont. Parts of South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa reported zero visibility on the 12th. On the 13th, dust reduced the visibility to half a mile in Tennessee. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1946: General Electric scientists produced snow in the Massachusetts Berkshires in the first modern-day cloud seeding experiment. Scientist Vincent Schaefer dropped six pounds of dry ice pellets into a cloud over Pittsfield, MA. The cloud seeding experiment produced snowfall, as a 4-mile long cloud was converted into snow flurries. The success of the experiment became the basis of many weather modification projects.

1953 - Strong southeasterly winds associated with a Pacific cold front reached 70 mph at Sacramento CA to equal their all-time record. The previous record had been established in a similar weather pattern on December 12th of the previous year. (The Weather Channel)

1981 - A powerful cyclone brought high winds to Washington State and Oregon. The cyclone, which formed about 1000 miles west of San Francisco, intensified rapidly as it approached the Oregon coast with the central pressure reaching 28.22 inches (956 millibars). A wind trace from the Whiskey Run Turbine Site, about 12 miles south of Coos Bay in Oregon, showed peak gusts to 97 mph fifty feet above ground level. The wind caused widespread damage in Washington and Oregon, with 12 deaths reported. As much as four feet of snow fell in the Sierra Nevada Range of northern California. (Storm Data)

1987 - A storm moving off the Pacific Ocean produced rain and gale force winds along the northern and central Pacific coast, and heavy snow in the Cascade Mountains. Cold weather prevailed in the southeastern U.S. Five cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Asheville NC with a reading of 21 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Low pressure brought rain and snow and gusty winds to the northeastern U.S. A thunderstorm drenched Agawam MA with 1.25 inches of rain in fifteen minutes. Winds gusted to 58 mph at Nantucket MA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thirty-two cities in the central and eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings warmed into the 70s as far north as Michigan and Pennsylvania. Afternoon highs in the 80s were reported from the Southern Plains to the southern Atlantic coast. Columbia SC reported a record high of 86 degrees, and the high of 71 degrees at Flint MI was their warmest of record for so late in the season. (The National Weather Summary)



## The Key to Hearing God

**To hear the Lord speak to you, dedicate time to meditating on His Word.**

Psalms 19:7-14

Meditation means different things to different people. For some, it is a time of introspection and self-empowerment. To Christians, however, meditation has an altogether different meaning. Simply put, it is the practice of thinking about God in all of His fullness and asking questions like ...

Who is God?

How does He work in my life?

What does Scripture say about Him?

How has He shown faithfulness to me?

When we meditate on God's Word with a goal of knowing Him better, His Spirit will direct our thinking. Often, the discipline will include wrestling with spiritual principles, which the Lord uses to build a firm foundation in our life. It may even involve a time of repentance, as He reveals truth and moves us to yearn for a Christ-centered mindset (Romans 12:1-2). Meditation could also lead to healing if God shows us areas of our heart that need addressing.

This week, take some time to sit quietly or take a walk, and dedicate those moments to focusing your attention on God. Let Him speak to you. Giving yourself over to His presence will likely be a rewarding break in your routine.

*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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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.11.25

10 13 40 42 46 1

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$965,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 0 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.12.25

9 30 31 34 39 2

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$7,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 15 Mins 0 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.12.25

20 28 30 33 44 15

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 30 Mins 0 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.12.25

3 7 14 22 26

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$83,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 30 Mins 0 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.12.25

7 31 32 39 65 11

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 59 Mins 0 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.12.25

29 39 43 51 65 23

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$546,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 59 Mins 1 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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

### **Simpkins and Shelstad combine for 42 points, Oregon beats South Dakota State 83-69**

EUGENE, Ore. (AP) — Jackson Shelstad scored 22 points, Takai Simpkins added 20 and Oregon made 15 3-pointers in an 83-69 victory over South Dakota State on Wednesday night.

Nate Bittle also had a double-double with 14 points and 10 rebounds for Oregon (3-0), which never trailed in the second half.

The Ducks shot 45% (28 of 62) overall and 15 of 40 (37.5%) from beyond the arc.

Luke Haertle scored seven points that included a 3-pointer and Caleb Delzel and Jaden Jackson each hit 3s during a 13-3 run to pull South Dakota State to 59-58 with 9:30 remaining. Kwame Evans Jr., Shelstad and Simpkins each answered with a 3 to make it 70-63 and Oregon cruised from there.

Shelstad was 8 of 19 from the floor, 4 of 13 from long range and had eight assists. Simpkins was 6-of-11 shooting and made 5 of his 10 3-point shots.

Haertle and Joe Saylor scored 14 points apiece to lead South Dakota State (2-2). Kalen Garry made three 3s and finished with 13 points.

Oregon took the lead for good about seven minutes in and led 40-34 at the break. Simpkins made three 3s and scored 12 points to pace the Ducks. Saylor and Gary each scored eight first-half points for the Jackrabbits.

On Monday, the Ducks conclude their four-game homestand against Oregon State while South Dakota State hosts Peru State.

### **Bruns scores 18 as South Dakota defeats Southern Indiana 89-74**

By The Associated Press undefined

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Isaac Bruns scored 18 points as South Dakota beat Southern Indiana 89-74 on Wednesday.

Bruns had seven rebounds for the Coyotes (2-2). Shey Eberwein shot 6 of 9 from the field and 6 for 8 from the line to add 18 points. Cameron Fens shot 2 of 7 from the field and 8 of 9 from the free-throw line to finish with 12 points.

The Screaming Eagles (0-3) were led by Ismail Habib, who posted 19 points and two steals. Southern Indiana also got 18 points from Kaden Brown. Cardell Bailey also had 10 points and eight rebounds.

### **Tribes that restored buffalo are killing some to feed people because of the shutdown**

By MATTHEW BROWN and GRAHAM LEE BREWER of The Associated Press and AMELIA SCHAFER of ICT undefined

WOLF POINT, Mont. (AP) — On the open plains of the Fort Peck Reservation, Robert Magnan leaned out the window of his truck, set a rifle against the door frame and then “pop!” — a bison tumbled dead in its tracks.

Magnan and a co-worker shot two more bison, also known as buffalo, and quickly field dressed the animals before carting them off for processing into ground beef and cuts of meat for distribution to members of the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes in northern Montana.

As lawmakers in Washington, D.C., plodded toward resolving the record government shutdown that interrupted food aid for tens of millions of people, tribal leaders on rural reservations across the Great Plains were culling their cherished bison herds to help fill the gap.

About one-third of Fort Peck’s tribal members on the reservation depend on monthly benefit checks,

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Chairman Floyd Azure said. That's almost triple the rate for the U.S. as a whole. They've received only partial payments in November after President Donald Trump's administration choked off funds to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program during the shutdown.

Fort Peck officials say they anticipated such a moment years ago, when they were bolstering their herd with animals from Yellowstone National Park over objections from cattle ranchers worried about animal disease.

"We were bringing it up with the tribal council: What would happen if the government went bankrupt? How would we feed the people?" said Magnan, the longtime steward of Fort Peck's bison herds. "It shows we still need buffalo."

## Treaty obligations

In October, the tribal government authorized killing 30 bison — about 12,000 pounds (5,440 kilograms) of meat. Half had been shot by Tuesday. A pending deal to end the shutdown comes too late for the rest, Magnan said. With Montana among the states that dispersed only partial SNAP payments, Azure said Fort Peck will keep handing out buffalo meat for the time being.

Tribes including the Blackfeet, the Lower Brule Sioux, the Cheyenne River Sioux and the Crow have done the same in response to Washington's dysfunction: feeding thousands of people with bison from herds restored over recent decades after the animals were hunted to near extinction in the 1800s.

Food and nutrition assistance programs are part of the federal government's trust and treaty responsibilities — its legal and moral obligations to fund tribes' health and well-being in exchange for land and resources the U.S. took from tribes.

"It's the obligation they incurred when they took our lands, when they stole our lands, when they cheated us out of our lands," said Mark Macarro, president of the National Congress of American Indians. "It lacks humanity to do this with SNAP, with food."

Fort Peck tribal members Miki Astogo and Dillon Jackson-Fisher, who are unemployed, said they borrowed food from Jackson-Fisher's mother in recent weeks after SNAP payments didn't come through. On Sunday they got a partial payment — about \$196 instead of the usual \$298 per month — Agosto said.

With four children to feed, the couple said the money won't last. So they walked 4 miles (6.4 kilometers) into town on Monday to pick up a box of food from the tribes that included 2 pounds (0.9 kilograms) of bison.

"Our vehicle's in the shop, but we have to put food on the table before we pay for the car, you know?" Jackson-Fisher said.

## Moose in Maine, deer in Oklahoma

Native American communities elsewhere in the U.S. also are tapping into natural resources to make up for lost federal aid. Members of the Mi'kmaq Nation in Maine stocked a food bank with trout from their hatchery and locally hunted moose meat. In southeastern Oklahoma, the Comanche Nation is accepting deer meat for food banks. And in the southwestern part of the state, the Choctaw Nation set up three meat processing facilities.

Another program that provides food to eligible Native American households, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, has continued through the shutdown.

Mi'kmaq is among the tribes that don't have the program, though the tribe is eligible. The Mi'kmaq also get funding for food pantries through the federal Emergency Food Assistance Program, but that money, too, was tied up by the shutdown, tribal Chief Sheila McCormack said.

Roughly 80% of Mi'kmaq tribal members in Aroostook County are SNAP recipients, said Kandi Sock, the tribe's community services director.

"We have reached out for some extra donations; our farm came through with that, but it will not last long," Sock said.

## The demise of bison, onset of starvation

Buffalo played a central role for Plains tribes for centuries, providing meat for food and hides for clothing and shelter.

That came to an abrupt end when white "hide hunters" arrived in 1879 in the Upper Missouri River basin

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around Fort Peck, which had some of the last vestiges of herds that once numbered millions of animals, Assiniboine historian Dennis Smith said. By 1883 the animals were virtually exterminated, said Smith, a retired University of Nebraska-Omaha history professor.

With no way to feed themselves and the government denying them food, the buffalo's demise heralded a time of starvation for the Assiniboine, he said. Many other Plains tribes also suffered hardship.

Hundreds of miles to the west of Fort Peck, the Blackfeet Nation killed 18 buffalo from its herd and held a special elk harvest to distribute meat to tribal members. The tribe already gave out buffalo meat periodically to elders, the sick and for ceremonies and social functions. But it's never killed so many of the 700 animals at once.

"We can't do that many all the time. We don't want to deplete the resource," said Ervin Carlson, who runs the Blackfeet buffalo program.

In South Dakota, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe has distributed meat from about 20 of its buffalo. The tribe worked to build its capacity to feed people since experiencing shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic. It now has a meat processing plant that can handle 25 to 30 animals a week, said Jayme Murray with the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Buffalo Authority Corp. Tribes from Minnesota to Montana have asked to use the plant, but they've had to turn some down, Murray said.

A former 'food desert' leans on its own herds

The Lower Brule Sioux Tribe in central South Dakota recently got its first full-fledged grocery store, ending its decades-long status as a "food desert" where people had to drive 100 miles (160 kilometers) round trip for groceries. The interruption to SNAP benefits stoked panic, tribal treasurer and secretary Marty Jandreau said.

Benefits for November were reduced to 65% of the usual amount.

But the Lower Brule have buffalo, cattle and elk in abundance across more than 9 square miles (25 square kilometers). On Sunday, the tribe gave away more than 400 pounds (180 kilograms) of meat to more than 100 tribal members, council members said.

"It makes me feel very proud that we have things we can give back," tribal council member Marlo Langdeau said.

## 50-year mortgages? NFL kickoff rules? Here's where some of Trump's latest jaw-dropping musings stand

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump loves offering outlandish ideas and then repeating them until they start to become mainstream — even if they don't always come to fruition.

Some notions that once felt far-fetched are now the norm, like insisting his government has a Department of War, imposing global tariffs at rates unseen since the Gilded Age and pardoning members of the mob that overran the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

But other musings force him to find ways to save face without keeping his word. And many disappear as simply unworkable.

A look at the latest round of Trump's especially jaw-dropping recent statements and where they stand: 50-year mortgages

WHERE IT STANDS: Still talking about it.

BACKSTORY: Trump posted on his social media site an image of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt under the heading "30-Year Mortgage" alongside one of himself under a "50-Year Mortgage" title. Bill Pulte, director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, posted that longer mortgages would be "a complete game changer," while the White House says it could ease housing affordability pressures. Extending loan terms by two decades would lower monthly payments, but it'd also leave mortgage-holders waiting significantly longer to build home equity. After the idea was panned by economists and even some in the GOP, Trump tried to downplay his own suggestion. "All it means is you pay less per month," he told Fox News' "The Ingraham Angle." White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt nonetheless said Wednesday that Trump's

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economic advisers are "seriously looking into" proposals to make it happen.

