

Groton Daily Independent

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Sat., Dec. 6

- Boys Wrestling at Clark/Willow Lake, 9 a.m.
- Girls Top of the Rock Wrestling at Dell Rapids, 9 a.m.
- HOSA Remembrance Dinner, 2 p.m.
- Olive Grove Holiday Party, 6 p.m.

Sun., Dec. 7

- Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.
- St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
- United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
- Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
- First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.;



Worship, 11 a.m.

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

FFA State LDE @ Rapid City

7th Grade Soccer, 1 p.m.

4th grade boys basketball Triangular, 1 p.m.

6th Grade GBB Practice, 2 p.m.

4th Grade BB Practice, 2 p.m.

4th Grade boys basketball Triangular, 3:30 p.m.

5th Grade Girls Basketball, 4 p.m.

Dance Team Practice, 5 p.m.

6th Grade Boys Basketball, 6 p.m.

7th Grade Boys BB. 6 p.m.

Mon., Dec. 8

Senior Menu: Chicken alfredo with broccoli, fruit, breadstick.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Pork chop, rice.

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

Groton Senior Citizens meet at Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

GBB at Florence: 7th grade @ 4pm, 8th grade @ 5pm

4th Grade Practice, 4 p.m.

JH WR @ Sisseton, 5 p.m.

5th Grade BBB, 6 p.m.

Groton Daily Independent
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1440

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

Netflix Wins Warner Bros.

Netflix yesterday announced an agreement to buy Warner Bros. Discovery's studios and streaming services—including DC Studios and HBO Max—in a cash-and-stock deal valuing the enterprise at \$82.7B. The transaction is expected to close next year, after Warner completes a previously planned separation of its studio and streaming assets (Warner Bros.) from its cable division (Discovery Global).

The purchase marks a milestone in Netflix's evolution from a DVD-by-mail rental service in 1998 to an on-demand content platform and production studio behind hits from "Stranger Things" to "Squid Game." Under the deal, Netflix has agreed to honor Warner Bros.' existing contracts for film releases. Netflix will also assume ownership of Warner Bros.' century-old content library, spanning from the 1939 "The Wizard of Oz" to the DC Universe and the "Harry Potter" franchise.

Paramount Skydance, which also bid for Warner's assets, is questioning the fairness of the sale process and raising potential antitrust concerns about Netflix's merger.

CDC advisory panel votes against universal hepatitis B vaccine guidance.

The panel appointed by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. voted 8-3 to end a universal recommendation that infants receive a first dose of the hepatitis B vaccine at birth. Breaking with over 30 years of federal guidance, the panel advises limiting birth doses to babies born to women who test positive for the liver infection or whose status is unknown. For infants born to women who test negative, the panel advised delaying the shot until at least 2 months of age.

Trump wins FIFA's inaugural peace prize at World Cup draw.

President Donald Trump was presented with the soccer organization's inaugural peace prize during yesterday's World Cup draw in Washington, DC. FIFA President Gianni Infantino had lobbied for Trump to win this year's Nobel Peace Prize and announced the new prize shortly after the Nobel Committee passed on Trump. Separately, the US will start against Paraguay in the 2026 World Cup.

Judge orders release of Epstein grand jury transcripts.

A federal judge in Florida yesterday gave the Justice Department permission to unseal transcripts from 2005 and 2007 grand jury investigations into Jeffrey Epstein. The judge, who previously denied the request, said a new federal law ordering the release of Epstein-related records overrides a law that typically keeps grand jury files sealed. Judges in New York are expected to rule on similar unsealing requests soon.

Putin and Modi to strengthen Russia-India trade ties.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi finalized an agreement aimed at increasing annual trade to \$100B by 2030. Bilateral trade totaled \$68.7B last fiscal year and was heavily skewed in Russia's favor. The nations are also pursuing a free-trade agreement for India with the Eurasian Economic Union, a Moscow-dominated bloc of five post-Soviet states.

Satellite boom is a growing threat to telescopes, according to NASA.

NASA researchers warn that a growing number of satellites in low-Earth orbit could ruin up to 96% of images from telescopes and observatories. Sunlight reflected off satellites can create bright streaks that obscure images. Researchers say that risk should be factored into future satellite planning, noting that low-Earth orbit satellites already increased from roughly 2,000 in 2019 to 15,000 in 2025.

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Egyptologists confirm the discovery of a pharaoh's tomb.

Archaeologists uncovered a trove of 225 figurines arranged in a star shape within an ancient Egyptian tomb—a rare find given how many sites were looted over the centuries. Symbols on the figurines suggest the resting site was intended for Pharaoh Shoshenq III, though his body was missing. Shoshenq III ruled during a civil war, so the research team believes political unrest likely foiled his burial plans.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Marcy C. in Haiku, Hawaii.

"My 15-year-old grandson noticed a boy on his bus had holes in his shoes. He knew the boy's family did not have much money so he asked his mom to buy him a pair of shoes on her way home from work. She sent him pictures of the choices and he didn't think he would like any of them, so he gave him his nice pair of tennis shoes that he saved for special occasions."

Christmas Holiday Show!



**Featuring:
The Shaun Johnson Big
Band Experience:
The Holiday Show**

**Sunday, December 14, 2025
4pm at the NSU Johnson Fine
Arts Center**

Tickets are on sale now!

- \$35/Adult & \$25/Student for non-members on-line or at IDC.
- \$25 for ACCA members (contact a board member or purchase at IDC Box Office for discount pricing.)

www.AberdeenCommunityConcerts.org



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Kids were coloring at the Wage Memorial Library's annual Christmas Tour of Trees event held Friday. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Lexie Locke had her picture taken with Mickey Mouse at the Wage Memorial Library's annual Christmas Tour of Trees event. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The Professional Management Services tree received the most votes at the Tour of Trees event. (Photo from Wage Memorial Library FB Page)

DACOTA BANK

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Cookies & Calendars

FRIDAY, DEC. 12

9:00 - 4:00 PM

7 East Hwy 12, Groton

*Stop in lobby for
cookies, coffee and a
2026 calendar!*

MEMBER FDIC

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Names Released in Codington County Fatal Crash

What: Two-vehicle fatal crash
Where: S. Broadway Street and 20th Avenue SE, Watertown, SD
When: 6:32 a.m., Tuesday, December 2, 2025

Driver 1: Antonio Davis, Jr., 29-year-old male from Oceanside, CA, fatal injuries
Vehicle 1: 2019 Dodge Ram 1500
Seat belt Used: Yes

Driver 2: Jerry F. Waldner, 54-year-old male from Watertown, SD, no injuries
Vehicle 2: 2006 Peterbilt Conventional 379
Seat belt Used: Yes

Codington County, S.D.- A California man was fatally injured in a two-vehicle crash Tuesday morning in Watertown, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Antonio Davis, Jr., the driver of a 2019 Dodge Ram 1500, was traveling west on 20th Avenue SE when the vehicle crossed into the eastbound lane and collided with an eastbound 2006 Peterbilt semi driven by Jerry Waldner.

Davis was pronounced deceased at the scene. Waldner was not injured.

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

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

Groton Angel Tree Reminder

The Angel tree gifts are due on Tuesday., December 10th.

There are a couple cards left on the City Hall Tree.

Thank you for your support of the Angel Tree.



**ELDA STANGE'S
102nd BIRTHDAY
is on Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025.**
Please join us in helping her celebrate her
special day by sending her a card at:
PO Box 305
405 N. 3rd Street
Groton, SD 57445



What can \$20 get you?



for
Senior Citizens

or anyone using physical therapy
a gym membership at

15 N Main - Ste. 101

Open 24/7

GDI Living  Fitness

Call/Text Paul at 605/397-7460

Call/Text Tina at 605/397-7285

for details



Annual Membership Rates

Student is \$29.82 per month or \$255.60 per year
Single is \$35.15 per month or \$319.50 per year
2-Person is \$55.45 per month or \$575.10 per year
Family is \$67.10 per month or \$702.26 per year

Month-to-Month Rates

Student is \$35.15 per month
Single is \$40.48 per month
2-Person is \$59.78 per month
Family is \$72.43 per month

**While many other rates have gone up, ours has not.
Same rates for several years!**

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GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting

December 8, 2025 – 6:00 PM

Hot Spot

42295 US Hwy 12 Bristol, SD

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approve of minutes of November 11, 2025 school board meeting as drafted.
2. Approve of November 2025 Financial Report, Custodial Accounts, and Investments.
3. Approve of November 2025 District bills for payment.
4. Approve of November 2025 School Lunch Report.
5. Approve of November 2025 School Transportation Report.
6. Authorize the Business Manager to pay district bills up to \$75,000 in advance, using the custodial advance payment account to be approved by the board for reimbursement at the following regular board meeting.
7. Approve Open Enrollments #26-12, #26-13, and #26-14 due to special circumstances.
8. Approve Open Enrollments #26-15, #26-16, and #26-17.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Board discussion regarding school district elections and voting precincts.
 - a. Set date and time for school board election – June 2, 2026 (7:00 AM to 7:00 PM) and authorize Business manager to designate officials at designated voting precincts. [3-year terms expiring: Grant Rix, Heather Lerseth-Fliehs)
3. Second reading and approval of recommended policy changes: DLA Payday Schedules, DJG Vendor Relations, DJ Purchasing, DJBA Incidental Accounts [Delete], DJF Purchasing Procedures [Delete]
4. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Adopt Supplemental Budget #26-1.
2. Authorize Business Manager to create custodial account for Girls Softball.
3. Consider advertising for after-school weight room supervisor.
4. Board discussion regarding virtual educational programming options.
5. Review preliminary 2026-2027 School Calendar.
6. First reading of recommended Job Description: Technology Coordinator
7. Approve hiring Kyle Gerlach, JH Boys Basketball Coach.
8. Approve Teagan Block as Volunteer Wrestling Coach.
9. Approve resignation of Aubray Harry, Cheer Coach, at the end of the 2025-26 school year.
10. Approve resignation of Maddie Bjerke, Cheer Coach, at the end of the 2025-26 school year.

ADJOURN

9th Annual Holiday Party Live and Silent Auctions Olive Grove Golf Clubhouse

Groton, SD

Sat., Dec. 6

Holiday Party:
6 p.m. to close
A variety of snacks
served

**Come on out for a fun
evening and support
your local golf course**



**Silent
Auction
Basket Items**

Bidding closes
at 9 p.m.
Live Auction
begins at
9 p.m.

Proceeds raised for maintenance
of course and clubhouse!



A semi with groceries for Ken's Food Fair in Groton went in the ditch on Thursday four miles west of town. The produce semi is expected to hopefully make a delivery to the store today. For a period of time, traffic was re-routed. There were no injuries.

(SDHP FB Photo)



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

State vaccine survey results are 'concerning,' health advocates say

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

lose to half of South Dakotans aren't up-to-date on their flu shots or their hepatitis B vaccinations, new vaccine survey results released by the South Dakota Department of Health indicate.

About 63% aren't up-to-date on their HPV vaccinations, which protect against most cases of cervical cancer, and 78% aren't up-to-date on their pneumococcal vaccinations, which help protect against pneumococcal infections.

That's "concerning" to Keith Hansen, president of the South Dakota State Medical Association. Vaccinations are "one of the most important developments in health" to keep people and communities healthy, he said.

As a reproductive endocrinology and infertility specialist, he is especially concerned with how vaccine-preventable diseases can affect pregnant women and newborn children.

"It's really sad when someone isn't vaccinated and then they come into the hospital because they caught a vaccine-preventable disease," Hansen said. "Now they have some bad outcome that could have been prevented."

The state Health Department conducted the survey to better understand vaccination behaviors, decision-making and awareness of the vaccine schedule. A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grant funded the survey.

COVID pandemic influences some vaccine behavior

More than a quarter of survey respondents said the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted their views on vaccines. Those respondents also had lower vaccination rates for the flu and COVID, at 34% and 4%, respectively.

Among all survey respondents, 96% reported ever being vaccinated. About 98% of respondents with children reported that their child had received at least one vaccination.

About 96% of respondents said they get at least "some" vaccines recommended by their doctor, and nearly 93% of respondents said they follow the routine or a delayed vaccination schedule for their child.