Tariff revenue checks

WHERE IT STANDS: Still talking about it.

BACKSTORY: Trump suggested online that the tariffs he's imposed could result in "a dividend of at least \$2000 a person (not including high income people!)." Experts scoff at the idea, noting that American consumers already are stuck paying high import levies passed onto them by exporters. Even Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has since said the idea may not mean Americans get a check. The administration has collected more than \$225 billion in tariff revenue, short of what it would cost to cover so many \$2,000 checks, no matter how it defines "high income people." Still, Leavitt said the White House "is committed to making" revenue checks a reality.

Air traffic controller bonuses

WHERE IT STANDS: In limbo.

BACKSTORY: Trump floated the idea of sending \$10,000 bonus checks to air traffic controllers who stayed on the job without pay during the government shutdown. But when asked how he'd pay for it on "The Ingraham Angle," the president replied, "I don't know" before adding, "I always get the money from someplace, regardless. It doesn't matter."

Death penalty in DC

WHERE IT STANDS: Faded away.

BACKSTORY: Trump issued a September statement directing "the enforcement of death penalty laws in the District of Columbia." That followed earlier suggestions that those convicted of murder in Washington should be put to death. But the D.C. City Council repealed capital punishment starting in 1981. In a Congress-mandated referendum 11 years later, city voters rejected reinstating the death penalty. The U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia and Justice Department report to Trump, but most crimes committed in Washington, even murder, don't qualify as federal offenses.

Creating a US sovereign wealth fund

WHERE IT STANDS: Political off-ramp found.

BACKSTORY: Trump signed a February executive order directing his administration to develop a plan to create a government-owned investment fund. Sovereign wealth funds are typically state-run investment pools derived from surpluses generated by oil wealth in places like Saudi Arabia and Norway. The U.S. has no surplus funds, though, and instead runs up towering budget deficits that have grown since Trump took office. As a workaround, the government has been directing funding to acquire stakes in firms like U.S. Steel, Intel and mineral and rare earth companies — moves the Trump administration says have national security implications — without necessitating declaring a more formal investment pool of money.

Changing NFL kickoff rules

WHERE IT STANDS: Still talking about it — but maybe resigned to it not changing.

BACKSTORY: Trump hates the dynamic kickoff, which has placed coverage players and blockers close together to eliminate injury-inducing, high-speed collisions. "I think it's so demeaning, and I think it hurts the game. I think it hurts the pageantry," Trump told ESPN's Pat McAfee, repeating a complaint he's expressed numerous times. He called the rule change "unromantic" and "demeaning," while suggesting to McAfee, "I don't think they have the right to do that to the game." But Trump also noted that the NFL will "do what they want to do" and admitted: "I don't think they'll change."

Changing the Commanders' name/naming their new stadium after him

WHERE IT STANDS: Still talking about it.

BACKSTORY: The White House said recently that it'd be "beautiful" to name the Washington Commanders' new stadium for Trump — an idea the team hasn't endorsed. The president also has decried the name "Commanders," suggesting Washington's NFL team should return to being called the Redskins, a name that was considered offensive to Native Americans. Trump previously suggested he'd look to block construction of a new Commanders stadium unless the team went back to its old name, and he's not said if a venue named for him might change his mind.

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Suspending habeas corpus

WHERE IT STANDS: Faded away.

BACKSTORY: White House deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller said in May that the administration was "actively looking at" suspending habeas corpus in an effort to speed up deportations. But asked about it during an October event with right-wing influencers, Trump was nonplussed, offering only, "Suspending who?" He then punted to Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who said she hadn't "been a part of any discussions on that."

US retaking Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan

WHERE IT STANDS: In limbo.

BACKSTORY: Trump suggested in September, "We're trying to get it back," seemingly hinting that the U.S. might renew hostilities with the Taliban to take back Bagram. He subsequently posted online that if the Taliban didn't give back what was once the largest U.S. military hub in Afghanistan: "BAD THINGS ARE GOING TO HAPPEN!!!" The Taliban has rejected that idea, suggesting instead that the U.S. adopt a policy of "realism and rationality."

Arrests for 'sinister' behavior at the UN

WHERE IT STANDS: Faded away.

BACKSTORY: Trump demanded an investigation into three "sinister events" against him during September's U.N. General Assembly. There was the escalator coming to a "screeching halt" with the president on it, which Trump called "absolutely sabotage." A U.N. spokesperson said an investigation — including a readout of the machine's central processing unit — later showed a videographer from the U.S. delegation who ran ahead of Trump triggering the escalator's stop mechanism. Trump still insisted, "The people that did it should be arrested." The president also said that a malfunctioning teleprompter went "stone cold dark" during his U.N. address, and that the sound didn't work as he spoke. Trump said the Secret Service was involved, but no arrests have been made.

## California revokes 17,000 commercial driver's licenses for immigrants

By JOSH FUNK AP Transportation Writer

California plans to revoke 17,000 commercial driver's licenses given to immigrants after discovering the expiration dates went past when the drivers were legally allowed to be in the U.S., state officials said Wednesday.

The announcement follows harsh criticism from the Trump administration about California and other states granting licenses to people in the country illegally. The issue was thrust into the public's consciousness in August, when a tractor-trailer driver not authorized to be in the U.S. made an illegal U-turn and caused a crash in Florida that killed three people.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said Wednesday that California's action to revoke these licenses is an admission that the state acted improperly even though it previously defended its licensing standards. California launched its review of commercial driver's licenses it issued after Duffy raised concerns.

"After weeks of claiming they did nothing wrong, Gavin Newsom and California have been caught red-handed. Now that we've exposed their lies, 17,000 illegally issued trucking licenses are being revoked," Duffy said, referring to the state's governor. "This is just the tip of iceberg. My team will continue to force California to prove they have removed every illegal immigrant from behind the wheel of semitrucks and school buses."

Newsom's office said that every one of the drivers whose license is being revoked had valid work authorizations from the federal government. At first, his office declined to disclose the exact reason for revoking the licenses, saying only they violated state law. Later, his office revealed the state law it was referring to was one that requires the licenses expire on or before a person's legal status to be in the United State ends, as reported to the DMV.

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Still, Newsom's spokesperson Brandon Richards shot back at Duffy in a statement.

"Once again, the Sean 'Road Rules' Duffy fails to share the truth — spreading easily disproven falsehoods in a sad and desperate attempt to please his dear leader," Richards said.

Fatal truck crashes in Texas and Alabama earlier this year also highlight questions about these licenses. A fiery California crash that killed three people last month involved a truck driver in the country illegally, only adding to the concerns.

Duffy previously imposed new restrictions on which immigrants can qualify for commercial driver's licenses. He said earlier this fall that California and five other states had improperly issued commercial driver's licenses to noncitizens, but California is the only state Duffy has taken action against because it was the first one where an audit was completed. The reviews in the other states have been delayed by the government shutdown, but the Transportation Department is urging all of them to tighten their standards.

Duffy revoked \$40 million in federal funding because he said California isn't enforcing English language requirements for truckers, and he reiterated Wednesday that he will take another \$160 million from the state over these improperly issued licenses if they don't invalidate every illegal license and address all the concerns. But revoking these licenses is part of the state's effort to comply.

The new rules for commercial driver's licenses that Duffy announced in September make getting them extremely hard for immigrants because only three specific classes of visa holders will be eligible. States will also have to verify an applicant's immigration status in a federal database. The licenses will be valid for up to one year unless the applicant's visa expires sooner.

Under the new rules, only 10,000 of the 200,000 noncitizens who have commercial licenses would qualify for them, which would only be available to drivers who have an H-2a, H-2b or E-2 visa. H-2a is for temporary agricultural workers while H-2b is for temporary nonagricultural workers, and E-2 is for people who make substantial investments in a U.S. business. But the rules won't be enforced retroactively, so those 190,000 drivers will be allowed to keep their commercial licenses at least until they come up for renewal.

Those new requirements were not in place at the time the 17,000 California licenses were issued. But those drivers were given notices that their licenses will expire in 60 days.

Duffy said in September that investigators found that one quarter of the 145 licenses they reviewed in California shouldn't have been issued. He cited four California licenses that remained valid after the driver's work permit expired — sometimes years after.

Newsom's office said the state followed guidance it received from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security about issuing these licenses to noncitizens.

## France honors the victims of the Paris attacks' night of terror 10 years on

By THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Coordinated terrorist attacks turned Paris into a theater of blood and calamity 10 years ago Thursday, with gunfire on café terraces, explosions by a stadium and a nighttime massacre at the Bataclan concert hall leaving 132 people dead and hundreds injured.

Many families measure time as "before" and "after" the attacks. The night reshaped France's sense of safety and purpose, hardening security while deepening a civic reflex for solidarity that endures a decade on.

Commemorations across the capital

Paris is marking the Thursday anniversary with tributes led by President Emmanuel Macron and Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo at each attack site.

The events start at Gate D of the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, where the first victim, Manuel Dias, was killed, then move to the café terraces in the 10th and 11th arrondissements and finally the Bataclan.

Parents, partners and friends of victims will stand closest to the plaques for each minute of silence, with a small group of relatives beside Macron for the wreath-laying under the ceremony's "families first" protocol.

At Place de la République, Parisians are leaving candles, flowers and notes at the foot of the statue of national symbol Marianne, as in 2015, and are following the ceremonies on a giant screen. Children are

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coming with parents to light candles and lay flowers as small, familiar gestures that turn the square into shared memory. City officials have asked the public to keep gatherings calm and give families space at the memorials.

On the eve of the anniversary Wednesday, the statue and surrounding buildings were lit in blue, white and red and dozens gathered for a nighttime vigil, candles at their feet.

"Ten years later, the emotion is still intact" and hope must be shared "despite the pain and the absence," Hidalgo said at the event.

A new memorial garden

The commemorations will culminate with the Jardin du 13-Novembre, a new memorial garden opposite City Hall. Conceived with victims' associations, it bears the 132 names of those killed on granite stelae, with plantings that echo the attack sites and benches for reflection. Designers added small signs of life — bird baths, nesting boxes, shade — for children at the request of families. The ceremony is scheduled for 6 p.m. and will be attended by Macron and Hidalgo.

The Eiffel Tower is to be lit again in the colors of the French flag after nightfall, as it was Wednesday night, a silent tribute in the Paris skyline. The French soccer federation will observe a minute of silence and other tributes at France's World Cup qualifier against Ukraine at the Parc des Princes.

A night of coordinated terror

On Nov. 13, 2015 — a Friday — nine Islamic State group gunmen and suicide bombers struck within minutes of one another. Suicide bombers detonated outside the Stade de France; gunmen sprayed bullets across café terraces; and three attackers stormed the Bataclan at 9:47 p.m., killing 90 people before police ended the siege. Two survivors who later died by suicide have since been recognized among the victims.

For survivors, the date reopens wounds.

"The 10th anniversary is here and emotions and tension are everywhere for us survivors," said Arthur Dénouveaux, who escaped the Bataclan and leads the Life for Paris association. "You never fully heal. You just learn to live differently."

Many describe a second task after grief: rebuilding the ordinary — work, friendship, noise — without flinching.

A 2021–2022 trial ended with life imprisonment without parole for Salah Abdeslam, the lone surviving assailant, and convictions for 19 others. For many, accountability did not erase the strain of trauma or the daily work of recovery; it clarified what must be protected.

As names are read and wreaths laid, the message from officials and families is consistent: remember the victims, honor the responders, and preserve the ordinary pleasures the attackers meant to destroy.

The goal, planners say, is simple: grief without spectacle, memory with room for the living.

## Truck hits pedestrians in South Korea market, killing 2 people and injuring 18

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A truck plowed into pedestrians at an outdoor market in South Korea, killing two people and injuring 18 Thursday, officials said.

The two people were pronounced dead at a hospital following the incident shortly before 11 a.m. in Bucheon city, near the capital of Seoul.

Nine people sustained serious injuries among the 18 who were hurt, Bucheon's municipal government said, noting it wasn't immediately clear if any of the injuries were life-threatening.

Police are questioning the unidentified truck driver in his 60s who was not under the influence of alcohol or drugs, said Son Byeong-sam, a police official in Bucheon.

Park Geum-cheon, an official at Bucheon's fire station, said witnesses told investigators that the vehicle initially reversed about 28 meters (92 feet) before driving forward 150 meters (492 feet), hitting pedestrians on the way.

The driver claimed his vehicle had malfunctioned and that officials were reviewing security camera footage, he said.