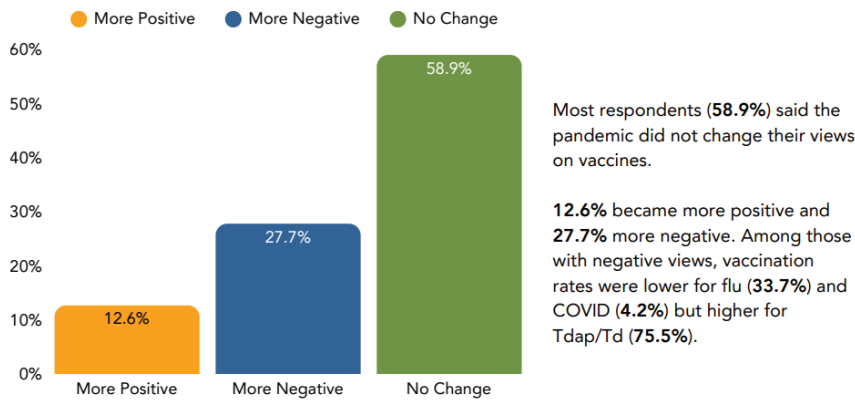
Carmen Toft, director for South Dakota Families for Vaccines and board vice president of Immunize South Dakota, said the state should "celebrate" those positive statistics.

The goal, Toft said, is to reach vaccination rates above 95% to reach herd immunity, which is when the prevention of infectious diseases becomes most effective.



A nurse readies a measles, mumps and rubella vaccine in May 2025 at Sanford Children's Hospital in Sioux Falls. (Photo by Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Vaccination Viewpoints



Data Source: Population Health Evaluation Center, South Dakota State University. January 2025. Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Award Number NH231P922581).



Most South Dakota vaccine survey respondents said their views on immunizations haven't changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. But nearly 28% said their views became more negative because of the pandemic. (Courtesy of the South Dakota Department of Health)

Tdap vaccinations remain high

While most vaccination rates in the survey are lower than Hansen or Toft prefer, up-to-date Tdap vaccination rates were highest among respondents at 78%. The vaccine protects against infections caused by diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough.

Among respondents who said their vaccination views were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, 75.5% of adult respondents were up to date on their Tdap vaccination.

That could be because the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends adults get the Tdap booster every 10 years for adults, Toft said, rather than yearly like the flu. If vaccine hesitancy rises, Tdap vaccination rates could be impacted more slowly than more regularly recommended

vaccines.

Hansen added that Tdap vaccinations are sometimes administered in response to injuries, such as cuts, to prevent tetanus. Also known as lockjaw, tetanus causes muscle contractions and can be life-threatening.

Conflicting information could lead to more vaccine hesitancy

The most common reasons respondents gave for not receiving vaccinations included hearing contradictory information — from doctors, social media, news outlets, government agencies and others — and believing a vaccine isn't safe or isn't needed.

Concern about vaccine safety was the most common reason respondents gave for choosing not to vaccinate a child, followed by the belief that it wasn't needed and the prevalence of conflicting information about vaccines.

Toft said fast-spreading misinformation on social media is influencing public opinion. So is U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s introduction of "fringe ideas" to inform policy changes, she said.

"It's moved off of Facebook feeds and onto 'CBS Mornings,'" Toft said, adding "the decisions seem more and more politicized, and that'll only lead to more confusion."

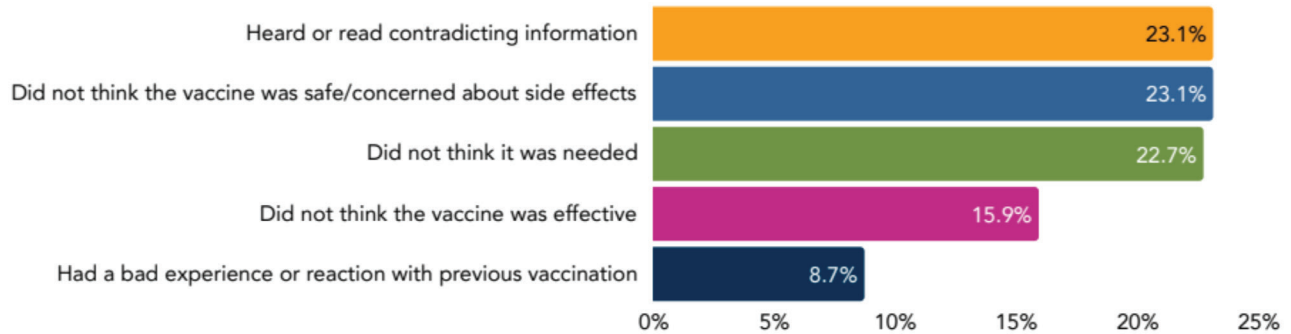
A CDC vaccine committee charged with setting national guidelines around vaccine policy voted on Friday to eliminate a 34-year-old recommendation that all newborn babies receive a hepatitis B vaccine. There was a 99% drop in serious infections among children between 1990 and 2019, which is attributed to the universal vaccination policy. Recommendations for adults and unvaccinated older children will remain unchanged.

The new recommendation mirrors COVID-19 guidelines changed by the same committee in September. The change at that time caused widespread confusion about the vaccine's accessibility and if insurance companies would cover it.

"I think it'll be a while before we see the long-lasting implications of some of these decisions they're making," Toft said of the committee's decisions.

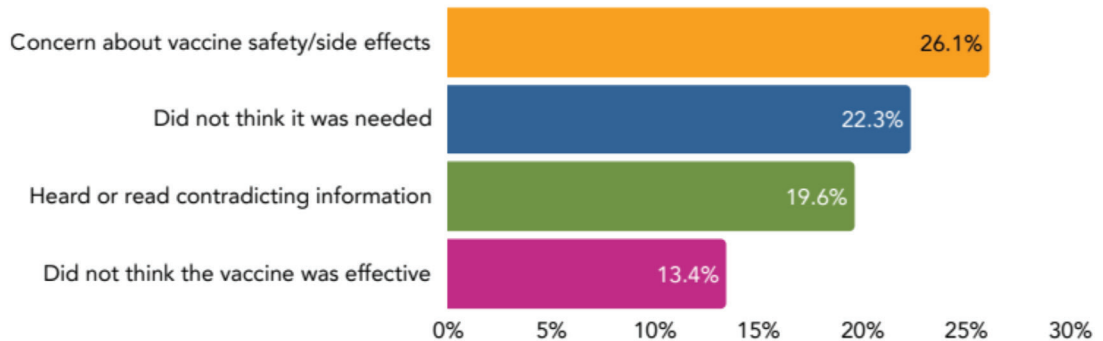
The recommendations play a key role in determining which vaccines insurance companies are willing to

Reasons For Not Receiving Vaccinations



Respondents were asked why they might choose not to follow the CDC Vaccination Schedule. The top five reasons are shown in the figure above.

Reasons For Not Vaccinating Child



Respondents were asked why they might choose not to vaccinate their child according to the CDC schedule. The top four reasons are shown above.

Conflicting information and vaccine safety were among the most common reasons adults and parents of children might choose not to vaccinate, respondents to the South Dakota Department of Health vaccine survey said. (Courtesy of the South Dakota Department of Health)

cover and how accessible those immunizations are to the public.

South Dakota's survey results indicate that most people place their trust in local professionals rather than national entities: 84% of respondents said their preferred source of health information is their doctor or health professional. About 95% said they "somewhat" or "to a great extent" trust their doctor or health professional with vaccine information — more than pharmacists, the state Department of Health, or the CDC. Social media and news outlets were the lowest trusted sources among respondents.

Hansen hopes health professionals take note and choose to broach immunization discussions more often with patients. Toft agreed that health professionals are the best point of contact for vaccine education.

"When we talk to vaccine-hesitant parents, we're like, 'Yes, ask questions. I'd love to help you. I'd love to connect you with a provider who can answer your questions,'" Toft said. "We want you to have access

to information to make the best decision for you and your family.”

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.

CDC vaccine committee overturns decades-old hepatitis B recommendation for newborns

BY: MAYA HOMAN



Members of a key CDC advisory committee, known as the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, met in Atlanta on Dec. 4. Maya Homan/Georgia Recorder

However, in all other cases, the decision will be left to “individual-based decision-making,” a change that experts say will lead to an increase in chronic hepatitis B infections. The new recommendation also suggests that parents delay the first dose of the vaccine until at least two months after birth.

Friday’s decision comes after an 8-3 vote from a key CDC advisory committee, known as the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, which is charged with setting national guidelines around which people should be vaccinated against a wide range of preventable diseases and when those vaccines should be administered. The recommendations play a key role in determining which vaccines insurance companies are willing to cover and how accessible those immunizations are to the public.

The two-day meeting included several presentations from prominent anti-vaccine activists, including Aaron Siri, a vaccine injury lawyer who has previously represented U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and reportedly helped him vet health officials for President Donald Trump’s administration. At least two of them — Cynthia Nevison, a climate researcher who has ties to anti-vaccine groups, and Mark Blaxill, a former consultant and author — were recently hired by the CDC.

Retsef Levi, an ACIP member and professor of operations management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, called the updated recommendation a “very positive change in policy,” arguing that blanket vaccine recommendations force newborns to serve as “a safety net for adults’ mistakes.”

ATLANTA — A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention committee voted to eliminate a recommendation that all newborn babies receive a vaccine against hepatitis B, ending a policy that has been in place since 1991 to protect Americans against an incurable liver disease that can lead to cirrhosis, cancer and liver failure.

The current three-dose series for hepatitis B includes one vaccine administered to infants within 24 hours of birth, and subsequent booster shots given one month and six months after the initial dose. The universal vaccination policy is credited with a 99% drop in serious infections among American children between 1990 and 2019.

In its updated guidelines, the agency will continue to recommend that babies born to mothers who test positive for hepatitis B receive a vaccine at birth.

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But Dr. Cody Meissner, another member of the committee who also serves as a professor of pediatrics and medicine at Dartmouth College, argued that the vaccines play a crucial role in protecting infants from the disease, and said there was no valid scientific evidence to support the changes implemented by the panel.

"Thoughtful inquiry is always commendable," he told the committee. "But that inquiry should not be confused with baseless skepticism, which is what I think we're encountering here."

Sandra Fryhofer, a doctor and liaison for the American Medical Association, also criticized the move, arguing that implementing guidelines based on the mother's hepatitis status will leave babies vulnerable to developing the disease from other sources, such as infected relatives. According to CDC data, roughly half of people with hepatitis B do not know they are infected.

"Are we going to test every patient that has access to or touches that baby?" she asked the committee Thursday. "I mean, that's not something that's really doable."

The updated recommendation for the hepatitis B vaccine mirrors COVID-19 vaccine guidelines passed by the same panel in September, which place new emphasis on the risks of immunizations, though the CDC's own datashows that the vaccines are safe and effective for most people.

A second vote, which passed 6-4, encourages parents to discuss using serology testing, a type of blood test that measures antibodies to gauge how well a patient's immune system has responded to a disease, before allowing their children to receive additional doses of the hepatitis B vaccine.

The changed recommendations will not prevent doctors from administering hepatitis B vaccines to newborns, but critics say they could create additional hurdles for families and healthcare providers.

"Adding excessive or ambiguous language around shared decision-making for routine vaccines muddies the waters, creates a false sense of scientific uncertainty and places unnecessary burden on clinicians and families," said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, who was representing the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.

Children enrolled in Medicaid or the Vaccines for Children program, which provides free immunizations to children who are uninsured or underinsured, will continue to be eligible for hepatitis B vaccines at birth under the new recommendations, according to program liaisons.

Federal fallout

As with the new COVID-19 vaccine recommendations, the updated hepatitis B guidelines will not take effect until being officially signed off by the acting CDC Director, Jim O'Neill.

But amid shifting federal guidance on public health policies, a growing number of state and federal officials are developing their own policies rather than relying on the agency's guidelines. In a Dec. 3 letter sent ahead of ACIP's meeting, more than 30 members of Congress urged O'Neill to maintain the existing recommendations, regardless of what the advisory committee decided.

"There is no data to support delaying the first immunization to one-month, four years, or 12 years of age," the letter states.

U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, a Louisiana Republican who heads the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, also called for O'Neill to forgo signing the updated recommendations.

"As a liver doctor who has treated patients with hepatitis B for decades, this change to the vaccine schedule is a mistake," he wrote in a social media post after the vote. "The hepatitis B vaccine is safe and effective. The birth dose is a recommendation, NOT a mandate."

Cassidy, a doctor, cast the deciding vote to confirm Kennedy as health secretary on the condition that Kennedy "maintain the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices without changes." Kennedy later backtracked on that promise, firing all 17 previous members of the committee and replacing them with a slate of hand-picked appointees, many of whom are seen as vaccine skeptics.

In a Thursday social media post, Cassidy criticized the committee for its plans to hear testimony from Siri, the vaccine injury lawyer.

"The ACIP is totally discredited," he added. "They are not protecting children."

Maya Homan covers state politics and policy for the Georgia Recorder. Previously, she worked as a fellow for USA TODAY covering Georgia politics and the 2024 presidential election. She is a 2023 graduate of Northeastern University, and can usually be found knitting in a committee meeting.

Trump order ending birthright citizenship to be argued at US Supreme Court

BY: JACOB FISCHLER

The U.S. Supreme Court said Friday justices will hear a case to decide if President Donald Trump's order to end birthright citizenship is constitutional.