Photos from the scene showed the truck jammed into a storefront in a jumble of debris, including toppled boxes, clothing and broken signboards. The front left side of the truck was mangled and its windows were shattered. Officials later removed the vehicle from the scene to investigate the crash.

Bucheon will support the restoration of damaged facilities, Mayor Cho Yong-eek said in a statement, adding that the city also will conduct safety inspections and provide psychological support for merchants and others who witnessed the crash.

Cho's office did not immediately have an estimate of the property damage, including the number of shops that were impacted.

## **Judge to hear arguments challenging appointment of prosecutor who charged James Comey, Letitia James**

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AP) — Lawyers for two of President Donald Trump's foes who have been charged by the Justice Department are set to ask a federal judge Thursday to dismiss the cases against them, saying the prosecutor who secured the indictments was illegally installed in the role.

The challenges to Lindsey Halligan's appointment as interim U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia are part of multi-prong efforts by former FBI Director James Comey and New York Attorney General Letitia James to get their cases dismissed before trial.

At issue during Thursday's arguments are the complex constitutional and statutory rules governing the appointment of the nation's U.S. attorneys, who function as top federal prosecutors in Justice Department offices across the country.

The role is typically filled by lawyers who have been nominated by a president and confirmed by the Senate. Attorneys general do have the authority to get around that process by naming an interim U.S. attorney who can serve for 120 days, but lawyers for Comey and James note that once that period expires, the law gives federal judges of that district exclusive say over who can fill the vacancy.

But that's not what happened in this instance.

After then-interim U.S. attorney Erik Siebert resigned in September while facing Trump administration pressure to bring charges against Comey and James, Attorney General Pam Bondi — at Trump's public urging — installed Halligan to the role.

Siebert had been appointed by Bondi in January to serve as interim U.S. attorney. Trump in May announced his intention to nominate him and judges in the Eastern District unanimously agreed after his 120-day period expired that he should be retained in the role. But after the Trump administration effectively pushed him out in September, the Justice Department again opted to make an interim appointment in place of the courts, something defense lawyers say it was not empowered under the law to do.

Prosecutors in the cases say the law does not explicitly prevent successive appointments of interim U.S. attorneys by the Justice Department, and that even if Halligan's appointment is deemed invalid, the proper fix is not the dismissal of the indictment.

Comey has pleaded not guilty to charges of making a false statement and obstructing Congress, and James has pleaded not guilty to mortgage fraud allegations. Their lawyers have separately argued that the prosecutions are improperly vindictive and motivated by the president's personal animus toward their clients, and should therefore be dismissed.

## **President Trump signs government funding bill, ending shutdown after a record 43-day disruption**

By KEVIN FREKING, JOEY CAPPELLETTI and MATT BROWN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump signed a government funding bill Wednesday night, ending a record 43-day shutdown that caused financial stress for federal workers who went without paychecks, stranded scores of travelers at airports and generated long lines at some food banks.

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The shutdown magnified partisan divisions in Washington as Trump took unprecedented unilateral actions — including canceling projects and trying to fire federal workers — to pressure Democrats into relenting on their demands.

The Republican president blamed the situation on Democrats and suggested voters shouldn't reward the party during next year's midterm elections.

"So I just want to tell the American people, you should not forget this," Trump said. "When we come up to midterms and other things, don't forget what they've done to our country."

The signing ceremony came just hours after the House passed the measure on a mostly party-line vote of 222-209. The Senate had already passed the measure Monday.

Democrats wanted to extend an enhanced tax credit expiring at the end of the year that lowers the cost of health coverage obtained through Affordable Care Act marketplaces. They refused to go along with a short-term spending bill that did not include that priority. But Republicans said that was a separate policy fight to be held at another time.

"We told you 43 days ago from bitter experience that government shutdowns don't work," said Rep. Tom Cole, the Republican chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. "They never achieve the objective that you announce. And guess what? You haven't achieved that objective yet, and you're not going to."

A bitter end after a long stalemate

The frustration and pressures generated by the shutdown was reflected when lawmakers debated the spending measure on the House floor.

Republicans said Democrats sought to use the pain generated by the shutdown to prevail in a policy dispute.

"They knew it would cause pain and they did it anyway," House Speaker Mike Johnson said.

Democrats said Republicans raced to pass tax breaks earlier this year that they say mostly will benefit the wealthy. But the bill before the House Wednesday "leaves families twisting in the wind with zero guarantee there will ever, ever be a vote to extend tax credits to help everyday people pay for their health care," said Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass.

Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said Democrats would not give up on the subsidy extension even if the vote did not go their way.

"This fight is not over," Jeffries said. "We're just getting started."

The House had not been in legislative session since Sept. 19, when it passed a short-term measure to keep the government open when the new budget year began in October. Johnson sent lawmakers home after that vote and put the onus on the Senate to act, saying House Republicans had done their job.

What's in the bill to end the shutdown

The legislation is the result of a deal reached by eight senators who broke ranks with the Democrats after reaching the conclusion that Republicans would not bend on using a government funding to bill to extend the health care tax credits.

The compromise funds three annual spending bills and extends the rest of government funding through Jan. 30. Republicans promised to hold a vote by mid-December to extend the health care subsidies, but there is no guarantee of success.

The bill includes a reversal of the firing of federal workers by the Trump administration since the shutdown began. It also protects federal workers against further layoffs through January and guarantees they are paid once the shutdown is over. The bill for the Agriculture Department means people who rely on key food assistance programs will see those benefits funded without threat of interruption through the rest of the budget year.

The package includes \$203.5 million to boost security for lawmakers and an additional \$28 million for the security of Supreme Court justices.

Democrats also decried language in the bill that would give senators the opportunity to sue when a federal agency or employee searches their electronic records without notifying them, allowing for up to \$500,000 in potential damages for each violation.

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The language seems aimed at helping Republican senators pursue damages if their phone records were analyzed by the FBI as part of an investigation into Trump's efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss. The provisions drew criticism from Republicans as well. Johnson said he was "very angry about it."

"That was dropped in at the last minute, and I did not appreciate that, nor did most of the House members," Johnson said, promising a vote on the matter as early as next week.

The biggest point of contention, though, was the fate of the expiring enhanced tax credit that makes health insurance more affordable through Affordable Care Act marketplaces.

"It's a subsidy on top of a subsidy. Our friends added it during COVID," Cole said. "COVID is over. They set a date certain that the subsidies would run out. They chose the date."

Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said the enhanced tax credit was designed to give more people access to health care and no Republican voted for it.

"All they have done is try to eliminate access to health care in our country. The country is catching on to them," Pelosi said.

Without the enhanced tax credit, 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.

Health care debate ahead

It's unclear whether the parties will find any common ground on health care before the December vote in the Senate. Johnson has said he will not commit to bringing it up in his chamber.

Some Republicans have said they are open to extending the COVID-19 pandemic-era tax credits as premiums will soar for millions of people, but they also want new limits on who can receive the subsidies. Some argue that the tax dollars for the plans should be routed through individuals rather than go directly to insurance companies.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said Monday that she was supportive of extending the tax credits with changes, such as new income caps. Some Democrats have signaled they could be open to that idea.

House Democrats expressed great skepticism that the Senate effort would lead to a breakthrough.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, said Republicans have wanted to repeal the health overhaul for the past 15 years. "That's where they're trying to go," she said.

## Epstein email says Trump 'knew about the girls' as White House calls its release a Democratic smear

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jeffrey Epstein wrote in a 2019 email to a journalist that Donald Trump "knew about the girls," according to documents made public Wednesday, but what he knew — and whether it pertained to the sex offender's crimes — is unclear. The White House quickly accused Democrats of selectively leaking the emails to smear the president.

Democrats on the House Oversight Committee released three emails referencing Trump, including one Epstein wrote in 2011 in which he told confidant Ghislaine Maxwell that Trump had "spent hours" at Epstein's house with a sex trafficking victim.

The disclosures seemed designed to raise new questions about Trump's friendship with Epstein and about what knowledge he may have had regarding what prosecutors call a yearslong effort by Epstein to exploit underage girls. The Republican businessman-turned-politician has consistently denied any knowledge of Epstein's crimes and has said he ended their relationship years ago.

Trump did not take questions from reporters Wednesday, even after inviting them into the Oval Office to watch him sign legislation ending the government shutdown.

The version of the 2011 email released by the Democrats redacted the name of the victim, but Republicans on the committee later said it was Virginia Giuffre, who accused Epstein of arranging for her to have

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sexual encounters with a number of his rich and powerful friends. Epstein took his own life in a New York jail in 2019 while awaiting trial on federal charges.

The emails made public Wednesday are part of a batch of 23,000 documents provided by Epstein's estate to the Oversight Committee.

Giuffre said Trump 'couldn't have been friendlier'

Giuffre, who died earlier this year, long insisted that Trump was not among the men who had victimized her.

In a court deposition, she said under oath that she didn't believe Trump had any knowledge of Epstein's misconduct with underage girls. And in her recently released memoir, she described meeting Trump only once, when she worked as a spa attendant at his Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida, and did not accuse him of wrongdoing.

Giuffre wrote that she was introduced to Trump by her father, who also worked at the club. She described Trump as friendly and said he offered to help her get babysitting jobs with parents at the club.

Trump "couldn't have been friendlier," Giuffre wrote.

Other members of Epstein's household staff also said in sworn depositions that, while Trump did stop by Epstein's house, they didn't see him engage in any inappropriate conduct.

Republicans says emails released to tarnish Trump

White House spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said Democrats "selectively leaked emails" to "create a fake narrative to smear President Trump."

Trump, writing on his Truth Social platform, said Democrats "are trying to bring up the Jeffrey Epstein Hoax again because they'll do anything at all to deflect on how badly they've done" on the government shutdown "and so many other subjects."

"There should be no deflections to Epstein or anything else, and any Republicans involved should be focused only on opening up our Country, and fixing the massive damage caused by the Democrats!" Trump wrote.

In July, Trump said he had banned Epstein from Mar-a-Lago because his one-time friend was "taking people who worked for me," including Giuffre. The women, he said, were "taken out of the spa, hired by him — in other words, gone."

"I said, 'Listen, we don't want you taking our people,'" Trump told reporters. Asked if Giuffre was one of the employees poached by Epstein, the president demurred but then said Epstein "stole her."

Shortly after Democrats released the Trump-related emails, committee Republicans countered by disclosing what they said was an additional 20,000 pages of documents from Epstein's estate. Among them were a trove of emails written over several years by Epstein, including many where he commented — often unfavorably — on Trump's rise in politics and corresponded with journalists.

Emails revive questions about Trump's relationship with Epstein

The release resurfaces a storyline that had shadowed Trump's presidency during the summer when the FBI and the Justice Department abruptly announced that they would not be releasing additional documents that investigators had spent weeks examining, disappointing conspiracy theorists and online sleuths who had expected to see new revelations.

In one 2019 email to journalist Michael Wolff, who has written extensively about Trump, Epstein wrote of Trump, "of course he knew about the girls as he asked ghislaine to stop."

In an April 2, 2011, email to Maxwell, a former Epstein girlfriend now imprisoned for conspiring to engage in sex trafficking, Epstein wrote, "I want you to realize that that dog that hasn't barked is Trump. Virginia spent hours at my house with him ,, he has never once been mentioned. police chief. etc. im 75 % there."

Maxwell replied the same day: "I have been thinking about that."

Leavitt said the person referenced in the emails is Giuffre, who had accused Britain's then-Prince Andrew and other influential men of sexually exploiting her as a teenager and who died by suicide in April. Andrew, who recently was stripped of his titles and evicted from his royal residence by King Charles III after weeks of pressure to act over his relationship with Epstein, has rejected Giuffre's allegations and said

he didn't recall meeting her.

It wasn't clear what Epstein meant by saying that Trump was a dog that "hadn't barked," but both he and Maxwell in other correspondence accused Giuffre of fabricating stories about her supposed sexual interactions with famous men.

Leavitt said in a statement that Giuffre had "repeatedly said President Trump was not involved in any wrongdoing whatsoever and 'couldn't have been friendlier' to her in their limited interactions."

"The fact remains that President Trump kicked Jeffrey Epstein out of his club decades ago for being a creep to his female employees, including Giuffre," the statement said. "These stories are nothing more than bad-faith efforts to distract from President Trump's historic accomplishments, and any American with common sense sees right through this hoax and clear distraction from the government opening back up again."

Messages seeking comment were left with Wolff, Maxwell attorney David Markus and representatives for Giuffre's family.

Maxwell's interview with the Justice Department

Maxwell, interviewed in July by the Justice Department's second-in-command, repeatedly denied witnessing any sexually inappropriate interactions involving Trump.