The court agreed to hear a case, before it is decided in a lower court, that deals with the Constitution's 14th Amendment, which grants citizenship to almost everyone born in the United States. The amendment's birthright citizenship clause has been used to give citizenship to the children of immigrants in the country without legal authorization or on a temporary basis.

While a schedule for arguments has not yet been released by the court, it's likely the case would be heard sometime in early 2026.

The Trump administration argued in its petition to the court that the amendment, which was adopted in 1868, was meant to apply to newly freed slaves. It was not meant to provide citizenship to the children of immigrants without legal status, Solicitor General D. John Sauer wrote.

"Long after the Clause's adoption, the mistaken view that birth on U.S. territory confers citizenship on anyone subject to the regulatory reach of U.S. law became pervasive, with destructive consequences," Sauer wrote in the September petition.

The petition also sought Supreme Court review of a related challenge to the order by the states of Washington, Arizona, Illinois and Oregon. Friday's court order did not grant a hearing on that case.

Trump signed an executive order on Jan. 20 seeking to redefine the birthright citizenship clause to exclude the children of immigrants in the country without legal authority or only temporarily. Democratic-led states and advocacy groups swiftly sued.

Courts have largely blocked enforcement of the order, although the Supreme Court in June allowed it to go into effect in the states that had not sued to preserve the right.

In a Friday afternoon statement, the American Civil Liberties Union, a leading civil rights group, noted that several federal judges had blocked enforcement and predicted the Supreme Court would preserve birthright citizenship.



The U.S. Supreme Court on Oct. 9, 2024. (Photo by Jane Norman/States

Newsroom)

"No president can change the 14th Amendment's fundamental promise of citizenship," Cecilia Wang, ACLU's national legal director, said. "For over 150 years, it has been the law and our national tradition that everyone born on U.S. soil is a citizen from birth. The federal courts have unanimously held that President Trump's executive order is contrary to the Constitution, a Supreme Court decision from 1898, and a law enacted by Congress. We look forward to putting this issue to rest once and for all in the Supreme Court this term."

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.

More industries want Trump's help hiring immigrant labor after farms get a break

Restaurants, construction and landscaping businesses have lost the most workers, a Stateline analysis found

BY: TIM HENDERSON

As food prices remain high, the Trump administration has made it easier for farmers to hire foreign guest workers and to pay them less. Now, other industries with large immigrant workforces also are asking for relief as they combat labor shortages and raids.

Visas for temporary foreign workers are a quick fix with bipartisan support in Congress. And Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins' office told Stateline that "streamlining" visas for both agricultural and other jobs is a priority for the Trump administration.

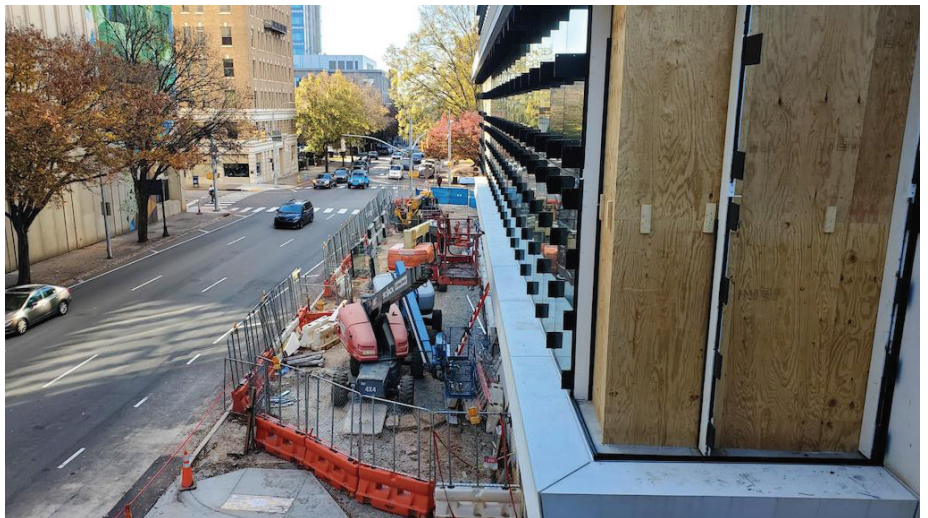
But some experts warn that such visas can be harmful if they postpone immigration overhauls that would give immigrant workers a path to green cards and citizenship.

"Lack of permanent status is costly to migrants, employers, and the broader economy," wrote Pia Orrenius, a labor economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, in a report published in June. Workers are "vulnerable to policy changes triggered by a change in administration, most recently the threat of mass deportations."

In a Nov. 25 interview with Stateline, Orrenius said the crackdown on illegal immigration could be a good thing if it leads to permanent solutions.

"If you can stop undocumented immigration, then great. This is a great time to work on comprehensive immigration reform," Orrenius said. "Where is there a scarcity of workers and how do we address those legally instead of illegally?"

Restaurants, construction and landscaping businesses have lost a combined 315,000 immigrant workers through August this year, more than any other industries, according to a Stateline analysis of Current



Construction on a new city hall in Raleigh, N.C., was at a standstill Nov. 18 as word of immigration raids kept away most workers. Industries with large immigrant workforces, such as construction, are asking for federal relief as they combat labor shortages and raids. (Photo by Clayton Henkel/NC Newsline)

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Population Survey data provided by the University of Minnesota at ipums.org.

The construction industry needs more foreign worker visas like those already being provided for agriculture to prevent more delays in building everything from homes to highways, business owners say.

The industry needs help to "provide lawful workers while working to prepare more Americans for permanent careers in construction," said Jaime Andress, testifying at a congressional hearing last month on behalf of the Associated General Contractors of America trade group. About 92% of contractors with open positions are having trouble finding enough skilled labor, whether it's for construction of buildings, highways or utility infrastructure, she testified.

There are about 145,000 fewer immigrants working in restaurants, on average, through August of this year compared with the same period in 2024, the Stateline analysis found. There are about 127,000 fewer in construction and 43,000 fewer in landscaping.

One landscaping firm, which did not agree to an interview, lost \$50,000 in contracts this year when workers stopped showing up because of rumored immigration raids, said Rebecca Shi, chief executive officer of the Chicago-based American Business Immigration Coalition, which advocates for employers seeking immigration changes.

"He had 75 workers and 50 of them didn't show up one day because there were rumors ICE was going to be in the area," Shi said. "Many of them were citizens and legal workers, but they were worried about family members and neighbors, so they didn't show up either. It's bad for the economy when you lose a worker, but it's also the fear and uncertainty. We know restaurants that have lost 50% of staff and are at risk of closing because people just aren't showing up."

The coalition organized a "fly-in" in October to Washington, D.C., to ask members of Congress for more help to legalize immigrant workers through work permits in hospitality, agriculture, construction, elder care, health care and manufacturing.

In a letter dated Dec. 2, thousands of businesses in all 50 states asked the administration for an additional 64,716 H-2B visas, saying they rely on them for seasonal surges in hospitality, tourism, landscaping, forestry, seafood production and other industries.

And a bipartisan group of 33 U.S. senators from 22 states signed a letter Nov. 13 by Maine Independent Sen. Angus King and South Dakota Republican Sen. Mike Rounds asking for more H-2B seasonal employment visas.

"Employers' workforce needs cannot be met with American workers alone," the letter said.

Construction contractors say they need visas that are similar to the H-2A visas for agriculture that the Trump administration streamlined in October to make them easier and cheaper for farmers to hire temporary foreign workers.

The Associated General Contractors of America wants visas like the proposed new H-2C visas floated by Pennsylvania Republican U.S. Rep. Lloyd Smucker. Those would allow up to 85,000 less-skilled temporary workers in construction, hospitality and other fields to stay in this country up to nine years. The bill, introduced in September, has not advanced.

The association also supports a pathway to legal status for some workers already in the country, as proposed by Florida Republican U.S. Rep. María Elvira Salazar and Texas Democratic U.S. Rep. Veronica Escobar. The bill, introduced in July, also has not advanced.

"Workforce shortages are the leading cause of construction project delays," said Brian Turmail, a vice president at the association. "Nearly 1 out of 3 contractors have been impacted in one way or another by enhanced ICE enforcement activities. That number is almost certain to increase now that ICE has received significant boosts to its budget as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act."

Those industries are asking for more help as the latest federal immigration raids further affect workforces in Illinois, Maryland and North Carolina, with more raids planned in Louisiana. Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, a data research organization at Syracuse University, reported a "massive redeployment of government military and civilian personnel to immigration enforcement" in recent months, with total detentions reaching more than 65,000, according to a Nov. 24 report. Nearly three-quarters of those ar-

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rested have no criminal convictions.

Construction, landscaping and other industries are already heavy users of H-2B visas for temporary non-agricultural foreign workers, according to government figures reviewed by Stateline.

In fiscal year 2025, which ended in September, there were about 209,000 H-2B visas, with Texas (20,051), Florida (18,515), North Carolina (8,634), Colorado (7,723) and Louisiana (7,234) getting the most. The most common occupations were building and grounds (94,152); food service (31,403); construction (16,729); farming, fishing and forestry (15,665); and personal care (12,170).

Some of the largest users of the visas last year were Core Tech Construction of New York City, a concrete coring and cutting firm (2,619 visas); ABC Professional Tree Services of Texas, which provides land clearance services (1,913); and Progressive Solutions LLC of Arkansas, which provides herbicide application to utilities (1,882).

The H-2B visa program needs to be streamlined and expanded to be useful for employers and workers, said David Bier, director of immigration studies at the libertarian CATO Institute, who has written about the visas.

Employers don't always get the workers they want because the United States limits H-2B visas to 33,000 twice a year. Requests for the visas have already surpassed the 33,000 cap for the first half of fiscal 2026.

"The paperwork is a nightmare for employers and there are a lot of steps for workers also," said Bier. "And there are so few visas available that your chance of getting all you need is almost nil."

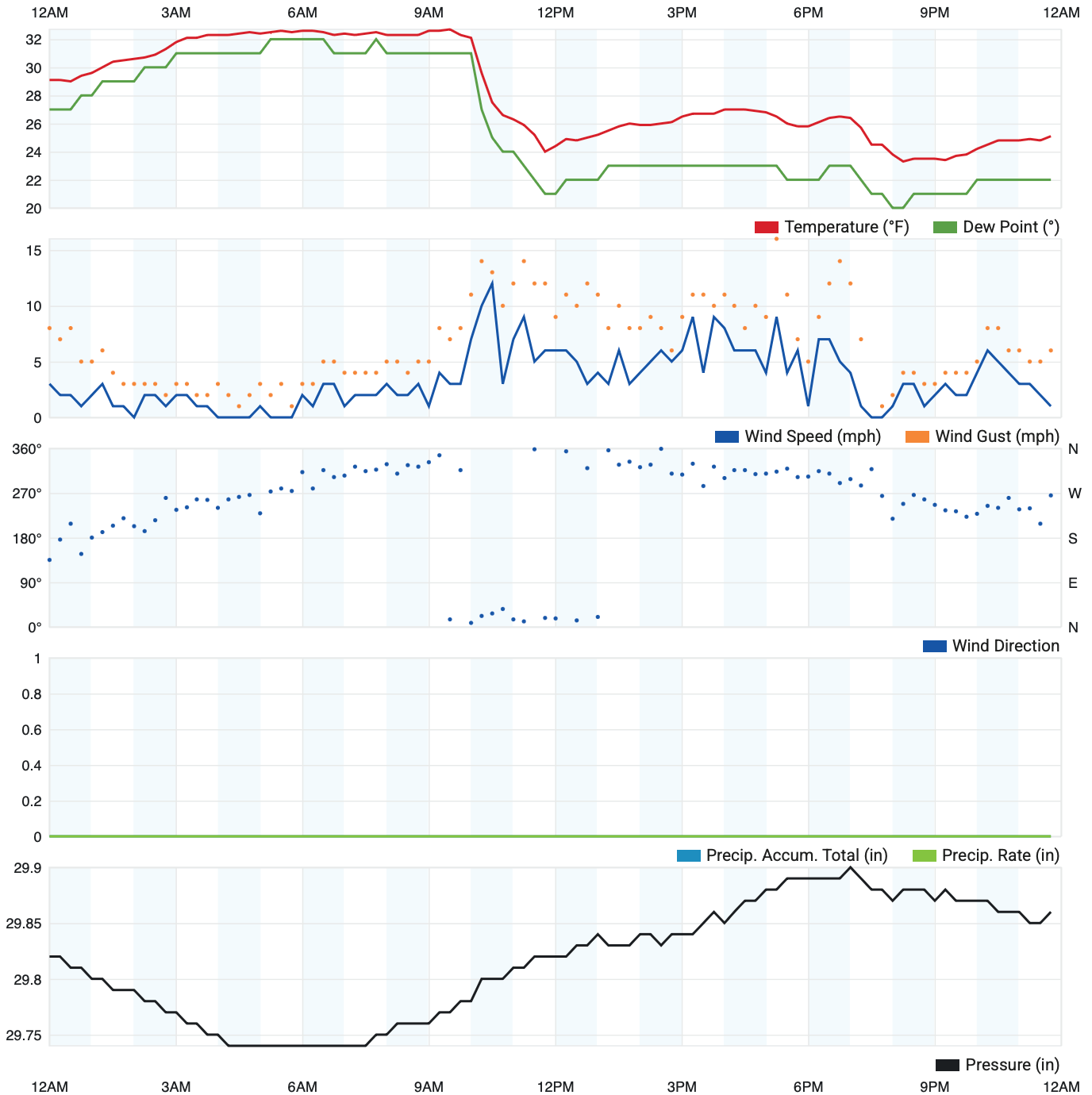
Tim Henderson covers demographics for Stateline. He has been a reporter at the Miami Herald, the Cincinnati Enquirer and the Journal News.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

December 5, 2025



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Today



High: 17 °F ↓

Snow Likely

Tonight



Low: -5 °F

Mostly Cloudy

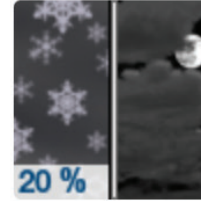
Sunday



High: 12 °F

Partly Sunny
then Chance
Snow

Sunday Night



Low: 6 °F

Slight Chance
Snow then
Mostly Cloudy

Monday



High: 33 °F

Partly Sunny



Winter Weather Advisory Today

December 6, 2025
3:37 AM

Key Messages:

- A **Winter Weather Advisory** remains in effect for Snow and patchy Blowing Snow over east central SD.
- Be prepared for slippery roads and surfaces, especially bridges and overpasses.
 - Slow down and use caution when driving or walking.