"I actually never saw the President in any type of massage setting," Maxwell told Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche, according to a transcript of the interview. "I never witnessed the President in any inappropriate setting in any way. The President was never inappropriate with anybody. In the times that I was with him, he was a gentleman in all respects."

Giuffre came forward publicly after an initial investigation ended in an 18-month Florida jail term for Epstein, who made a secret deal to avoid federal prosecution by pleading guilty instead to relatively minor state-level charges of soliciting prostitution. He was released in 2009.

In subsequent lawsuits, Giuffre said she was a teenage spa attendant at Mar-a-Lago when she was approached in 2000 by Maxwell.

Lawyers for Maxwell, a British socialite, have argued that she never should have been tried or convicted for her role in luring teenage girls to be sexually abused by Epstein. She is serving a 20-year prison term, though she was moved from a low-security federal prison in Florida to a minimum-security prison camp in Texas after the Blanche interview.

## **The timeline for SNAP benefits remains uncertain, even as the government is set to reopen**

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

The federal government is reopening, but there's still uncertainty about when one of the most far-reaching impacts of the closure will be resolved and all 42 million Americans who receive SNAP food aid will have access to their full November benefits.

President Donald Trump signed the reopening measure Wednesday.

One provision calls for restarting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, but it doesn't resolve when the benefits will be loaded onto the debit cards beneficiaries use to buy groceries.

A spokesperson for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which runs the program, said in an email Wednesday that funds could be available "upon the government reopening, within 24 hours for most states." The department didn't immediately answer questions about where it might take longer — or whether the 24-hour timeline applies to when money would be available to states or loaded onto debit cards used by beneficiaries.

There has been a series of court battles over the fate of the largest government food program, which serves about 1 in 8 Americans.

Here are things to know about how it could go.

When SNAP funds become available could vary by state

Seesawing court rulings and messages from the USDA have meant that beneficiaries in some states al-

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

States say it's faster to provide full benefits than it is to do the calculations and computer programming required for partial amounts.

At least 19 states plus the District of Columbia issued full benefits to at least some recipients last week, an Associated Press tally found. Many of them managed to do it in a day or so, in the narrow window between the Nov. 6 court ruling that required the federal government to make full payments and one Nov. 7 by the U.S. Supreme Court that stopped it.

Jessica Garon, a spokesperson for the American Public Human Services Association, said she anticipates most states will be able to issue full benefits within three days after they're given the go-ahead, but that it might take a week for others.

Experts say the states that have sent no November benefits already, such as South Carolina and West Virginia, will likely be the quickest.

But there's a complication. Sixteen states have loaded the EBT cards used in SNAP with partial benefits. Carolyn Vega, a policy analyst with the advocacy group Share Our Strength said some of those states might run into technical hurdles to issue the remaining amount.

Delays in benefits can be a problem for recipients

Even if there's some clarity that benefits are on the way, exactly when they arrive will matter to millions of Americans.

About 42 million lower-income Americans receive SNAP benefits, on average about \$190 monthly per person. Many say the benefits don't and aren't intended to cover the full cost of groceries in a regular month, even with careful budgeting.

It's worse when benefits are delayed.

Doretha Washington, 41, of St. Louis, and her husband have themselves and six children to feed and not enough money to cover that cost. Her husband works servicing heating and cooling systems, but the family still needs SNAP to get by. They had received nothing in November, although Missouri said Tuesday that partial benefits would be issued.

"Now it's making things difficult because we can't pay our bills in full and keep food in here," Washington said this week. "I'm down to three days of food and trying to figure out what to do."

She has been rationing what they have.

Other people have turned to food charities but are sometimes finding long lines and low supplies.

Cutting off funds left state governments scrambling

The USDA told states Oct. 24 that it would not fund the program for November if the shutdown continued. That left states scrambling. Most Democratic-led states sued to have the funding restored.

Some Democratic and Republican-led states launched efforts to pay for SNAP benefits using state money, boost food banks and deploy the National Guard to help with food distribution. Another group of states used their money allotted for SNAP benefits only after a judge ordered the Trump administration to cover the full cost for the month.

The legislation to reopen the government passed by the Senate on Monday calls for states to be reimbursed for spending their funds to run programs usually paid for by the federal government.

It's not immediately clear, though, which situations might qualify in the case of SNAP.

In the meantime, the USDA told states Tuesday that it would reimburse them for paying out partial SNAP benefits under a system where recipients get up to 65% of their regular allocations — and even states that paid the full amount can receive partial reimbursements. It also said it would not reduce the amount on cards for recipients in states that paid full amounts.

Democratic-led states that sued for benefits to be made available said in a filing Wednesday that the late-arriving information "illustrates the chaos and confusion occasioned by USDA's multiple, conflicting guidance documents."

## Pirates ace Paul Skenes wins first Cy Young Award and Tigers star Tarik Skubal goes back-to-back

By WILL GRAVES AP National Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The individual trophy cases for Paul Skenes and Tarik Skubal are growing increasingly full.

The next step in the evolution of baseball's two best pitchers is winning — preferably where they are.

The 23-year-old Skenes capped his blistering rise to stardom by capturing the National League Cy Young Award on Wednesday night. The Pittsburgh Pirates ace was a unanimous choice by the Baseball Writers' Association of America, the honor coming minutes after Skubal won baseball's premier pitching prize in the American League for the second straight year as the anchor of the Detroit Tigers.

As gratified as they are by the recognition, both said they are eager for their respective teams to get in on the act in 2026.

That's where things get tricky.

The 28-year-old Skubal is entering his final year of club control, and while he would like to stay in Detroit beyond next season, he's also well aware the Tigers could trade him as a business decision, considering the hefty raise the left-hander figures to command should he hit the open market as a free agent.

It's much the same for Skenes, who remains under team control for the rest of the decade but found himself pushing back against a report that he's already told teammates he is eager to move on.

"I don't know where that came from," Skenes said. "The goal is to win and the goal is to win in Pittsburgh."

The Pirates finished last in the NL Central in 2025, well off the pace of front-running Milwaukee. The first pitcher since Dwight Gooden with the New York Mets in the mid-1980s to win Rookie of the Year one season and a Cy Young Award the next remains optimistic Pittsburgh is closer to contending than most think.

"The way that fans see us outside of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh is not supposed to win," Skenes said. "There are 29 fan bases that expect us to lose. I want to be a part of the 26 guys that change that."

Skenes — selected first overall by the Pirates in the 2023 amateur draft after a standout career at Air Force and LSU — did his part in 2025, leading the majors in ERA (1.97) while striking out 216 batters in 187 1/3 innings during his first full season in the big leagues.

Yet even with his brilliance, Skenes needed a little late help from Pittsburgh's woeful offense to avoid becoming the first Cy Young-winning starting pitcher to finish with a losing record. Skenes won three of his final four decisions to finish 10-10.

That so-so win/loss mark didn't stop the towering 6-foot-6 right-hander from placing atop all 30 ballots. Philadelphia left-hander Cristopher Sánchez received every second-place vote, and World Series MVP Yoshinobu Yamamoto of the Los Angeles Dodgers finished third.

Sánchez's 2029 option price increased by \$1 million to \$15 million and his 2030 option price by \$1 million to \$16 million as a result of being a Cy Young Award finalist.

Skubal received 26 first-place votes in the AL from a separate BBWAA panel. The other four went to runner-up Garrett Crochet of the Boston Red Sox. Hunter Brown of the Houston Astros came in third.

Although disappointed to be out of contention, Skenes said playing out the string was "a blessing" individually in some ways.

"It allowed me to try some new things in August and September that I wouldn't have gotten to try if we were playing for the playoffs," he explained.

Skubal and the Tigers have gotten a taste of October baseball each of the last two seasons, thanks in large part to his ascendance.

A year after taking a massive step forward by winning the AL pitching Triple Crown on his way to being a unanimous Cy Young winner, Skubal backed it up by serving as the anchor for the Tigers during a volatile season in which they squandered a 15 1/2-game lead in the AL Central and were caught by Cleveland down the stretch.

Detroit got a bit of revenge in the wild-card round, beating the division-champion Guardians in three

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games following a 14-strikeout gem by Skubal in the series opener.

Yet as fun as the season was at times, the disappointment of falling short of the ultimate goal lingers. "Ending the season on a loss is not a fun thing," Skubal said. "You can be proud of what we accomplished, but you want to end the season with a win ... the one in October or maybe deep in November you get to play in."

Skubal is the 12th hurler to win baseball's top pitching honor in consecutive years, joining a group that includes Hall of Famers Randy Johnson and Pedro Martínez, who was the last American League pitcher to go back-to-back, for Boston in 1999 and 2000.

"I think a lot of it is not being complacent with who I am today," Skubal said. "I still think there's more to tap into. I don't think this is the finished version of myself."

And he doesn't think this is the finished version of the Tigers.

"You want to win this award as many times as you can in your career, but I'd gladly trade a Cy Young for a World Series," Skubal said.

Skubal was 13-6 with an AL-leading 2.21 ERA and 240 strikeouts in 195 1/3 innings during the regular season. Then he went 1-0 with a 1.74 ERA in three playoff starts for Detroit, which was eliminated by Seattle in their Division Series.

Crochet led the American League in innings (205 1/3) and strikeouts (255).

Brown's top-three finish earned Houston an extra pick after the first round of next July's amateur draft under the prospect promotion incentive in the 2022 collective bargaining agreement.

Skubal's historic run comes with a chance for him to cash in as potential free agency looms. Economics aside, Skubal would be just fine sticking in the Motor City.

"I've given everything I have to this organization. I want to be a Tiger for a very, very long time," he said. "I'm just going to do what I do and not really focus on any of that stuff."

Skenes and Skubal both started the All-Star Game this year. The only other time the two All-Star Game starters won the Cy Young Awards in the same season was 2001, when Johnson and Roger Clemens accomplished the feat.

MVP awards for both leagues will be handed out Thursday.

Dodgers two-way star Shohei Ohtani is a heavy favorite to repeat in the NL and win for the fourth time overall, including twice in the AL.

New York Yankees slugger Aaron Judge is seeking his third AL MVP in what could be a close vote with another top contender, Seattle catcher Cal Raleigh.

## Ex-aide to California governor indicted for alleged theft of campaign funds from ex-health secretary

By TRÂN NGUYỄN AND JAIMIE DING Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A former top aide to California Gov. Gavin Newsom has been indicted on federal charges alleging her involvement in a scheme to steal campaign money from former federal Health Secretary Xavier Becerra.

Dana Williamson was arrested and appeared in court Wednesday in Sacramento. She pleaded not guilty to all charges, and a judge ordered her released from custody.

The federal indictment lists four other co-conspirators. It alleges that Williamson developed a plan with Sean McCluskie, a longtime Becerra aide, to siphon money from one of Becerra's dormant state campaign accounts to give to McCluskie to pad his salary after he accepted a job as his chief of staff in Washington.

McCluskie signed a plea agreement Oct. 30 in which he admitted to one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud and wire fraud, according to court filings. He agreed to pay back the \$225,000 he took from the account.

McCluskie's attorney Daniel Olmos declined to comment.

Becerra is a former member of Congress who was appointed California attorney general in 2017 to fill a vacancy and reelected in 2018 with Williamson running his campaign. Former President Joe Biden later

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appointed him as secretary of Health and Human Services, and he is now running for California governor in next year's election. He is not implicated in the indictment.

"The news today of formal accusations of impropriety by a long-serving trusted advisor are a gut punch," Becerra said in a statement, adding that he voluntarily cooperated with the Department of Justice in its investigation and will continue doing so.

Williamson allegedly orchestrated plan before taking job with Newsom

According to the indictment, she began helping McCluskie in April 2022 by using her political consulting company to bill Becerra's campaign account for purported services. The money would then be sent to McCluskie's wife for work supposedly done for Williamson.

When Williamson prepared to join Newsom's office in late 2022, she is said to have arranged for "Co-Conspirator 2" — an unnamed former public official — to take over her role in the scheme.

Williamson told the Los Angeles Times that year that she planned to sever financial ties to her company while working for the governor. However the indictment includes details of emails, calls, and meetings between her and McCluskie regarding the alleged scheme and cover-up while she was Newsom's chief of staff, a position she held until late 2024.

In a statement, a spokesperson for Newsom said: "Ms. Williamson no longer serves in this administration. While we are still learning details of the allegations, the Governor expects all public servants to uphold the highest standards of integrity."

Williamson is a longtime Democratic power player in Sacramento known for her savvy and aggressive style, often unafraid to spar publicly and privately with those who disagree with her. She was a Cabinet secretary for former Gov. Jerry Brown before opening her own political affairs firm and later rejoined state government as Newsom's chief of staff.

Indictment says luxury handbags, vacations claimed as business deductions

Williamson faces 23 charges including some involving the falsification of business contracts related to Paycheck Protection Program loans that her business received during the COVID-19 pandemic. She allegedly asked a co-conspirator to create a retroactive contract saying her company provided services to his company so she would be eligible for the loans and loan forgiveness.

The indictment accuses Williamson of filing fraudulent tax forms for her business from 2021 to 2023 claiming more than \$1 million in business deductions for personal expenses, including luxury handbags and jewelry; private jet travel; vacations in Mexico; installation of a home HVAC system; and several hundred thousand dollars paid to various relatives for fake jobs.

She could face up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

During her court appearance, Williamson wore a large gray coat with black glasses and had her hair pulled back in a bun. At one point she appeared to tear up after answering "yes" to questions from Judge Carolyn Delaney. Matthew Rowan, her attorney, declined to comment further.

The investigation began under the Biden administration more than three years ago, FBI Sacramento Special Agent in Charge Sid Patel said in a statement.

The charges against Williamson include conspiracy to commit bank and wire fraud, bank fraud, wire fraud, conspiracy to defraud the United States and obstruct justice, subscribing to false tax returns and making false statements.

McCluskie sought funds after taking \$180,000 pay cut

The scheme began after McCluskie agreed to take the job as Becerra's chief of staff in 2022, a role that resulted in a pay cut of roughly \$180,000, according to his plea agreement.

The FBI recorded and surveilled a meeting between Williamson and two other co-conspirators in July 2024, according to the plea deal. One unnamed co-conspirator who took over handling the payments from Williamson said she did not want to continue. The three discussed how to end the arrangement so as not to attract attention.

Several days later two of the people involved met, and one acknowledged that the arrangement was "always set up to be somewhat icky" and amounted to "laundering money," according to the plea deal. The co-conspirator handling the payments stopped making them shortly after. Several weeks later, Mc-

Cluskie asked for the payments to resume while he tried to find a job outside the federal government. He said the money helped pay for plane tickets to fly back and forth between California and Washington.

The other named co-conspirator was lobbyist Greg Campbell. He also signed a plea deal admitting to one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud and wire fraud and one count of conspiracy to defraud the United States. Campbell used his company as a conduit for the campaign money to obscure that it was going to McCluskie's wife.

Todd Pickles, Campbell's attorney, said he "takes full accountability for his actions and is cooperating fully with the legal process." He added that the charges do not involve any lobbying or advocacy work by Campbell on behalf of any client.

As part of her conditions for release, Williamson will have to surrender her passport and is prohibited from consuming alcohol or drugs. She also cannot contact any of the co-conspirators. Her lawyer said in court that her health is in a "precarious situation" but did not give details.

## Russia makes gains in southern Ukraine as it expands front-line attacks

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The Russian army overran three settlements in the southern Zaporizhzhia region of Ukraine, Kyiv's top military commander said Wednesday, as Moscow's forces expand their efforts to capture more Ukrainian territory.

Dense fog enabled Russian troops to infiltrate Ukrainian positions in Zaporizhzhia, Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi wrote on the messaging app Telegram, adding that Ukrainian units are locked in "grueling battles" to repel the Russian thrust.

He noted, however, that the fiercest battles are still in the besieged Ukrainian city of Pokrovsk, in the eastern Donetsk region, where close to half of all front-line clashes took place over the previous 24 hours.

The cities of Kupiansk and Lyman in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region have also recently witnessed an uptick in combat.

Russia launched its full-scale invasion of its neighbor almost four years ago and now occupies roughly one fifth of Ukrainian land. New U.S. sanctions that take aim at Russia's oil sector, which is the mainstay of the Russian economy, are due to come into force on Nov. 21. Their purpose is to compel Russian President Vladimir Putin to accept a ceasefire.

Kyiv officials, meanwhile, risk being distracted by a growing corruption scandal engulfing senior members of the government. Ukraine's Justice Minister Herman Halushchenko was suspended from his post Wednesday after being placed under investigation, Prime Minister Yuliia Svyrydenko announced.

Russian gains come at a cost

The U.S. sanctions on Russia's biggest oil companies, Rosneft and Lukoil, raise the stakes for Putin. The Russian leader has so far avoided serious top-level peace negotiations, with Ukrainian and Western officials accusing him of stalling for time while his army tries to grab more Ukrainian territory. International peace efforts have come to nothing.

Russia's bigger and better-equipped army has scaled up its attacks, placing the short-handed Ukrainian military under severe strain. Ukrainian officials said in September that the front line has grown in length to nearly 1,250 kilometers (800 miles). Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said earlier this month that Russia had deployed around 170,000 troops in Donetsk.

Over the past four weeks, the Russian Defense Ministry has reported capturing nine settlements and villages in Donetsk: eight in the Zaporizhzhia region, seven in the Dnipropetrovsk region and five in the Kharkiv region.

Russia's corrosive war of attrition has been costly in terms of casualties and armor, however, and Ukraine has held it to incremental battlefield gains.

The Institute for the Study of War said Russia's siege of Pokrovsk, where it has deployed elite drone operators and "spetsnaz" special forces soldiers, has been slow-moving because its military commanders

are spreading their resources widely.

Russia is pursuing several offensive operations across the theater simultaneously and is having difficulty extending logistical operations, the Washington-based think tank said late Tuesday.

Ukraine, meanwhile, has launched sustained long-range drone attacks on high-value military-related assets inside Russia.

Its latest assault hit the Stavrolen chemical plant in Budionnovsk, in the Stavropol region of Russia, overnight, according to the general staff. The plant produces polymers for composite materials used by the Russian military, it said.

## **Trump urges Israel to pardon Netanyahu in corruption case, sparking concerns over US influence**

By MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday sent a letter to Israel's president asking him to pardon Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a long-running corruption trial that has bitterly divided the country.

It was the latest attempt by Trump to intervene in the case on behalf of Netanyahu, raising questions about undue American influence over internal Israeli affairs. Trump also called for a pardon for Netanyahu during a speech to Israel's parliament last month, when he made a brief visit to promote his ceasefire plan for the war in Gaza.

In Wednesday's letter to President Isaac Herzog, Trump called the corruption case "political, unjustified prosecution."

"As the Great State of Israel and the amazing Jewish People move past the terribly difficult times of the last three years, I hereby call on you to fully pardon Benjamin Netanyahu, who has been a formidable and decisive War Time Prime Minister, and is now leading Israel into a time of peace," Trump wrote.

Netanyahu is the only sitting prime minister in Israeli history to stand trial, after being charged with fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three separate cases accusing him of exchanging favors with wealthy political supporters.

Netanyahu rejects the allegations, and in Trump-like language has condemned the case as a witch hunt orchestrated by the media, police and judiciary.

In a post on X late Thursday, Netanyahu expressed gratitude toward Trump, though it wasn't explicitly tied to the pardon request.

"Thank you, President Trump, for your incredible support. As usual, you get right to the point and call it like it is," he wrote. "I look forward to continuing our partnership to bolster security and expand peace."

Netanyahu has taken the stand multiple times over the past year, but the case has been repeatedly delayed as he has dealt with wars and unrest stemming from Hamas-led militant attacks of October 2023.

Israel's presidency is a largely ceremonial office, but the president does have the authority to grant pardons.

Herzog acknowledged receiving the letter, but said that anyone seeking a presidential pardon must submit a formal request. Herzog has declined to say how he would respond to a request by Netanyahu, saying publicly only that he believes the trial has been a distraction and source of division for the country and that he would prefer to see Netanyahu and the prosecution reach a settlement.

When Trump called for a pardon in his speech last month, he received a raucous standing ovation from Netanyahu's allies in parliament.

But it has also raised questions about American influence over Israeli policies, especially relating to security in the Gaza Strip. Those concerns came to a head during a series of visits from senior American leaders, from Vice President JD Vance to Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Israeli media called the visits "Bibi-sitting," a word play on Netanyahu's nickname, saying the officials were coming to ensure that Israel continues to hold up its side of the fragile ceasefire. Both Netanyahu and Vance rejected the suggestions and say the countries have a tight partnership.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid noted that the pardon could have unintended consequences for Netanyahu. "Reminder: Israeli law stipulates that the first condition for receiving a pardon is an admission of guilt and an expression of remorse for those actions," he wrote on X.

According to Israeli law, a presidential pardon can only happen for Netanyahu if Netanyahu makes a formal request, which sets in motion a long procedure that includes recommendations from the Justice Ministry, said Amir Fuchs, a senior researcher at the Jerusalem-based think tank Israel Democracy Institute and an expert in constitutional law.

Fuchs added that pardons are usually issued for people who are convicted of a crime. "Pardon is a word for forgiveness, a pardon without some kind of admission of guilt is very unusual and even illegal," said Fuchs.

He also said that if a pardon were granted after the Trump letter, it risked giving a "green light" to corruption. "The message will be undermining of rule of law," he said.

In June, Trump also condemned Netanyahu's trial as a "WITCH HUNT," using the same language that both he and Netanyahu have long used to describe their legal woes. Both contend they are the victims of hostile media, crooked law enforcement and political opponents.

## US Mint presses final pennies as production ends after more than 230 years

By MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The U.S. ended production of the penny Wednesday, abandoning the 1-cent coins that were embedded in American culture for more than 230 years but became nearly worthless.

When it was introduced in 1793, a penny could buy a biscuit, a candle or a piece of candy. Now most of them are cast aside to sit in jars or junk drawers, and each one costs nearly 4 cents to make.

"God bless America, and we're going to save the taxpayers \$56 million," Treasurer Brandon Beach said at the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia before hitting a button to strike the final penny. The coins were then carefully placed on a tray for journalists to see. The last few pennies were to be auctioned off.

Billions of pennies are still in circulation and will remain legal tender, but new ones will no longer be made.

The last U.S. coin to be discontinued was the half-cent in 1857, Beach said.

Most penny production ended over the summer, officials said. During the final pressing, workers at the mint stood quietly on the factory floor as if bidding farewell to an old friend. When the last coins emerged, the men and women broke into applause and cheered one another.

"It's an emotional day," said Clayton Crotty, who has worked at the mint for 15 years. "But it's not unexpected."

President Donald Trump ordered the penny's demise as costs climbed and the 1-cent valuation became virtually obsolete.

"For far too long the United States has minted pennies which literally cost us more than 2 cents," Trump wrote in an online post in February. "This is so wasteful!"

Still, many Americans have a nostalgia for them, seeing pennies as lucky or fun to collect. And some retailers voiced concerns in recent weeks as supplies ran low and the end of production drew near. They said the phaseout was abrupt and came with no government guidance on how to handle transactions.

Some businesses rounded prices down to avoid shortchanging shoppers. Others pleaded with customers to bring exact change. The more creative among them gave out prizes, such as a free drink, in exchange for a pile of pennies.

"We have been advocating abolition of the penny for 30 years. But this is not the way we wanted it to go," Jeff Lenard of the National Association of Convenience Stores said last month.

Proponents of eliminating the coin cited cost savings, speedier checkouts at cash registers and the fact that some countries have already eliminated their 1-cent coins. Canada, for instance, stopped minting its penny in 2012.

Some banks began rationing supplies, a somewhat paradoxical result of the effort to address what many

see as a glut of the coins. Over the last century, about half the coins made at mints in Philadelphia and Denver have been pennies.

But they cost far less to produce than the nickel, which costs nearly 14 cents to make. The diminutive dime, by comparison, costs less than 6 cents to produce, and the quarter nearly 15 cents.

No matter their face value, collectors and historians consider them an important historical record. Frank Holt, an emeritus professor at the University of Houston who has studied the history of coins, laments the loss.

"We put mottoes on them and self-identifiers, and we decide — in the case of the United States — which dead persons are most important to us and should be commemorated," he said. "They reflect our politics, our religion, our art, our sense of ourselves, our ideals, our aspirations."

## All 14 victims identified from fiery UPS cargo plane crash in Louisville

By BRUCE SCHREINER and DYLAN LOVAN Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — A grandfather and his young granddaughter. An electrician with two young children. A woman standing in line at a scrap metal business.

They were among the 14 people who died in the fiery crash of a UPS plane in Louisville last week. Their names were released Wednesday as Mayor Craig Greenberg lamented the lives that will "forever be unfinished."

"As we share the names of those who we've lost, our city feels the full weight of this unimaginable tragedy," Greenberg said at a news conference. "Behind every one of these names is a circle of family, friends, stories that will forever be unfinished."

Eight days after the plane plowed into the ground in a massive fireball, the local coroner's office said it completed the grim tasks of recovering victims' remains, identifying them and notifying their loved ones. Investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board remain at the crash site, Greenberg said.