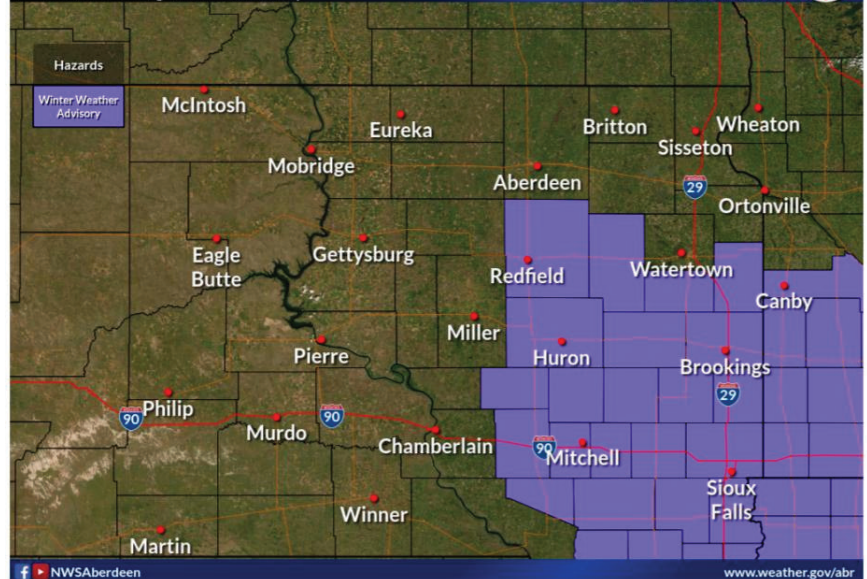
Winter Weather Advisory

valid 9 AM CST through 6 PM CST Saturday

Weather Forecast Office

Aberdeen, SD

Issued Dec 05, 2025 1:54 PM CST



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Winter Weather Advisories are in effect today for east central to southeastern South Dakota. Snow will begin in the morning and continue through the day, before ending during the late afternoon and evening hours. 1-3" of snow with locally higher amounts is currently forecast for much of east central to northeastern South Dakota. Winds out of the east to northeast will gust 20-30 mph, which will lead to blowing snow when snow is falling and between the Missouri River and James River (where the strongest winds are expected).

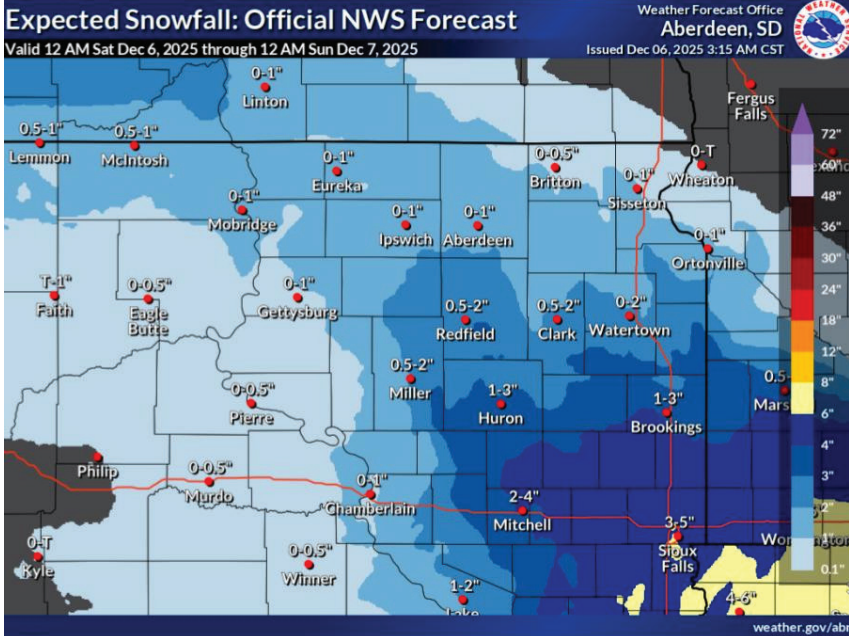
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Snow Forecast For Today

December 6, 2025
3:42 AM



Key Messages

- Snow will develop this morning and spread over into east central South Dakota today, before ending during the late afternoon and evening hours.
- 1 to 3" of snow expected with locally higher amounts possible over much of east central/northeast South Dakota.

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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

1 to 3 inches of snow with locally higher amounts is currently forecast for much of east central to north-eastern South Dakota. Higher amounts are forecast for southeastern South Dakota. Snow will begin in the morning and continue through the day, before ending during the late afternoon and evening hours. Winds out of the east to northeast will gust 20-30 mph, which will lead to blowing snow when snow is falling and between the Missouri River and James River (where the strongest winds are expected).



Wind Forecast Today

December 6, 2025
3:45 AM

	12/6 Sat						12/7 Sun		
	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am
Aberdeen	16	21	24	24	22	18	14	12	8
Britton	15	20	23	23	21	16	12	9	7
Chamberlain	22	25	25	25	22	18	14	12	10
Clark	17	24	26	26	23	20	16	13	12
Eagle Butte	24	25	25	24	22	20	15	16	18
Eureka	23	25	26	24	20	15	12	10	12
Gettysburg	25	28	29	28	22	18	15	14	16
McIntosh	23	26	26	24	21	15	12	15	17
Milbank	12	14	17	17	15	15	14	12	8
Miller	22	24	26	25	22	20	16	12	10
Mobridge	22	24	25	24	21	15	12	13	14
Murdo	23	22	24	24	23	20	15	13	15
Pierre	23	24	25	24	22	16	12	9	14
Redfield	16	22	25	25	22	20	16	13	10
Sisseton	15	14	17	17	16	14	13	10	7
Watertown	12	20	23	24	22	20	16	13	10
Webster	15	21	24	24	22	20	14	13	10
Wheaton	12	13	15	16	14	14	13	12	8

Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)

- Winds out of the east to northeast gusting 20 to 30 mph.
- Patchy blowing snow when snow is falling, and east of the Missouri River to the James River - where the strongest winds are expected.

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 33 °F at 9:07 AM

Low Temp: 23 °F at 8:10 PM

Wind: 16 mph at 6:37 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 69 in 1939

Record Low: -30 in 1972

Average High: 32

Average Low: 11

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.12

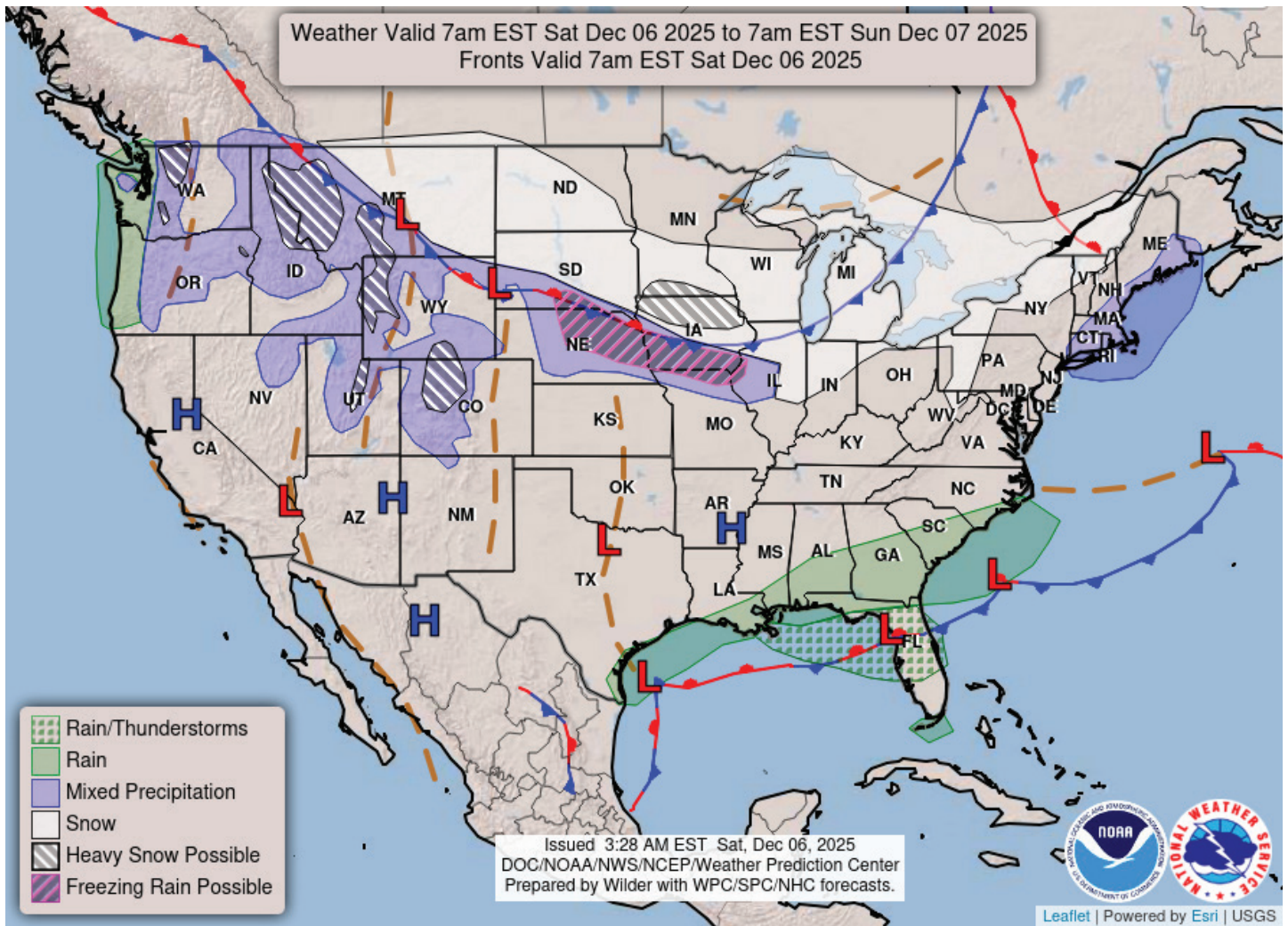
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.33

Precip Year to Date: 24.81

Sunset Tonight: 4:49 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:58 am



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Today in Weather History

December 6, 1969: An unusual period of almost continuous snow began in southern Minnesota and eastern South Dakota on the afternoon of the 5th and continued until late on the 10th. The Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport reported 88 2/3 consecutive hours of snowfall, which amounted to 14.2 inches total. The snowfall was 3-9 inches in the western half of Minnesota, with slightly lesser amounts in eastern South Dakota. Two inches snow fell at Summit and Sisseton; 2.5 inches at Watertown and Waubay; 3.0 inches at Clear Lake; 3.1 inches at Aberdeen; and 4.0 inches at Artichoke Lake, Webster, and Milbank.