Victims included three pilots on board when the crash happened during takeoff at UPS Worldport, the company's global aviation hub located at Muhammad Ali International Airport. They were Capt. Richard Wartenberg, First Officer Lee Truitt and International Relief Officer Capt. Dana Diamond.

Dramatic video captured the aircraft crashing into businesses and erupting in a fireball. Footage from eyewitnesses and security cameras has given investigators evidence of what happened from many different angles.

Authorities believe that all the victims have been located and identified, Greenberg said Wednesday.

John Spray, 45, was killed at Grade A Auto Parts & Recycling when the plane crashed into the business. The mother of his child, Tiffany Torok, said in a GoFundMe account for Spray's daughter that he "was in the wrong place at the wrong time."

The family of Louisnes Fedon, 47, said "his death has created a sudden and immense void that goes far beyond emotional grief"; a GoFundMe was set up by a friend of Fedon's children. Like Spray, relatives say Fedon and his 3-year-old granddaughter, Kimberly Asa, were in the wrong place at the wrong time when the plane crashed to the ground just off the runway.

Matthew Sweets, 37, was severely burned and died days later. He worked as an electrician and had two young children, Cohen and Rayne, according to his obituary.

Another victim, Ella Petty Whorton, 31, was at the recycling business when the crash occurred. Her boyfriend, Eric Richardson, said they worked together collecting scrap metal to help make a living. They had been a couple for more than a year after being introduced by a mutual friend.

"She was a great person," Richardson said this week by phone. "Everybody loved her. I miss her so much."

Others killed in the crash were Angela Anderson, 45; Carlos Fernandez, 52; Trinadette Chavez, 37; Tony Crain, 65; John Loucks, 52; and Megan Washburn, 35. Officials haven't publicly shared details about them, including where they were when the plane crashed.

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Greenberg credited the coroner's office for "working tirelessly, under incredibly challenging conditions," to recover the victims' remains, identify them and notify the families.

"I had a family member ask me yesterday, 'how do you ever get used to this?' And I said, 'I don't,'" Jefferson County Coroner Jo-Ann Farmer. "If I get used to this and it doesn't bother me anymore, I'm in the wrong profession."

## Wall Street drifts around its records as AMD rallies

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks drifted around their records in a mixed day of trading Wednesday.

The S&P 500 added 0.1% and neared its all-time high set a couple weeks ago. The Dow Jones Industrial Average jumped 327 points, or 0.7%, to set a record for the second straight day, while the Nasdaq composite slipped 0.3%.

Advanced Micro Devices was at the front of the market. It rallied 9% after CEO Lisa Su said the chip company is expecting better than 35% of annual compounded revenue growth over the next three to five years. She credited "accelerating AI momentum."

Stocks benefiting from the artificial-intelligence frenzy have been shaky recently, as investors question whether how much more they can add to already spectacular gains.

Their sensational performances have been one of the top reasons the U.S. market has hit records despite a slowing job market and high inflation. Their prices have shot so high, though, 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.

Nvidia came into the day with a 4.6% drop for the month so far, for example, after its stock price more than doubled in four of the last five years. The biggest player in AI chips swung between gains and losses throughout Wednesday. Palantir Technologies, another AI darling, fell 3.6% for one of the day's larger losses in the S&P 500.

Similar questions about priciness are dogging the rest of the U.S. market, though not as pointedly as for Big Tech and AI superstars.

One way for stock prices to look less expensive is for companies to deliver big growth in profits.

On Holdings jumped 18% after the Swiss shoe and apparel company reported a much bigger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected. It reported growth in sales from around the world, with the strongest coming from Asia.

But even beating expectations may not be enough for some stocks. Circle Internet Group fell 12.2% even though it reported profit for the latest quarter that trounced analysts' estimates.

The issuer of one of the most popular cryptocurrencies has seen its stock price fall since it got near \$300 in June, just a few weeks after its initial price offering of \$31. It's now below \$87.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 4.31 points to 6,850.92. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 326.86 to 48,254.82, and the Nasdaq composite slipped 61.84 to 23,406.46.

Another way for stock prices to look less expensive is if interest rates fall. That's because bonds paying lower yields can encourage investors to pay higher prices for other kinds of investments.

In the U.S. bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury eased to 4.06% from 4.13% late Monday after trading resumed following Tuesday's Veterans Day holiday.

Traders still see a nearly 2-in-3 chance that the Federal Reserve will cut its main interest rate at its next meeting in December, according to data from CME Group. That's despite Fed Chair Jerome Powell saying a third cut for the year is far from a sure thing. Fed officials are worried about the potential of giving still-high inflation more fuel.

The Fed has been in a difficult spot recently because the U.S. government has not been publishing its usual updates on the job market, inflation and other areas of the economy. That's restricted its view of how things are going, though the nation's longest-ever shutdown appears to be nearing an end.

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

Germany's DAX returned 1.2%, and South Korea's Kospi jumped 1.1% for two of the world's bigger gains.

## Adelita Grijalva sworn in as the House's newest member, paving the way for an Epstein files vote

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI, MATT BROWN and MEG KINNARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrat Adelita Grijalva was sworn in as the newest member of Congress on Wednesday, more than seven weeks after she won a special election in Arizona to fill the House seat last held by her late father.

Grijalva was sworn in by House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., on Wednesday shortly before the House returned to session to vote on a deal to fund the federal government. After delivering a floor speech, Grijalva signed a discharge petition to eventually trigger a vote to release files related to Jeffrey Epstein, giving it the needed 218 signatures.

Grijalva's seating brings the partisan margin in the House to a narrow 219-214 Republican majority. She vowed to continue her father's legacy of advocating for progressive policies on issues like environmentalism, labor rights and tribal sovereignty.

In a speech on the House floor after being sworn in, Grijalva said it was time for Congress "to restore a full and check and balance to this administration."

"We can and must do better. What is most concerning is not what this administration has done, but what the majority of this body has failed to do," she said.

The seating of Grijalva brings an end to a weeklong delay that she and other Democrats said was intended to prevent her signature on the Epstein petition.

Johnson had refused to seat Grijalva while the chamber was out of session, a decision that prompted condemnation from Grijalva, a lawsuit from Arizona's attorney general and speculation that Johnson was delaying her induction into the House to stall a vote on whether to require the Justice Department release documents related to the late convicted sex trafficker.

Grijalva had said she would join the petition from Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., after taking office, giving it the 218 signatures needed. Three Republicans have signed onto Massie's petition — Reps. Lauren Boebert of Colorado, Nancy Mace of South Carolina and Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia.

President Donald Trump has been reaching out about the Epstein petition to Boebert and Mace, according to a person familiar with the effort who was not authorized to discuss it publicly.

### A busy first day

Grijalva's arrival kicks off a busy day on Capitol Hill as hundreds of House members return, their trips potentially complicated by travel delays caused by the shutdown.

Lawmakers who win special elections typically take the oath of office on days when legislative business is conducted. But with the House out of session since Sept. 19, Johnson had said he would swear her in when everyone returned. He did swear in two Republican members this year when the chamber was not in legislative session.

"I don't think he's thought of anything that he's doing, in this case, as anything personal," Grijalva told The Associated Press in an interview. "It feels personal because, literally, my name was attached. I also know that if I were a Republican, I would have been sworn in seven weeks ago."

"We've been waiting for this so long that it's still surreal," she said.

She will start her House tenure by voting on the Senate-passed legislation to reopen the government. Grijalva and most Democrats are expected to oppose it because it does not extend Affordable Care Act tax credits that expire at the end of the year. Republicans can still pass the bill with their slim majority.

### The 218th signature on an Epstein file discharge petition

Grijalva is the final necessary signature on a discharge petition linked to legislation that would require the Justice Department to release all unclassified documents and communications related to Epstein and his sex trafficking operation. But her move will not mean a vote right away, due to House rules.

Massachusetts Rep. Jim McGovern, the top Democrat on the House Rules Committee, said he expects voting on the Epstein bill to take place in early December.

Emails released Wednesday from Democrats on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee are likely to reignite interest in the issue. Epstein wrote in a 2011 email that Trump had "spent hours" at Epstein's house with a victim of sex trafficking and said in a separate message years later that Trump "knew about the girls."

"The Democrats selectively leaked emails to the liberal media to create a fake narrative to smear President Trump," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a statement.

Leavitt and Republicans on the committee said the person in question was Virginia Giuffre, who accused Epstein of arranging for her to have sexual encounters with a number of his rich and powerful friends. Giuffre, before she died this year, had long insisted that Trump was not among the men who had victimized her.

Arizona's first Latina congresswoman

Rep. Raúl Grijalva, Adelita's father, died in March after more than two decades in the House, where he built a reputation as a staunch progressive.

Adelita Grijalva has long been active in local politics. She served on the Tucson Unified School District board before joining the Pima County Board of Supervisors, where she became only the second woman to lead the board.

She won the Sept. 23 special election with ease to complete the remainder of her father's term, representing a mostly Hispanic district in which Democrats enjoy a nearly 2-to-1 voter registration advantage over Republicans. Grijalva said the win was emotional.

"I would rather have my dad than have an office," she said.

She told the AP that environmental justice, tribal sovereignty and public education are among her priorities, echoing the work her father championed.

"I know that the bar is set very high, and the expectation is high of what we're going to be able to do once sworn in," she said.

## US bishops officially ban gender-affirming care at Catholic hospitals

By TIFFANY STANLEY Associated Press

U.S. Catholic bishops voted Wednesday to make official a ban on gender-affirming care for transgender patients at Catholic hospitals. The step formalizes a yearslong process for the U.S. church to address transgender health care.

From a Baltimore hotel ballroom, the bishops overwhelmingly approved revisions to their ethical and religious directives that guide the nation's thousands of Catholic health care institutions and providers.

More than one in seven patients in the U.S. are treated each day at Catholic hospitals, according to the Catholic Health Association. Catholic hospitals are the only medical center in some communities.

Major medical groups and health organizations support gender-affirming care for transgender patients.

Most Catholic health care institutions have taken a conservative approach and not offered gender-affirming care, which may involve hormonal, psychological and surgical treatments. The new directives will formalize that mandate. Bishops will have autonomy in making the directives into law for their dioceses.

"With regard to the gender ideology, I think it's very important the church makes a strong statement here," said Bishop Robert Barron of Minnesota's Winona-Rochester diocese during the public discussion of the revised directives.

The Catholic Health Association thanked the bishops for incorporating much of the organization's feedback into the directives. It said in a statement, "Catholic providers will continue to welcome those who seek medical care from us and identify as transgender. We will continue to treat these individuals with dignity and respect, which is consistent with Catholic social teaching and our moral obligation to serve everyone, particularly those who are marginalized."

The new guidelines incorporate earlier documents on gender identity from the Vatican in 2024 and the U.S. bishops in 2023.

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In the 2023 doctrinal note, titled "Moral Limits to the Technological Manipulation of the Human Body," the bishops specified: "Catholic health care services must not perform interventions, whether surgical or chemical, that aim to transform the sexual characteristics of a human body into those of the opposite sex, or take part in the development of such procedures."

Progressive religious voices respond

The Catholic Church is not monolithic when it comes to transgender rights. Some parishes and priests welcome trans Catholics into the fold, while others are not as accepting.

"Catholic teaching upholds the invaluable dignity of every human life, and for many trans people, gender-affirming care is what makes life livable," said Michael Sennett, a trans man who is active in his Massachusetts parish.

Sennett serves on the board of New Ways Ministry, which advocates for LGBTQ+ inclusion in the Catholic Church. In 2024, the group arranged a meeting with Pope Francis to discuss the need for gender-affirming care.

New Ways Ministry's executive director, Francis DeBernardo, said that for many transgender Catholics he knows, "the transition process was not just a biological necessity, but a spiritual imperative. That if they were going to be living as authentic people in the way that they believe God made them, then transition becomes a necessary thing."

On the same day that U.S. Catholic bishops were discussing gender identity, the heads of several major progressive religious denominations issued a statement in support of transgender, intersex and nonbinary people, at a time when many state legislatures and the Trump administration are curtailing their rights.

The 10 signers included the heads of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Episcopal Church, the Union for Reform Judaism and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

"During a time when our country is placing their lives under increasingly serious threat, there is a disgraceful misconception that all people of faith do not affirm the full spectrum of gender – a great many of us do. Let it be known instead that our beloveds are created in the image of God – Holy and whole," the religious leaders said in a statement.

U.S. bishops united in their concern for immigrants

The Catholic bishops, wrapping up their conference in Baltimore, overwhelmingly approved a "special message" on immigration Wednesday. Such pastoral statements are rare; the last was in 2013 in response to the Obama administration's mandate for insurers to provide contraception coverage.

Catholic leaders individually have criticized the Trump administration's immigration crackdown. Fear of immigration enforcement has suppressed Mass attendance at some parishes. Local clerics are fighting to administer sacraments to detained immigrants.