1886 - A great snowstorm hit the southern Appalachian Mountains. The three day storm produced 25 inches at Rome GA, 33 inches at Asheville NC, and 42 inches in the mountains. Montgomery AL received a record eleven inches of snow. Columbia SC received one to two inches of sleet. (4th-6th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1913 - A snowstorm from December 1st through the 6th dumps a record total of 45.7 inches in Denver, Colorado. This storm produced the most snow ever recorded in a single Denver snowstorm.

1970 - The National Christmas tree in 1970 was a 78 foot spruce from South Dakota. On the way to Washington, the train carrying the tree derailed twice in Nebraska. On the weekend before the lighting event, the tree toppled in gusty winds and required new branches to fill it out.

1987 - Another in a series of storms brought high winds and heavy rain to the northwestern U.S., with heavy snow in some of the higher elevations. In northern California, Crescent City was drenched with 2.58 inches of rain, and winds gusted to 90 mph. Up to fourteen inches of snow blanketed the mountains of northern California, and snow and high winds created blizzard conditions around Lake Tahoe NV. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - The morning low at Bismarck, ND, was eleven degrees warmer than the record low of 25 degrees at Meridian MS, and during the afternoon half a dozen cities in the north central and northwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Alpena MI with a reading of 57 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Heavy snow blanketed the Central Rocky Mountain Region. Totals in the southern foothills of Colorado ranged up to 17 inches at Rye. Arctic air invaded the north central U.S. Lincoln NE, which reported a record high of 69 degrees the previous afternoon, was 35 degrees colder. International Falls MN was the cold spot in the nation with a morning low of 9 degrees below zero, and temperatures in northern Minnesota hovered near zero through the daylight hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



How to Deal With Unforgiveness

In the aftermath of hurt, follow these steps to protect your relationships.

Matthew 18:21-22: The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"

22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

God's Word tells us to forgive those who hurt us. So let's identify practical ways to confront unforgiveness head-on:

Take it seriously. Unforgiveness shouldn't be dismissed as unimportant.

Assume responsibility. Don't blame others for your actions.

Confess it honestly. Be specific with God about what you feel, and acknowledge that unforgiveness is sin.

Lay down your anger (Ephesians 4:31-32). Unless you deal with your resentment, bitterness can reenter your life later on.

Pray for the one who wronged you (Matthew 5:44). Though this may feel impossible, it's important. Praying is a choice that can impact relationships and change your outlook.

Ask that individual to forgive you. If the other person knows you've been harboring bitterness, consider asking for his or her forgiveness. Sometimes reaching out in this way can be a step toward peace.

Don't allow Satan to throw you back into bitterness. Once the matter is resolved, watch out for stray thoughts that could stir up memories of how the other person hurt you.

Go through these steps every time you are mistreated, and watch for God to work.

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:
12.05.25

34 38 42 44 69 8

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$60,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.03.25

14 19 27 30 41 10

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$8,570,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 30 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.05.25

4 35 38 40 41 3

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 45 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.03.25

4 13 18 25 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$111,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 45 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.03.25

9 31 35 37 58 11

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 14 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.03.25

1 14 20 46 51 26

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$820,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 14 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Roncalli 46, Northwestern 19
Arlington 50, Luverne, Minn. 49
Centerville 59, Parker/Marion 20
Hanson 46, Kimball-White Lake 21
Lemmon High School 61, Bison 19
Linton, N.D. 35, Timber Lake 19
Milbank 55, Great Plains Lutheran 18
Wakpala 45, Takini 19
Yankton 61, Sioux Falls Lincoln 10

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

Released 911 calls reveal desperate pleas and tragic outcomes during Texas Hill Country flood

By JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

KERRVILLE, Texas (AP) — Many of the voices were frantic and desperate. A few were steady and calm amid mounting, frightening danger, and in some cases, inescapable doom.

They came from families huddled on rooftops to escape rising, swirling waters, mothers panicked for the wellbeing of their children and onlookers who heard people yell for help through the dark as they clung to treetops.

One man, stuck high in a tree as it began to break under the pressure of the floodwaters, asked emergency dispatchers for a helicopter rescue that never came.

Their pleas were among more than 400 calls for help across Kerr County last summer when devastating floods hit during the overnight hours on the July Fourth holiday. The recordings of the 911 calls were released Friday.

The sheer volume of calls would overwhelm two county emergency dispatchers on duty in the Texas Hill Country as catastrophic flooding inundated cabins and youth camps along the Guadalupe River.

"There's water filling up super fast, we can't get out of our cabin," a camp counselor told a dispatcher above the screams of campers in the background. "We can't get out of our cabin, so how do we get to the boats?"

Amazingly, everyone in the cabin and the rest of campers at Camp La Junta were rescued.

The flooding killed at least 136 people statewide during the holiday weekend, including at least 117 in Kerr County alone. Most were from Texas, but others came from Alabama, California and Florida, according to a list released by county officials.

One woman called for help as the water closed in on her house near Camp Mystic, a century-old summer camp for girls, where 25 campers and two teenage counselors died.

"We're OK, but we live a mile down the road from Camp Mystic and we had two little girls come down the river. And we've gotten to them, but I'm not sure how many others are out there," she said in a shaky voice.

A spokesperson for the parents of the children and counselors who died at Camp Mystic declined to comment on the release of the recordings.

Calls came from people on rooftops and in trees

Many residents in the hard-hit Texas Hill Country have said they were caught off guard and didn't receive any warning when the floods overtopped the Guadalupe River. Kerr County leaders have faced scrutiny

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about whether they did enough right away. Two officials told Texas legislators this summer that they were asleep during the initial hours of the flooding, and a third was out of town.

Using recordings of first responder communications, weather service warnings, survivor videos and official testimony, The Associated Press assembled a chronology of the chaotic rescue effort. The AP was one of the media outlets that filed public information requests for recordings of the 911 calls to be released.

Many people were rescued by boats and emergency vehicles. A few desperate pleas came from people floating away in RVs. Some survivors were found in trees and on rooftops.

But some of the calls released Friday came from people who did not survive, said Kerrville Police Chief Chris McCall, who warned that the audio is unsettling.

"The tree I'm in is starting to lean and it's going to fall. Is there a helicopter close?" Bradley Perry, a firefighter, calmly told a dispatcher, adding that he saw his wife, Tina, and their RV wash away.

"I've probably got maybe five minutes left," he said.

Bradley Perry did not survive. His wife was later found clinging to a tree, still alive.

Moving higher and higher to survive

In another heartbreaking call, a woman staying in a community of riverside cabins told a dispatcher the water was inundating their building

"We are flooding, and we have people in cabins we can't get to," she said. "We are flooding almost all the way to the top."

The caller speaks slowly and deliberately. The faint voices of what sounds like children can be heard in the background.

Some people called back multiple times, climbing higher and higher in houses to let rescuers know where they were and that their situations were getting more dire. Families called from second floors, then attics, then roofs sometimes in the course of 30 or 40 minutes, revealing how fast and how high the waters rose.

As daylight began to break, the call volume increased, with people reporting survivors in trees or stuck on roofs, or cars floating down the river.

Britt Eastland, the co-director of Camp Mystic, asked for search and rescue and the National Guard to be called, saying as many as 40 people there were missing. "We're out of power. We hardly have any cell service," he said.

The 911 recordings show that relatives and friends outside of the unfolding disaster and those who had made it to safety had called to get help for loved ones trapped in the flooding.

One woman said a friend, an elderly man, was trapped in his home with water up to his head. She had realized his phone cut out as she was trying to relay instructions from a 911 operator.

Dispatchers gave advice and comfort

Overwhelmed by the endless calls, dispatchers tried to comfort the panic-stricken callers yet were forced to move on to the next one. They advised many of those who were trapped to get to their rooftops or run to higher ground. In some calls, children could be heard screaming in the background.

"There is water everywhere, we cannot move. We are upstairs in a room and the water is rising," said a woman who called from Camp Mystic.

The same woman called back later.

"How do we get to the roof if the water is so high?" she asked. "Can you already send someone here? With the boats?"

She asked the dispatcher when help would arrive.

"I don't know," the dispatcher said. "I don't know."

US vaccine advisers say not all babies need a hepatitis B shot at birth

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal vaccine advisory committee voted on Friday to end the longstanding recommendation that all U.S. babies get the hepatitis B vaccine on the day they're born.

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A loud chorus of medical and public health leaders decried the actions of the panel, whose current members were all appointed by U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. — a leading anti-vaccine activist before this year becoming the nation's top health official.

"This is the group that can't shoot straight," said Dr. William Schaffner, a Vanderbilt University vaccine expert who for decades has been involved with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and its workgroups.

Several medical societies and state health departments said they would continue to recommend them. While people may have to check their policies, the trade group AHIP, formerly known as America's Health Insurance Plans, said its members still will cover the birth dose of the hepatitis B vaccine.

For decades, the government has advised that all babies be vaccinated against the liver infection right after birth. The shots are widely considered to be a public health success for preventing thousands of illnesses.

But Kennedy's advisory committee decided to recommend the birth dose only for babies whose mothers test positive, and in cases where the mom wasn't tested.

For other babies, it will be up to the parents and their doctors to decide if a birth dose is appropriate. The committee voted 8-3 to suggest that when a family elects to wait, then the vaccination series should begin when the child is 2 months old.

President Donald Trump posted a message late Friday calling the vote a "very good decision."

The acting director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Jim O'Neill, is expected to decide later whether to accept the committee's recommendation.

The decision marks a return to a health strategy abandoned more than three decades ago

Asked why the newly-appointed committee moved quickly to reexamine the recommendation, committee member Vicky Pebsworth on Thursday cited "pressure from stakeholder groups," without naming them.

Committee members said the risk of infection for most babies is very low and that earlier research that found the shots were safe for infants was inadequate.

They also worried that in many cases, doctors and nurses don't have full conversations with parents about the pros and cons of the birth-dose vaccination.

The committee members voiced interest in hearing the input from public health and medical professionals, but chose to ignore the experts' repeated pleas to leave the recommendations alone.

The committee gives advice to the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on how approved vaccines should be used. CDC directors almost always adopted the committee's recommendations, which were widely heeded by doctors and guide vaccination programs. But the agency currently has no director, leaving acting director O'Neill to decide.

In June, Kennedy fired the entire 17-member panel earlier this year and replaced it with a group that includes several anti-vaccine voices.

Hepatitis B and delaying birth doses

Hepatitis B is a serious liver infection that, for most people, lasts less than six months. But for some, especially infants and children, it can become a long-lasting problem that can lead to liver failure, liver cancer and scarring called cirrhosis.

In adults, the virus is spread through sex or through sharing needles during injection drug use. But it can also be passed from an infected mother to a baby.

In 1991, the committee recommended an initial dose of hepatitis B vaccine at birth. Experts say quick immunization is crucial to prevent infection from taking root. And, indeed, cases in children have plummeted.

Still, several members of Kennedy's committee voiced discomfort with vaccinating all newborns. They argued that past safety studies of the vaccine in newborns were limited and it's possible that larger, long-term studies could uncover a problem with the birth dose.

But two members said they saw no documented evidence of harm from the birth doses and suggested concern was based on speculation.

Three panel members asked about the scientific basis for saying that the first dose could be delayed for two months for many babies.

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"This is unconscionable," said committee member Dr. Joseph Hibbeln, who repeatedly voiced opposition to the proposal during the sometimes-heated two-day meeting.

The committee's chair, Dr. Kirk Milhoan, said two months was chosen as a point where infants had matured beyond the neonatal stage. Hibbeln countered that there was no data presented that two months is an appropriate cut-off.

Dr. Cody Meissner also questioned a second proposal — which passed 6-4 — that said parents consider talking to pediatricians about blood tests meant to measure whether hep B shots have created protective antibodies.

Such testing is not standard pediatric practice after vaccination. Proponents said it could be a new way to see if fewer shots are adequate.

A CDC hepatitis expert, Adam Langer, said results could vary from child to child and would be an erratic way to assess if fewer doses work. He also noted there's no good evidence that three shots pose harm to kids.

Meissner attacked the proposal, saying the language "is kind of making things up."

Health experts say this could 'make America sicker'

Health experts have noted Kennedy's hand-picked committee is focused on the pros and cons of shots for the individual getting vaccinated, and has turned away from seeing vaccinations as a way to stop the spread of preventable diseases among the public.

The second proposal "is right at the center of this paradox," said committee member Dr. Robert Malone.

Some observers criticized the meeting, noting recent changes in how they are conducted. CDC scientists no longer present vaccine safety and effectiveness data to the committee. Instead, people who have been prominent voices in anti-vaccine circles were given those slots.

The committee "is no longer a legitimate scientific body," said Elizabeth Jacobs, a member of Defend Public Health, an advocacy group of researchers and others that has opposed Trump administration health policies. She described the meeting this week as "an epidemiological crime scene."

Republican Sen. Bill Cassidy, a liver doctor who chairs the Senate health committee, called the committee's vote on the hepatitis B vaccine "a mistake."

"This makes America sicker," he said, in a post on social media.

The committee heard a 90-minute presentation from Aaron Siri, a lawyer who has worked with Kennedy on vaccine litigation. He ended by saying that he believes there should be no ACIP vaccine recommendations at all.

In a lengthy response, Meissner said, "What you have said is a terrible, terrible distortion of all the facts." He ended by saying Siri should not have been invited.

The meeting's organizers said they invited Siri as well as a few vaccine researchers — who have been vocal defenders of immunizations — to discuss the vaccine schedule. They named two: Dr. Peter Hotez, who said he declined, and Dr. Paul Offit, who said he didn't remember being asked but would have declined anyway.

Hotez, of the Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, declined to present before the group "because ACIP appears to have shifted its mission away from science and evidence-based medicine," he said in an email to The Associated Press.

Argentina and Messi will open their World Cup defense against Algeria. The US starts vs. Paraguay

By RONALD BLUM, HOWARD FENDRICH and NOAH TRISTER AP Sports Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — All around the globe, eyes focused Friday on the stage where World Cup paths were sorted, nations' names chosen one by one in a draw that determined Argentina and Lionel Messi will start their title defense against Algeria and the U.S. will open against Paraguay.

Twenty-seven months after qualifying began, teams from five-time champion Brazil to newcomers Cape Verde, Curaçao, Jordan and Uzbekistan learned their group-stage opponents in the expanded 48-nation,

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104-game tournament that starts June 11 in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

"Exciting for the island, for the people there. They're so proud," said Dick Advocaat, the 78-year-old Dutchman leading Curaçao, a Caribbean country with a population of 150,000, into an opener against four-time champion Germany.

On a day that began with snow falling on the nation's capital, the ceremony at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts included U.S. President Donald Trump receiving a newly created peace prize awarded by FIFA, soccer's governing body. Trump, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney picked up plastic spheres containing their own nations' names from bowls — Sheinbaum drew more applause from those gathered in the hall than Trump.

FIFA's lead-in show, featuring music and stars from sports and entertainment, was almost as long as a soccer match, starting in the 87th minute. Tom Brady, Shaquille O'Neal, Aaron Judge and Wayne Gretzky took part. New Zealand was the last orb picked.

"Just watching Americans on stage and the president giving speeches and performances, it made it feel like an American event already," said U.S. midfielder Tyler Adams, who watched from England, where he plays for the Premier League club Bournemouth. "And I think we know the expectation of what it's going to be like when we go there and there's going to be halftime shows and there's going to be celebrities and the big draw of what America brings to sports."

Three-time champion Argentina opens on June 16 at either Kansas City, Missouri, or Santa Clara, California. Specific sites for all group stage games and kickoff times were to be announced Saturday. The Albiceleste then face Austria and Jordan in Group J. Argentina surprisingly lost its 2022 opener to Saudi Arabia before going on to win the final over France on penalty kicks.

Messi, who turns 39 during the tournament, hasn't committed yet to playing but it would be shocking if he decided against appearing in a record sixth World Cup.

"We are just awaiting for him to decide," coach Lionel Scaloni said. "In principle, everything is going well."

The U.S., which reached the semifinals at the inaugural World Cup in 1930 and the quarterfinals in 2002, starts Group D against Paraguay on June 12 in Inglewood, California. The Americans play Australia six days later at Seattle, then face Turkey, Romania, Slovakia or Kosovo — one will emerge next year from playoffs — on June 25 back at SoFi Stadium.

The Americans had friendlies against Turkey in June, Australia in October and Paraguay last month.

"We know them but they know us," U.S. coach Mauricio Pochettino said.

Brimming with confidence, he defined success as: "Win the World Cup."

Mexico hosts the tournament opener at Azteca Stadium in Mexico City on June 11 against South Africa in Group A, a rematch of the 1-1 tie at the 2010 opener in Johannesburg. El Tri then meets South Korea and closes the first round against the Czech Republic, Ireland, Denmark or North Macedonia.

Forty-two of the teams have been determined; 22 are competing in playoffs for six berths that will be decided March 31.

Winners and second-place nations from the 12 groups advance to the new round of 32 along with the top eight third-place teams. All games from the quarterfinals on will be in the U.S., culminating in the July 19 final at East Rutherford, New Jersey.

England, which won its only title in 1966, plays Croatia, Ghana and Panama in Group L. Players from Chelsea and Manchester City experienced summer U.S. conditions at this year's Club World Cup.

"It doesn't make it any easier when it comes again to blame the heat and fight against humidity and altitude and different time zones," England manager Thomas Tuchel said. "It's just what it is. We have to find a way to dig in. We have to find a way to accept it and build a high tolerance to all these obstacles."

Brazil opens against 2022 semifinalist Morocco, then plays Haiti and Scotland in Group C.

"It is a difficult group," coach Carlo Ancelotti said.

Top-ranked Spain, the 2010 champion, faces Cape Verde, Saudi Arabia and Uruguay in Group H, while Germany follows its Curaçao match by playing Ivory Coast and Ecuador in Group E.

"It is always difficult to play as a European team against a South American team," Germany coach Julian

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Nagelsmann said.

Two-time champion France starts June 16 against Senegal at East Rutherford, New Jersey, or Foxborough, Massachusetts. With Les Bleus coming off their first world title, they lost 1-0 to the Lions of Teranga in the 2002 opener at Seoul, South Korea. France then faces Bolivia, Iraq or Suriname in Group I and closes perhaps the most daunting group against Norway in a matchup of Kylian Mbappé and Erling Haaland,

Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo, like Messi expected to play in a sixth World Cup, has Group K matches against Uzbekistan, Colombia and Congo, Jamaica or New Caledonia. If Portugal and Argentina win their groups, Ronaldo and Messi could meet in a quarterfinal at Arrowhead Stadium.

Other groups include:

G: Belgium, Egypt, Iran, New Zealand.

B: Canada, Switzerland, Qatar and Italy, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Wales or Northern Ireland.

F: Netherlands, Japan, Tunisia and Sweden, Ukraine, Albania and Poland.

"Without knowing who the third opponent is, it can get difficult — specifically if Italy advances," Canada coach Jesse Marsch said.

No team has repeated as champion since Brazil won in 1958 and '62, and only eight nations have won soccer's biggest prize. Italy has four titles and Uruguay two.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino gave Trump a large gold-colored peace prize trophy and a gold-colored medal hanging from a blue ribbon, which Trump draped around his neck. Standing next to Trump, Infantino lavished praise.

"This is truly one of the great honors of my life," Trump said.

Shops empty in a Hispanic neighborhood as immigration crackdown comes to Louisiana

By JACK BROOK and SARA CLINE Associated Press/Report for America

KENNER, La. (AP) — The doors of Carmela Diaz's taco joint are locked, the tables are devoid of customers and no one is working in the kitchen. It's one of many once-thriving Hispanic businesses, from Nicaraguan eateries to Honduran restaurants, emptied out in recent weeks in neighborhoods with lots of signs in Spanish but increasingly fewer people on the streets.

In the city of Kenner, which has the highest concentration of Hispanic residents in Louisiana, a federal immigration crackdown aiming for 5,000 arrests has devastated an economy already struggling from ramped-up enforcement efforts this year, some business owners say, and had far-reaching impacts on both immigrants and U.S. citizens alike.

"Fewer and fewer people came," said a crying Diaz, whose Taqueria La Conquistadora has been closed for several weeks now with both customers and workers afraid to leave home. "There were days we didn't sell anything. That's why I made the decision to close the business — because there was no business."

On Wednesday, convoys of federal vehicles began rumbling back and forth down Kenner's main commercial streets as the Department of Homeland Security commenced the latest in a series of immigration enforcement operations that have included surges in Los Angeles, Chicago and Charlotte, North Carolina. Bystanders have posted videos of federal agents detaining people outside Kenner businesses and at construction sites.

Border Patrol commander Gregory Bovino also made an appearance in the city, surrounded by agents in tactical gear, to tout to reporters the launch of the operation dubbed Catahoula Crunch, a name derived from the big game hound that is the Louisiana state dog.

A community on edge

The state's Hispanic population has boomed in the last two decades, with many of them arriving in the aftermath of 2005's Hurricane Katrina to help rebuild. In Kenner, just west of New Orleans between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain, Hispanics make up about 30% of residents.

Diaz, who is from El Salvador, arrived in 2006 after years of doing farm work in Texas. She opened food trucks, earning enough to buy a home in Kenner, and her business has since expanded to a fleet of trucks

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and two brick-and-mortar restaurants.

Nearly all that is shuttered at the moment because of the crackdown, and Diaz is scraping by through making home deliveries to people fearful of being swept up by agents regardless of their legal status.

"They don't respect anyone," Diaz said. "They don't ask for documents. They don't investigate. They slap the handcuffs on them and take them away."

Mayra Pineda, CEO of the Louisiana Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and a Kenner resident for decades, fears for the future if the crackdown continues for months as planned.

"How are these business owners going to survive?" she said. "I don't know. But let's be clear — it's not only on the Hispanic community but bad for all of us, for the economy in general."

Local police chief backs operation

Kenner Police Chief Keith Conley described the federal immigration operation as a "prayer answered for us."

The chief said while crime is decreasing in the city, he has raised concerns about violent crimes involving immigrants who entered the U.S. illegally. The police department shared a dozen press releases documenting crimes – between 2022 and 2025 – where they say the person arrested had entered the country illegally. The cases included sex crimes, a murder, gang activity and shootings.

Based on the most recent crime report published by the Louisiana Statistical Analysis Center, in 2023 in Kenner a total of 4,436 total "offenses" were committed, which included 863 "crimes against persons."

Conley said that while violent crimes are concerning, one of the "blights" that "we see and feel every day" are traffic stops and car accidents, that involve drivers who are illegal immigrants that are uninsured and unlicensed.

State Sen. Kirk Talbot, a Republican who represents a portion of Kenner, said he believes the federal operation will ultimately "benefit the city" and that residents who are in the U.S. legally have "nothing to be afraid of."

"I think the people that come here illegally – who flee authorities and, especially, ones that have criminal records -- need to obey the law and they need to be caught and deported," Talbot said.

While Kenner has closely worked with federal immigration agents before, especially under the 287(g) program that allows local police to question the immigration status of suspects in their custody, Conley said local officers are not currently aiding in the federal operation. However, he said, the department is ready to assist in the operation if asked.

DHS says operations target violent offenders

DHS spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin said Thursday that federal agents have already made dozens of arrests, though the agency has not released a full list of people detained.

"Americans should be able to live without fear of violent criminal illegal aliens harming them, their families, or their neighbors," McLaughlin said in a statement. "In just 24 hours on the ground, our law enforcement officers have arrested violent criminals with rap sheets that include homicide, kidnapping, child abuse, robbery, theft, and assault."

The office of Mayor Michael Glaser, a former police chief, declined to comment on his stance on the operation. But it said the crackdown "falls under federal jurisdiction" and the mayor expects all agencies operating in the city to conduct themselves "professionally, lawfully and with respect for our community."

However, the city's police are among the hundreds of local and state law enforcement agencies nationwide that have signed agreements to be part of an Immigration and Customs Enforcement program that authorizes them to hold detainees for potential deportation.

Fearing for vulnerable relatives

Sergio Perez, a Guatemalan immigrant and U.S. citizen who has lived in Kenner since 2010, said he has loved ones there who lack legal permission to be in the country and risk being detained or deported. He also worries that anyone who is Hispanic is at risk of abuse by federal agents, regardless of their immigration status.

While Perez considers Kenner home — a place where it is easy to find favorite dishes like "caldo de res,"

a hearty beef and vegetable stew — he is prepared to leave the country if family members are deported. “They don’t want us here,” Perez said. “It’s like you are in someone’s house and you don’t feel welcome. They’re just killing our spirit.”

Suspect in DC pipe bomb case was ‘disappointed’ after Trump lost 2020 election, prosecutor says

By ERIC TUCKER, ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The man accused of planting a pair of pipe bombs outside the headquarters of the Republican and Democratic national parties in Washington on the eve of the U.S. Capitol attack told investigators he was “disappointed” in the outcome of the 2020 presidential election lost by President Donald Trump, the top federal prosecutor for the nation’s capital said Friday.

U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro told ABC News Live that she believes it is “unmistakable” that Brian Cole Jr. was responsible for placing the pipe bombs based on evidence collected by investigators. Pirro also suggested Cole may have been motivated by claims by Trump and his Republican allies that the 2020 election was stolen from him.

“He was disappointed in various aspects of the election, but this guy was an equal opportunity bomber,” Pirro said. “He was disappointed to a great deal in the system. Both sides of the system.”