"We are disturbed when we see among our people a climate of fear and anxiety around questions of profiling and immigration enforcement," the bishops' statement reads. "We are saddened by the state of contemporary debate and the vilification of immigrants. We are concerned about the conditions in detention centers and the lack of access to pastoral care."

In a show of unity, multiple bishops stood up to speak in favor of the statement during the final afternoon discussion, including Oklahoma City Archbishop Paul Coakley, the newly elected president of the conference.

"I'm strongly in support of it for the good of our immigrant brothers and sisters, but also to find a nice balance," Coakley said, noting that they call "upon our lawmakers and our administration to offer us a meaningful path of reform of our immigration system."

Chicago Cardinal Blase Cupich walked to the microphone to recommend stronger language around mass deportation. "That seems to be the central issue we are facing with our people at this time," he said.

His brother bishops agreed. The updated text now states that U.S. Catholic bishops "oppose the indiscriminate mass deportation of people."

## Judge signals hundreds of people detained in Chicago immigration crackdown could be released on bond

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Hundreds of people who have been arrested and detained in the Chicago area during the Trump administration's immigration crackdown could soon be released on bond while they await immigration hearings, a federal judge signaled Wednesday.

During a hearing in Chicago, U.S. District Judge Jeffrey Cummings said he would order the full release of 13 detained individuals based on a 2022 consent decree outlining how U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement can make so-called warrantless arrests.

He also gave government attorneys a Friday deadline to comb through a list of 615 people detained at county jails and federal facilities nationwide to see if they qualify for alternatives to detention under the decree, such as using an ankle monitor, while their immigration cases proceed. The judge said he'd issue an order for their release next week, and in the meantime would temporarily pause any deportation proceedings for people who might qualify for bond under the decree.

Attorneys for the detainees hailed Cummings' move as a win and said they plan to bring more cases.

"All of the tactics of ICE have been unlawful in the vast majority of arrests," said Mark Fleming, a lawyer with the Chicago-based National Immigrant Justice Center.

Attorneys said they were racing against the clock, as many of the more than 3,300 people suspected of immigration violations who have been arrested in Chicago and its suburbs since "Operation Midway Blitz" began in September have already been deported or left of their own accord.

"We're concerned they have no access to counsel and no understanding of what their situation is," Fleming told the judge.

Will Weiland, a Justice Department attorney, told Cummings that at least 12 people on the list of 615 were "high risk" and shouldn't be released into communities.

"Nothing has been easy with this case your honor," he said.

Cummings previously determined that ICE had violated the consent decree which, among other things, requires the agency to show documentation for each arrest it makes for people besides those being specifically targeted in an operation.

During Wednesday's hearing, Cummings listed instances since the crackdown started in which immigration agents have arrested people while they were at work, out walking or pulling through the drive-thru lane at a fast-food restaurant.

"It also seems highly unlikely to me that any of these foreign nationals ... fall into the category of what ICE has called the 'worst of the worst,'" he said.

The Trump administration has touted its federal intervention efforts as effective at fighting crime and applauded agents' aggressive tactics that have been challenged in court. But leaders in Illinois say violent crime had already been trending downward in the Chicago area and that federal agents only inflamed tensions.

While the consent decree covers arrests by ICE, it doesn't include U.S. Customs and Border Protection, which has been behind the most controversial tactics used during the immigration operation, including the liberal use of chemical agents.

The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees both agencies, hasn't offered details about its arrests, only highlighting a handful of people living in the country without legal permission who also had criminal histories.

DHS Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin deemed Cummings an "activist judge," a common Trump administration label for judges who've down struck parts of the Republican's agenda.

In a Wednesday statement, McLaughlin claimed that an order to release the detainees put "the lives of Americans directly at risk."

The consent decree, which expired earlier this year, was extended until February. Although its policy on ICE's warrantless arrests applies nationwide, remedies for individual cases have been focused in six states

covered by the ICE field office in Chicago, where the original lawsuit over immigration sweeps was filed. Those states are Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Kentucky and Wisconsin.

## Appeals court weighs arguments on law cutting Medicaid funds to Planned Parenthood

By SAFIYAH RIDDLE and KIMBERLEE KRUESI Associated Press/Report For America

Attorneys representing Planned Parenthood argued Wednesday that Congress cannot strip the nation's largest abortion provider of its Medicaid funding with the hope that doing so may result in fewer abortions.

"The only fact in the record is that when you defund Planned Parenthood members from providing non-abortion care, the result is an increase in abortions," said Planned Parenthood attorney Alan Schoenfeld to the 1st Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston.

The arguments are the latest development in a legal battle over a spending law passed by Congress — and then signed into law by President Donald Trump in July — that ended Medicaid reimbursements for Planned Parenthood.

Under the tax and spending cut bill, organizations that provide both abortions and receive more than \$800,000 a year in Medicaid reimbursements would no longer be eligible to receive such funding.

Planned Parenthood quickly sued to block the law, saying it violates the Constitution, while anti-abortion activists applauded the legislation.

However, in September, the 1st Circuit Court of Appeals overturned a lower court decision and said the law could take effect while the U.S. government's attorneys appealed the initial ruling.

On Wednesday, Justice Department attorney Eric McArthur said the federal government stressed that Planned Parenthood was not specifically named in Trump's tax and spending cut law and that officials were still finalizing the guidance over who specifically would qualify.

"That guidance hasn't been issued yet," McArthur said. "And so I'm not in a position to tell you what it will say."

In a report released ahead of the hearing, Planned Parenthood said the legislation cost \$45 million in September alone as clinics across the country paid for treatment for Medicaid patients out of pocket — a rate that the organization says is unsustainable.

Nearly half of Planned Parenthood's patients rely on Medicaid for health care aside from abortions, which was already not covered by the federal insurance program that serves millions of low-income and disabled Americans.

### Legal fight

Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its member organizations in Massachusetts and Utah, as well as a major medical provider in Maine, filed lawsuits against Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. in July. The Maine provider has been forced to stop its primary care services while its lawsuit works its way through the courts.

In the meantime, seven states — California, Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York and Washington — have directed state funds to compensate for lost federal Medicaid reimbursements.

That has covered roughly \$200 million of the \$700 million that the organization spends annually on Medicaid patients, according to Planned Parenthood.

In light of the shortfall, some clinics will force Medicaid patients to pay out of pocket while others will close altogether, adding to the 20 Planned Parenthood affiliated clinics that have closed since July and the 50 total that have closed since the start of Trump's second term.

"The consequence is for patients who are going to be forced to make impossible choices between essential services," Planned Parenthood President and CEO Alexis McGill Johnson said in an interview with The Associated Press.

### Abortion at the heart of the debate

Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, said Trump's legislation is a step in the right direction. Even though federal tax dollars aren't used for abortions directly, she said taxpayers are

contributing to abortion services even if they are morally or religiously opposed since Medicaid reimbursements help organizations stay afloat that provide them.

"To be forced to pay for that is just very objectionable," Tobias said.

She suggested Planned Parenthood could stop offering abortions if it wanted to keep providing medical care to vulnerable populations.

Planned Parenthood's president has doubled down on the organization's commitment to providing abortions.

"The government should not play a role in determining any pregnancy outcomes," Johnson said.

A range of services hit

Planned Parenthood is the country's largest abortion provider, but abortions only constituted 4% of all its medical services in 2024, according to the organization's annual report. Testing for sexually transmitted infections and contraception services make up about 80%. The remaining 15% of services are cancer screenings, primary care services and behavioral health services.

Jenna Tosh, CEO of Planned Parenthood California Central Coast, said in an interview that the Medicaid cuts threaten abortion and non-abortion medical care in equal measure. Roughly 70% of patients who use Planned Parenthood California Central Coast rely on Medicaid, she said.

"Many of our patients, we are their primary provider of health care," Tosh said. "You really start pulling at the thread of the entire health care safety net for the most vulnerable people."

## More Americans are unhappy with the way Trump is managing the government, AP-NORC poll shows

By JILL COLVIN and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Approval of the way President Donald Trump is managing the government has dropped sharply since early in his second term, according to a new AP-NORC poll, with much of the rising discontent coming from fellow Republicans.

The survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research was conducted after Democrats' recent victories in off-year elections but before Congress took major steps to try to end the longest shutdown in U.S. history. It shows that only 33% of U.S. adults approve of the way the Republican president is managing the government, down from 43% in an AP-NORC poll from March.

That was driven in large part by a decline in approval among Republicans and independents. According to the survey, only about two-thirds of Republicans, 68%, said they approve of Trump's government management, down from 81% in March. Independents' approval dropped from 38% to 25%.

The results highlight the risks posed by the shutdown, which Trump and his administration have tried to pin squarely on Democrats, even as U.S. adults have cast blame on both parties as the funding lapse has snarled air traffic, left hundreds of thousands of federal workers without paychecks and compromised food aid for some of the most vulnerable Americans. But it could also indicate broader discontent with Trump's other dramatic — and polarizing — changes to the federal government in recent months, including gutting agencies and directing waves of mass layoffs.

Trump's approval on government management erodes among Republicans

Republicans have generally been steadfast in their support for the president, making their growing displeasure particularly notable.

"I'm thoroughly disturbed by the government shutdown for 40-something days," said Beverly Lucas, 78, a Republican and retired educator who lives in Ormond Beach, Florida, and compared Trump's second term to "having a petulant child in the White House, with unmitigated power."

"When people are hungry, he had a party," she said, referring to a Great Gatsby-themed Halloween party held at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club in Florida. "I thought he seems callous."

The survey found an overwhelming majority of Democrats, 95%, continue to disapprove of Trump's management of the federal government, compared with 89% in March.

Trump's overall approval holds steady

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Even with the decline in support for his management of the government, Trump's overall approval rating has remained steady in the new poll. About one-third of U.S. adults, 36%, approve of his overall handling of the presidency, roughly in line with 37% in an October AP-NORC poll. Approval of his handling of key issues like immigration and the economy have also barely changed since last month.

Health care emerged as a key issue in the shutdown debate as Democrats demanded that Republicans negotiate with them to extend tax credits that expire Jan. 1. But Trump's approval on the issue, which was already fairly low, has barely changed.

About one-third, 34%, of Americans said they approved of Trump's handling of health care in the November poll, compared with 31% in October.

And many of his supporters are still behind him. Susan McDuffie, 74, a Republican who lives in Carson City, Nevada, and retired several years ago, said she has "great confidence in Trump" and thinks the country is on the right track. She blames Democrats for the shutdown and the suffering it's caused.

"I just don't understand how the Democrats can care so little about the people," she said, scoffing at the idea that Democrats were trying to use the shutdown to force Republicans to address soon-to-skyrocket health care costs.

"I don't have any patience for the Democrats and their lame excuses," she said, arguing that people who are scared about SNAP benefits expiring and struggling to put food on the table are a more pressing issue.

Plenty of blame to go around

When it comes to the shutdown, there is still plenty of blame to go around. Recent polls have indicated that while Republicans may be taking slightly more heat, many think Democrats are at fault, too.

"I truly do believe it's everybody. Everybody is being stubborn," said Nora Bailey, 33, a moderate who lives in the Batesville area in Arkansas and does not align with either party.

After recently giving birth, she said, she faced delays in getting a breast pump through a government program that helps new mothers while her son was in intensive care. And she is worried about her disabled parents, who rely on SNAP food stamp benefits.

Overall, she said she is mixed on Trump's handling of the job and disapproves of his management of the federal government because she believes he has not gone far enough to tackle waste.

"I don't see enough being done yet to tell me we have downsized the federal government instead of having all these excess people," she said.

It's possible that Trump's approval on handling the federal government will rebound if the government reopens. But the showdown could have a more lasting impact on perceptions of the president, whose approval on the economy and immigration has eroded slightly since the spring.

Lucas, the Florida Republican, said shutdowns in which civilians aren't paid are the wrong way to address ideological disagreement.

"Air traffic controllers? Really? You want to not pay the people in whose hands your lives are every day?" she said. "We need to be addressing these conflicts like intelligent people and not thugs and bullies on the playground."

## What to know as the US Mint in Philadelphia presses its final penny

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI Associated Press

The U.S. Mint in Philadelphia on Wednesday pressed its last penny, marking the latest step in the 1-cent coin's demise.

President Donald Trump ordered the cancelation of the penny earlier this year, noting that the cost of making them had become more than their value.

Here's what you should know about the penny's long history in the U.S.

When was the first penny minted?

The penny was one of the first coins made by the U.S. Mint after its establishment in 1792, when only the half-cent was being produced along with the 1-cent coin.

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Congress eventually discontinued the unpopular half cent in 1857, but kept the modest penny after deciding to making it smaller to save money on the copper needed to make the coin. Today, the penny is made with 97.5% zinc with copper plating.

Where will these last pennies go?

There are an estimated 250 billion pennies still in circulation in the U.S., according to the American Bankers Association. This means the last pressed pennies won't disappear, but circulation will slow. Pennies still remain legal tender, and will largely remain worth the same humble 1-cent.

On Wednesday, U.S. Treasurer Brandon Beach told reporters that they would auction off the final pennies printed in Philadelphia.

How many pennies are there today?

There are about 114 billion pennies currently in circulation in the United States, but they are greatly underutilized, according to the Treasury.

Are pennies really that expensive to make?

It costs nearly 4 cents to make one penny, according to the U.S. Mint. Trump has called such production costs "so wasteful" while others have described the penny as obsolete. The Treasury Department has estimated it will save \$56 million per year on materials by ceasing to make them.

However, defenders of the penny say the cost is a bargain compared to the nickel, which costs almost 14 cents to mint. Each dime costs nearly 6 cents to make and distribute, and a quarter costs nearly 15 cents.

Where are pennies used?

Many people have a nostalgia for pennies, seeing them as lucky or fun to collect. They've also long been tied to traditions and have shown up in rhymes like "See a penny, pick it up. All the day you'll have good luck."

The penny has also remained useful not only for charity drives but also for those who continue to use physical cash and coins for purchases.

So what happens now?

For retailers, the phase-out has been abrupt, and in part significant given that price tags ending in \$.99 are a bedrock of American retail used to convince customers of a good deal.

The American Bankers Association says that some banks and retailers may round cash transactions to the nearest five cents, mimicking what countries like Canada and Australia did after phasing out their own lowest-value coins.

## **A happy circumstance: Bob Ross paintings sell for more than \$600K to help public TV stations**

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Three paintings from famously chill public television legend Bob Ross sold Tuesday for more than \$600,000 at auction. The paintings were the first of 30 Ross works being sold to benefit public TV stations hurt by cuts in federal funding.

At the live auction at Bonhams in Los Angeles, a serene, snow vista called "Winter's Peace" that Ross painted entirely during a 1993 episode of "The Joy of Painting" went for \$318,000 to a bidder on the phone.

"For a good cause — and you get the painting," auctioneer Aaron Bastian said during the bidding. He invoked a common sentiment of Ross, who died in 1995, during a brief lull. "Bob would remind you that this is your world, and you can do anything you want."

Another painting done on a 1993 episode, a lush, green landscape called "Home in the Valley," went for \$229,100. A third, "Cliffside," sold for \$114,800.

The final prices include a charge for the auction house added to the final bid known as the buyer's premium. The identities of the buyers weren't immediately revealed.

Bids for all three paintings went well past pre-auction estimates of their value, which topped out around \$50,000.

Three more Ross paintings will be up for auction at Bonhams in Marlborough, Massachusetts, on Jan.

27, with others to follow, including one in New York.

All profits are pledged to stations that use content from distributor American Public Television.

Ross, a public television staple in the 1980s and '90s, was known for his dome of hair and warm demeanor.

The special sales seek to help stations in need of licensing fees that allow them to show popular programs that along with Ross' show include "America's Test Kitchen," "Julia Child's French Chef Classics," and "This Old House." Small and rural stations are particularly challenged.

The stations "have been the gateway for generations of viewers to discover not just Bob's gentle teaching, but the transformative power of the arts," Joan Kowalski, president of Bob Ross Inc., said in a statement.

As sought by the Trump Administration, Congress has eliminated \$1.1 billion allocated to public broadcasting, leaving about 330 PBS and 246 NPR stations.

Ross died at age 52 of complications from cancer after 11 years in production with the therapeutic how-to show, "The Joy of Painting." The former Air Force drill sergeant was a sort of pioneer, known for his calm — and calming — manner and encouraging words.

Ross spoke often as he worked on air about painting happy little clouds and trees, and making no mistakes, only "happy accidents."

He has only become more popular in the decades since his death, and his shows saw a surge in popularity during the lockdowns of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Pakistan's prime minister offers talks to Afghanistan after deadly militant attacks**

By MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan's prime minister on Wednesday offered talks to Afghanistan's Taliban government in a renewed peace overture, about a week after negotiations between the two sides collapsed in Istanbul, raising fears that a ceasefire brokered by Qatar and Turkey could unravel and trigger new border clashes.

Shehbaz Sharif made the offer in a televised speech to parliament, a day after a deadly suicide bombing outside a court in Islamabad killed 12 people and wounded 27 others.

Seeking peace

Still, he said that Pakistan wanted peace in the region, because it was good for both sides, though there were "Afghan footprints" in this week's attacks.

"Let us sit with sincere hearts, rein in terrorism, and work together for peace and prosperity in the region," Sharif said. He said that during the recent rounds of talks in Doha and Istanbul, Pakistan had only made one demand to Afghanistan: rein in the militants.

"We want peace to prevail," he said, and "Afghanistan should realize that what is good for us is good for them. But it cannot be that they make promises and then fail to act."

There was no immediate comment from Kabul to Sharif's offer.

Growing militancy

The latest development came hours after Pakistanis buried their loved ones killed in the suicide bombing at an Islamabad court, as authorities opened an investigation into the assault.

The bombing in Islamabad underscored the country's challenges as the government struggles with a growing militancy, border tensions and a fragile truce with Afghanistan.

Tuesday's attack at the district court, located on the edge of the city, raised alarms that despite multiple operations by 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 had 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 loved ones at an Islamabad hospital.

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

## Pakistan's accusations

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said 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 and also said that 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 for the attack. Pakistan has long said that the Afghan Taliban have been sheltering leaders and fighters from Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP — an accusation that 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 statement.

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 that insurgents can carry out attacks deep inside the country.

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

## Attack on 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.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack.

Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said that 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.

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar told a gathering in Islamabad on Wednesday that the two attacks — in Islamabad and Wana — killed at least 15 people. His remark indicated that the Pakistani forces had suffered at least three fatalities at the cadet school.

## Army chief's promotion

Pakistan's parliament on Wednesday approved a bill to elevate army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir to the newly created post of chief of defense forces, pending the signature of President Asif Ali Zardari, which is considered a formality.

The opposition boycotted the vote, saying the bill could undermine democracy, while the government insists that the new title for the army chief was only meant to ensure better coordination with the navy and air force.

## 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 wouldn't 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.

Indian 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 that its technical mission in Kabul would become a full embassy — the first high-level diplomatic engagement since the Taliban took power.

## **Atlanta Fed president Bostic to retire in February, opening seat on key committee**

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Raphael Bostic, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, will retire at the end of his current term in February, opening up a new seat on the Fed's interest-rate setting committee at a time that President Donald Trump is seeking to exert more control over the central bank.

As president of one of the Fed's 12 regional banks, Bostic, 59, serves on the 19-member committee that meets eight times a year to decide whether to change a key short-term interest rate that influences borrowing costs throughout the economy. Only 12 of the 19 participants vote on rates at each meeting. The regional Fed presidents rotate as voters, and the Atlanta Fed's president will next vote in 2027.

Bostic's replacement will be selected by the Atlanta Fed's board of directors, which are made up of local business and community leaders, not the Trump administration. The terms of all the regional Fed presidents end in 2026.

Bostic is the first Black and openly gay president of a regional Fed bank in the Fed's 112-year history and was first appointed in June 2017. He has recently expressed concerns that inflation is still too high for the Fed to deeply cut its key rate, and suggested he supported just one rate cut this year, while the Fed has cut twice.

Bostic did not provide a reason for stepping down, but is speaking later Wednesday and could provide more details.

In 2022, Bostic acknowledged that many of his financial investments and trades in previous years had violated Fed ethics rules and revised all his financial statements dating back to 2017. At the time, he said the trades were made by investment managers that he did not directly oversee and that he was unaware of the transactions.

The Fed's Washington, D.C.-based board of governors will vote on whether to approve Bostic's replacement. Trump has sought to gain more control over the Fed's board, which would potentially give the administration more sway over the approval of the regional Fed presidents. Three of the current seven members of the board were appointed by Trump.

Trump has also sought to fire Fed governor Lisa Cook, which would have given him a fourth seat on the board. But Cook has sued to keep her seat and the Supreme Court has allowed her to stay in the job while the issue is fought out in court.

The regional Fed banks were set up specifically to ensure that voices outside Washington and New York would have a say in the central bank's decisions.

Trump has repeatedly attacked the Fed this year for not cutting interest rates as quickly as he would prefer. The Fed reduced its key rate by a quarter-point at its September and October meetings, but Chair Jerome Powell said at a news conference last month that another cut in December is not a "foregone conclusion."

In a September essay, Bostic said that the Fed's short-term interest rate — at that time about 4.3% — was only "marginally restrictive," meaning that it was barely holding back the economy and it wouldn't require many cuts to bring it to a level that would stimulate the growth.

At the same time, Bostic said he remained worried about inflation: "I will not be complacent and simply assume ... another inflation outbreak won't happen," he wrote.

## **Global tuberculosis diagnoses rise to a record, but deaths fall, WHO reports**

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The number of people diagnosed with tuberculosis worldwide rose again last year, eclipsing 2023's record total, World Health Organization officials said Wednesday.

About 8.3 million people across the globe were reported as newly diagnosed with TB in 2024. Not all infections are diagnosed and the new numbers represent 78% of the estimated number of people who actually fell ill last year, the WHO noted.

WHO officials see the increase as an indication that screening and treatment are improving after health care disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Globally, the number of deaths caused by TB fell in 2024 to 1.23 million, down from 1.25 million the year before.

U.S. tuberculosis cases continued to rise last year — reaching the highest level in more than a dozen years, according to preliminary data released earlier this year. The vast majority of U.S. TB cases are diagnosed in people born in other countries.

Tuberculosis is caused by bacteria that attack the lungs, and is spread through the air when an infectious person coughs or sneezes. Roughly a quarter of the global population is estimated to have TB, but only a fraction develop symptoms. It can be fatal if not treated, and is one of the top causes of death worldwide.

The WHO releases a TB report every year. The latest is based on data from 184 countries. Funding for fighting the disease was already stagnating, and experts worry about a possible backslide in the battle following recent spending cuts by the U.S. government and other funders.

## **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.

The military personnel were part of a unit that had traveled to Azerbaijan to take part in that country's Victory Day celebrations on Saturday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said. The event marked Azerbaijan's 2020 military success over Armenia for control of the Karabakh region, known internationally as Nagorno-Karabakh, a conflict that had lasted nearly four decades.

A 46-member Turkish accident investigation team reached the crash site and was inspecting the wreckage of the plane, in coordination with the Georgian authorities.

Erdogan said the plane's flight data recorder has been recovered and inspections were underway to determine the cause of the crash.

Authorities have so far recovered the remains of 19 of the victims and efforts were continuing to locate one other body, Erdogan added.

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

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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.

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.

## Today in History: November 13, 130 die in Paris terror attacks

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Thursday, Nov. 13, the 317th day of 2025. There are 48 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Nov. 13, 2015, Islamic State militants carried out a set of coordinated attacks in Paris at the national stadium, in a crowded concert hall, in restaurants and on streets, killing 130 people in the worst attack on French soil since World War II.

Also on this date:

In 1775, during the Revolutionary War, American troops captured Montreal under the command of Continental Army Gen. Richard Montgomery.

In 1909, 259 men and boys were killed when fire erupted inside a coal mine in Cherry, Illinois.

In 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed a lower court ruling which found Alabama bus segregation laws were illegal.

In 1971, the U.S. space probe Mariner 9 went into orbit around Mars, becoming the first spacecraft to orbit another planet.

In 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

In 1985, some 23,000 residents of Armero, Colombia, died when a volcanic mudslide buried the city.

In 2001, U.S.-backed Northern Alliance fighters in Afghanistan entered Kabul as Taliban forces retreated from the capital city.

In 2022, four University of Idaho students were fatally stabbed in their off-campus rental home in Moscow, Idaho. A suspect, Bryan Kohberger, would plead guilty to the murders in 2025 in a deal with prosecutors to avoid the death penalty and was handed four life sentences without parole.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Joe Mantegna is 78. Hockey Hall of Famer Gilbert Perreault is 75. Actor Frances Conroy is 73. Actor Chris Noth is 71. Actor-comedian Whoopi Goldberg is 70. Republican U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan of Alaska is 61. Talk show host Jimmy Kimmel is 58. Actor Steve Zahn is 58. Actor Gerard Butler is 56. Olympic swimming gold medalist Dana Vollmer is 38. Actor Devon Bostick is 34. Tennis player Emma Raducanu is 23.