Cole confessed to planting the devices on Jan. 5, 2021, two people familiar with the matter told The Associated Press. Cole also indicated that he believed conspiracy theories around the 2020 election and expressed views supportive of Trump, said the people, who were not authorized to discuss by name an ongoing investigation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Cole spoke to law enforcement officers for more than four hours after his arrest, a federal prosecutor, Charles Jones, said Friday during Cole’s initial court appearance.

The details add to a still-emerging portrait of the 30-year-old suspect from Woodbridge, Virginia, and it was not immediately clear what other information or perspectives he may have shared while cooperating with law enforcement following his arrest Thursday.

Surveillance video captured the suspect’s movements through the area where the pipe bombs were placed and the surrounding neighborhood. The suspect, whose face was obscured by a mask, was wearing a hooded sweatshirt, gloves and Nike Air Max Speed Turf shoes.

“He told us that he had those sneakers and that he got rid of them after he placed the pipe bombs,” Pirro said.

The FBI said a comparison of records from nearby cell towers and for Cole’s cellphone indicate he was near the RNC and DNC around the same time that the pipe bombs were placed there.

“In my mind, they were on the right path when it was clear that the cellphone was pinging in the exact locations where we had the video of the suspect walking along the area,” Pirro said. “Everywhere he walked, his cellphone was pinging at the cell tower. So it is unmistakable that he was the guy who was walking along and placing those items.”

Investigators also obtained credit card records that show Cole bought items consistent with components used to make the pipe bombs placed at the RNC and DNC, according to the FBI.

U.S. Magistrate Moxila Upadhyaya ordered Cole to remain in jail after his first court appearance. He did not enter a plea and is due back in court Dec. 15 for a detention hearing.

Cole, wearing a tan-colored jail uniform, answered a few routine questions from the magistrate during Friday’s brief hearing. Relatives of Cole attended the hearing and called out words of encouragement as he was led out of the courtroom.

“We love you!” one shouted.

“We’re here for you, baby,” another said.

Defense attorney John Shoreman declined to comment on the charges after the hearing.

“We’re in the very, very early stages,” he said.

Nobody was hurt before the bombs were rendered safe, but the FBI has said both devices could have

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been lethal.

The arrest marks the first time investigators have publicly identified a suspect in an act that has been an enduring mystery for nearly five years in the shadow of the violent Capitol attack. For years, the FBI struggled to pinpoint a suspect despite hundreds of tips, a review of tens of thousands of video files and a significant number of interviews.

Trump lost the 2020 election to Democrat Joe Biden but promoted conspiracy theories that Democrats stole the election from him. A mob of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, after Trump's "Stop the Steal" rally near the White House.

Wall Street rises to the edge of its all-time high

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. stock market rose to the edge of its all-time high on Friday.

The S&P 500 added 0.2% and finished just 0.3% shy of its record closing level, which was set in October. It had briefly topped the mark during the day, before paring its gain.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 104 points, or 0.2%, and the Nasdaq composite gained 0.3%.

The modest moves capped a quiet week for Wall Street, offering a respite following weeks of sharp and scary swings.

Ulta Beauty helped lead the market and jumped 12.7% after the retailer reported stronger profit and revenue for the latest quarter than expected. CEO Kecia Steelman said its customers are broadly feeling pressure, but Ulta saw growth across its categories, particularly in e-commerce. It raised its forecast for revenue over the full year.

Another encouraging signal for the holiday shopping season came from Victoria's Secret & Co. It delivered a milder loss for the latest quarter than analysts expected, and it likewise raised its forecast for sales over the full year. Its stock rallied 18%.

Warner Bros. Discovery rose 6.3% after Netflix said it would buy Warner Bros. for \$72 billion in cash and stock following its pending split from Discovery Global.

The deal for the company behind HBO Max, "Casablanca" and "Harry Potter" is not a sure thing, though. It could raise fears at the U.S. government about too much industry power residing at Netflix.

Shares of Netflix fell 2.9%. Paramount Skydance, which earlier had been seen as a front-runner to buy Warner Bros., sank 9.8%.

Also on the losing end of Wall Street was SoFi Technologies. The financial technology company fell 6.1% to \$27.78 after saying it would add \$1.5 billion worth of its stock into the market in order to raise cash. It's selling the stock at a price of \$27.50 per share.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 13.28 points to 6,870.40. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 104.05 to 47,954.99, and the Nasdaq composite gained 72.99 to 23,578.13.

If the S&P 500 does return to a record, it would mark the latest time the U.S. stock market has powered past what seemed to be a debilitating set of worries. Most recently, those concerns centered on what the Federal Reserve will do with interest rates, whether too many dollars are flowing into artificial-intelligence technology and if sharp drops for cryptocurrencies would bleed over into other markets.

After some back and forth, the widespread expectation among traders is now that the Fed will cut its main interest rate next week in hopes of shoring up the slowing U.S. job market. If it does, that would be the third cut of the year.

Investors love lower interest rates because they boost prices for investments and can juice the economy. The downside is that they can worsen inflation, which is stubbornly remaining above the Fed's 2% target.

Economic reports released on Friday did little to change expectations for a coming cut. One said that an underlying measure of inflation that the Fed prefers to use was at 2.8% in September, exactly as economists expected.

A separate report said U.S. consumers appear to be downgrading their expectations for inflation coming

in the near future. They're now forecasting 4.1% inflation for the year ahead, down from their forecast of 4.5% last month, according to the University of Michigan.

That's the lowest such forecast since January, which is important because heightened expectations for inflation can create a vicious cycle that only worsens inflation.

In the bond market, Treasury yields climbed. The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.13% from 4.11% late Thursday.

In stock markets abroad, indexes were mixed in Europe and Asia.

Germany's DAX returned 0.6%, and South Korea's Kospi jumped 1.8% for two of the world's bigger gains.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 fell 1.1% after data showed household spending in Japan fell 3.0% in October from a year earlier. It was the sharpest drop since January 2024. Japanese markets have been shaky recently after the Bank of Japan hinted that hikes to interest rates may be coming.

US, Ukraine officials say they'll meet for 3rd day after progress on creating a security framework

By AAMER MADHANI and ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's advisers and Ukrainian officials say they'll meet for a third day of talks on Saturday after making progress on finding agreement on a security framework for postwar Ukraine.

The two sides also offered the sober assessment that any "real progress toward any agreement" ultimately will depend "on Russia's readiness to show serious commitment to long-term peace."

The statement from U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner as well as Ukrainian negotiators Rustem Umerov and Andriy Hnatov came after they met for a second day in Florida on Friday. They offered only broad brushstrokes about the progress they say has been made as Trump pushes Kyiv and Moscow to agree to a U.S.-mediated proposal to end nearly four years of war.

"Both parties agreed that real progress toward any agreement depends on Russia's readiness to show serious commitment to long-term peace, including steps toward de-escalation and cessation of killings," the statement said. "Parties also separately reviewed the future prosperity agenda which aims to support Ukraine's post-war reconstruction, joint U.S.-Ukraine economic initiatives, and long-term recovery projects."

The U.S. and Ukrainian officials also discussed "deterrence capabilities" that Ukraine will need "to sustain a lasting peace."

Witkoff and Kushner's talks in Florida with Umerov, Ukraine's lead negotiator, and Hnatov follow discussions between President Vladimir Putin and the U.S. envoys at the Kremlin on Tuesday.

Friday's session took place at the the Shell Bay Club in Hallandale Beach, a high-end private golf and lifestyle destination owned by Witkoff's real estate development company.

Previous diplomatic attempts to break the deadlock have come to nothing and the war has continued unabated. Officials largely have kept a lid on how the latest talks are going, though Trump's initial 28-point plan was leaked.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said his country's delegation in Florida wanted to hear from the U.S. side about the talks at the Kremlin.

Zelenskyy, as well as European leaders backing him, have repeatedly accused Putin of stalling in peace talks while the Russian army tries to press forward with its invasion. Zelenskyy said in a video address late Thursday that officials wanted to know "what other pretexts Putin has come up with to drag out the war and to pressure Ukraine."

Speaking to Russian journalist Pavel Zarubin on Friday, Kremlin foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov praised Kushner as potentially playing an important role in ending Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Ushakov also took part in Tuesday's talks at the Kremlin.

"If any plan leading to a settlement is put on paper, it will be the pen of Mr. Kushner that will lead the way," Ushakov said.

The flattering comments about Kushner by the senior Russian official come as Putin has sought to sow

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division between Trump and Ukraine and Europe at a moment when Trump's impatience with the conflict is mounting. Putin said his five-hour talks this week with Witkoff and Kushner were "necessary" and "useful," but some proposals were unacceptable.

Kushner, who is married to Trump's daughter Ivanka, was a senior adviser to Trump during his first term and was the president's point person on developing the Abraham Accords, which formalized commercial and diplomatic ties between Israel and a trio of Arab nations.

Kushner has played a more informal role in Trump's second go-around, but he helped Witkoff close out ceasefire and hostage negotiations between Israel and Hamas this fall. Trump tapped Kushner again to pair up with Witkoff to try to find an endgame to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The European take on the peace talks

Ushakov, who accompanied Putin on a visit to India on Friday, repeated the Russian president's recent criticism of Europe's stance on the peace talks. Kyiv's European allies are concerned about possible Russian aggression beyond Ukraine and want a prospective peace deal to include strong security guarantees.

Kyiv's allies in Europe are "constantly putting forward demands that are unacceptable to Moscow," Ushakov told Russia's state-owned Zvezda TV. "Putting it mildly, the Europeans don't help Washington and Moscow reach a settlement on the Ukrainian issues."

French President Emmanuel Macron said Friday that he made progress during a visit to Beijing on getting Chinese leader Xi Jinping's support for peace efforts.

"We exchanged deeply and truthfully on all points, and I saw a willingness from the (Chinese) president to contribute to stability and peace," Macron said.

The French president said he stressed that Ukraine needs guarantees that Russia won't attack it again if a settlement is reached and that Europe must have a voice in negotiations.

"The unity between Americans and Europeans on the Ukrainian issue is essential. And I say it, repeat it, emphasize it. We need to work together," Macron said.

The latest drone attacks

Russian drones struck a house in central Ukraine, killing a 12-year-old boy, officials said, while long-range Ukrainian strikes reportedly targeted a Russian port and an oil refinery.

The Russian attack on Thursday night in Ukraine's central Dnipropetrovsk region destroyed the house where the boy was killed and also two women were injured, according to the head of the regional military administration, Vladyslav Haivanenko.

The Ukrainian air force said Russia fired 137 drones of various types during the night.

Ukrainian drones attacked a port and an oil refinery inside Russia overnight as part of Kyiv's campaign to disrupt Russian logistics, Ukraine's general staff said.

The drones struck Temriuk sea port in Russia's Krasnodar region and the Syzran oil refinery in the Samara region, starting blazes, a statement said. Syzran is about 800 kilometers (500 miles) east of the border with Ukraine.

The Russian Defense Ministry said only that its air defenses intercepted 85 Ukrainian drones over Russian regions and Crimea, which Russia illegally annexed in 2014.

FIFA gives Trump a peace prize in a departure from its traditional focus on sport

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump was awarded the new FIFA peace prize on Friday at the 2026 World Cup draw — giving the spectacle to set matchups for the quadrennial soccer tournament even more of a Trumpian flair.

Trump, who had openly campaigned for the Nobel Peace Prize, had been heavily expected to receive the newly created FIFA prize. FIFA president Gianni Infantino, a close ally of Trump, has said he thought Trump should have won the Nobel for his efforts to broker a ceasefire in Gaza.

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In awarding the prize, Infantino told Trump it was a "beautiful medal for you that you can wear everywhere you want to go." Trump promptly placed the medal around his neck. The certificate that Infantino handed Trump recognizes the U.S. president for his actions to "promote peace and unity around the world."

Infantino also presented Trump with a gold trophy with his name on it that depicts hands holding up the world. "You definitely deserve the first FIFA Peace Prize for your action, for what you have obtained in your way," said Infantino, who spoke after a video was played that showed images of Trump meeting with world leaders from countries whose conflicts he has taken credit for resolving.

Trump thanked his family, including his wife, first lady Melania Trump, and praised the leaders of the other two host nations — Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum — in his brief remarks, saying the coordination with the countries has been "outstanding."

"This is truly one of the great honors of my life," Trump said, adding that "most important, I just want to thank everybody. The world is a safer place now."

Infantino has often spoken about soccer as a unifier for the world, but the prize is a departure from the federation's traditional focus on sport.

Infantino has been a frequent visitor to the Oval Office, including in November when the administration announced new efforts to expedite visa processing for World Cup visitors. Infantino had a prime seat at Trump's January inauguration and FIFA has established an office at Trump Tower in Manhattan.

FIFA has given no details about the process for choosing a winner. When Infantino first announced last month that the organization would give out a peace prize, some of its senior officials were caught off guard, learning about it through reports in the media.

The FIFA president was also on hand Thursday at the newly renamed Donald J. Trump Institute of Peace in Washington, where Trump and the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda signed a deal aimed at ending the conflict in eastern Congo.

FIFA's award to Trump came during a week in which his administration has been engaged in shuttle diplomacy to try to end the war in Ukraine, while also under scrutiny for lethal strikes on alleged drug boats in the Caribbean and as Trump hardens his rhetoric against immigrants.

The Nobel for peace was awarded this year to Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, who said shortly after the prize was announced that she was dedicating it in part to Trump for "his decisive support of our cause." Machado will receive the award at the traditional Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo, Norway, on Dec. 10.

Frank Gehry, the most celebrated architect of his time, dies at 96

By JOHN ROGERS Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Frank Gehry, who designed some of the most imaginative buildings ever constructed and achieved a level of worldwide acclaim seldom afforded any architect, has died. He was 96.

Gehry died Friday in his home in Santa Monica after a brief respiratory illness, said Meaghan Lloyd, chief of staff at Gehry Partners LLP.

Gehry's fascination with modern pop art led to the creation of distinctive, striking buildings. Among his many masterpieces are the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain; The Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles and Berlin's DZ Bank Building.

He also designed an expansion of Facebook's Northern California headquarters at the insistence of the company's CEO, Mark Zuckerberg.

Gehry was awarded every major prize architecture has to offer, including the field's top honor, the Pritzker Prize, for what has been described as "refreshingly original and totally American" work.

Other honors include the Royal Institute of British Architects gold medal, the Americans for the Arts lifetime achievement award, and his native country's highest honor, the Companion of the Order of Canada.

The start of his career in architecture

After earning a degree in architecture from the University of Southern California in 1954 and serving in the Army, Gehry studied urban planning at Harvard University.

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But his career got off to a slow start. He struggled for years to make ends meet, designing public housing projects, shopping centers and even driving a delivery truck for a time.

Eventually, he got the chance to design a modern shopping mall overlooking the Santa Monica Pier. He was determined to play it safe and came up with drawings for an enclosed shopping mall that looked similar to others in the United States in the 1980s.

To celebrate its completion, the mall's developer dropped by Gehry's house and was stunned by what he saw: The architect had transformed a modest 1920s-era bungalow into an inventive abode by remodeling it with chain-link fencing, exposed wood and corrugated metal.

Asked why he hadn't proposed something similar for the mall, Gehry replied, "Because I have to make a living."

If he really wanted to make a statement as an architect, he was told, he should drop that attitude and follow his creative vision.

Gehry would do just that for the rest of his life, working into his 90s to create buildings that doubled as stunning works of art.

As his acclaim grew, Gehry Partners LLP, the architectural firm he founded in 1962, grew with it, expanding to include more than 130 employees at one point. But as big as it got, Gehry insisted on personally overseeing every project it took on.

The headquarters of the InterActiveCorp, known as the IAC Building, took the shape of a shimmering beehive when it was completed in New York City's Chelsea district in 2007. The 76-story New York By Gehry building, once one of the world's tallest residential structures, was a stunning addition to the lower Manhattan skyline when it opened in 2011.

That same year, Gehry joined the faculty of his alma mater, the University of Southern California, as a professor of architecture. He also taught at Yale and Columbia University.

Imaginative designs drew criticism along with praise

Not everyone was a fan of Gehry's work. Some naysayers dismissed it as not much more than gigantic, lopsided reincarnations of the little scrap-wood cities he said he spent hours building when he was growing up in the mining town of Timmins, Ontario.

Princeton art critic Hal Foster dismissed many of his later efforts as "oppressive," arguing they were designed primarily to be tourist attractions. Some denounced the Disney Hall as looking like a collection of cardboard boxes that had been left out in the rain.

Still other critics included Dwight D. Eisenhower's family, who objected to Gehry's bold proposal for a memorial to honor the nation's 34th president. Although the family said it wanted a simple memorial and not the one Gehry had proposed, with its multiple statues and billowing metal tapestries depicting Eisenhower's life, the architect declined to change his design significantly.

If the words of his critics annoyed Gehry, he rarely let on. Indeed, he even sometimes played along. He appeared as himself in a 2005 episode of "The Simpsons" cartoon show, in which he agreed to design a concert hall that was later converted into a prison.

He came up with the idea for the design, which looked a lot like the Disney Hall, after crumpling Marge Simpson's letter to him and throwing it on the ground. After taking a look at it, he declared, "Frank Gehry, you've done it again!"

"Some people think I actually do that," he would later tell the AP.

Gehry's lasting legacy around the world

Ephraim Owen Goldberg was born in Toronto on Feb. 28, 1929, and moved to Los Angeles with his family in 1947, eventually becoming a U.S. citizen. As an adult, he changed his name at the suggestion of his first wife, who told him antisemitism might be holding back his career.

Although he had enjoyed drawing and building model cities as a child, Gehry said it wasn't until he was 20 that he pondered the possibility of pursuing a career in architecture, after a college ceramics teacher recognized his talent.

"It was like the first thing in my life that I'd done well in," he said.

Gehry steadfastly denied being an artist though.

"Yes, architects in the past have been both sculptors and architects," he declared in a 2006 interview with The Associated Press. "But I still think I'm doing buildings, and it's different from what they do."

His words reflected both a lifelong shyness and an insecurity that stayed with Gehry long after he'd been declared the greatest architect of his time.

"I'm totally flabbergasted that I got to where I've gotten," he told the AP in 2001. "Now it seems inevitable, but at the time it seemed very problematic."

The Gehry-designed Guggenheim Museum in Abu Dhabi, first proposed in 2006, is expected to finally be completed in 2026 after a series of construction delays and sporadic work. The 30,000-square-foot (2,787-square-meter) structure will be the world's largest Guggenheim, leaving a lasting legacy in the capital city of the United Arab Emirates.

His survivors include his wife, Berta; daughter, Brina; sons Alejandro and Samuel; and the buildings he created.

Another daughter, Leslie Gehry Brenner, died of cancer in 2008.

Netflix to acquire Warner Bros. studio and streaming business for \$72 billion

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS and MATT OTT AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Netflix struck a deal Friday to buy Warner Bros. Discovery, the Hollywood giant behind "Harry Potter" and HBO Max, in a \$72 billion deal that would bring together two of the biggest players in television and film and potentially reshape the entertainment industry.

If approved by regulators, the merger would put two of the world's biggest streaming services under the same ownership — and join Warner's television and motion picture division, including DC Studios, with Netflix's vast library and its production arm, which has released popular titles such as "Stranger Things" and "Squid Game."

The proposal could draw intense antitrust scrutiny, particularly for its effects on movie making and streaming subscriptions.

"Netflix is the top streaming service today. Now combined with HBO Max, it will absolutely cement itself as the Goliath in the streaming industry," said Mike Proulx, vice president and research director at Forrester, a market research company.

The cash and stock deal is valued at \$27.75 per Warner share, giving it a total enterprise value of \$82.7 billion, including debt. The transaction is expected to close in the next 12 to 18 months, after Warner completes its previously announced separation of its cable operations. Not included in the deal are networks such as CNN and Discovery.

Will streaming services stay separate or combine?

One of the big unanswered questions, Proulx added, is whether HBO Max and Netflix would "stay as separate streaming services or combine into a mega streaming service."

But either way, he said, customers could see some price relief in the form of a single subscription bill or bundle promotions, which would be a welcome change as streaming prices continue to rise and consumers feel the pinch of paying for multiple services.

Of course, that all depends on whether the deal goes through. Netflix on Friday maintained that the addition of HBO and HBO Max programming will give its members "even more high-quality titles" and "optimize its plans for consumers."

Others warned that a Netflix-Warner combo could create an even bigger entertainment titan with ramifications for both consumers and people working across the film and TV industry. Critics said the consequences could include job losses and a reduced variety of content.

Gaining Warner's legacy studios would mark a notable shift for Netflix, particularly its presence in theaters. Under the proposed acquisition, Netflix has promised to continue theatrical releases for Warner's

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studio films, honoring Warner's contractual agreements.

Netflix has kept most of its original content within its core online platform. But there have been exceptions, including qualifying runs for its awards contenders, including this year's "Frankenstein," limited theater screenings of a "KPop Demon Hunters" sing-a-long and its coming "Stranger Things" series finale.

"Our mission has always been to entertain the world," Ted Sarandos, co-CEO of Netflix, said in a statement, adding that merging with Warner will "give audiences more of what they love."

David Zaslav, CEO of Warner Bros. Discovery, added that merging with Netflix "will ensure people everywhere will continue to enjoy the world's most resonant stories for generations to come."

Critics question potential effect on movie theaters and filmmakers

Critics said a Netflix-Warner combo would be bad news for moviegoers and for people who work in theaters. Cinema United — a trade association that represents more than 30,000 movie screens in the U.S. and another 26,000 screens internationally — was quick to oppose the deal, which it said "poses an unprecedented threat to the global exhibition business."

"Netflix's stated business model does not support theatrical exhibition. In fact, it is the opposite," Michael O'Leary, CEO of Cinema United, said Friday. "Theaters will close, communities will suffer, jobs will be lost."

The Writers Guild of America sounded a similar alarm and called for the merger to be blocked.

The Producers Guild of America said the Netflix deal must prove that it protects workers' livelihoods and theatrical distribution. "Legacy studios are more than content libraries — within their vaults are the character and culture of our nation," the union added.

Warner Bros., which is 102 years old, is one of the "big five" studios left in Hollywood. If the Netflix sale goes through, the remaining legacy studios would be Disney, Paramount, Sony Pictures and Universal.

The Netflix-Warner deal also sent shock waves through Washington, on both sides of the aisle.

Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a longtime antitrust hawk, said the proposed merger "looks like an anti-monopoly nightmare." And Sen. Roger Marshall, a Kansas Republican and close Trump ally, said the deal "raises serious red flags for consumers, creators, movie theaters and local businesses alike."

Friday's announcement followed a monthslong bidding war for Warner. Rumors of interest from Netflix, as well as NBC owner Comcast, started bubbling up in the fall. Skydance-owned Paramount, which completed its own \$8 billion merger in August, also reportedly made several all-cash offers.

Paramount seemed like the front-runner for some time, and unlike Netflix or Comcast, it was reportedly vying to buy Warner's entire company, including its cable networks and news business.

Beyond combining two of Hollywood's legacy studios, that would have brought Paramount-owned CBS and Warner's CNN under the same roof. Such sizeable consolidation would have vastly reshaped America's TV media landscape, and perhaps raised questions about shifts in editorial control — as seen at CBS News both leading up to and following Skydance's purchase of Paramount.

Paramount did not immediately respond to a request for comment Friday from The Associated Press.

Regulators and politics could decide fate of deal

While Netflix's bid won over Warner's approval, experts stressed that a bumpy regulatory road lies ahead.

"No doubt politics are going to come into play," Proulx said. He pointed particularly to the Trump administration's relationship with the family of Larry Ellison, whose son David runs Paramount, and reports of that company's frustrations over Warner's sale process — both of which, he noted, "can't be ignored as part of the calculus as to the outcome of all of this."

Christina DePasquale, a Johns Hopkins University professor who specializes in antitrust issues, said the government might be skeptical of a streaming behemoth controlling both the production and distribution of content.

Warner Bros. Discovery, which was formed just three and a half years ago, announced its intention to split its streaming and studio operations from its cable business back in June. The move arrived as more and more consumers continue to "cut the cord" and rely almost entirely on streaming.

The company outlined plans for HBO, HBO Max, as well as Warner Bros. Television, Warner Bros. Motion Picture Group and DC Studios, to become part of a new streaming and studios company. That is what Netflix is now acquiring. Meanwhile, networks such as CNN, Discovery and TNT Sports and other digital

products will make up a separate cable counterpart called Discovery Global.

Warner signaled that it was open to a sale of all of parts of its business back in October, citing “unsolicited interest” it had received. Now that it’s agreed to Netflix’s bid, Discovery Global is set to become a new publicly traded company by the third quarter of 2026.

Grand jury transcripts from abandoned Epstein investigation in Florida can be released, judge rules

By MIKE SCHNEIDER and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press.

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — A federal judge on Friday gave the Justice Department permission to release transcripts of a grand jury investigation into Jeffrey Epstein’s abuse of underage girls in Florida — a case that ultimately ended without any federal charges being filed against the millionaire sex offender.

U.S. District Judge Rodney Smith said a recently passed federal law ordering the release of records related to Epstein overrode the usual rules about grand jury secrecy.

The law signed in November by President Donald Trump compels the Justice Department, FBI and federal prosecutors to release later this month the vast troves of material they have amassed during investigations into Epstein that date back at least two decades.

Friday’s court ruling dealt with the earliest known federal inquiry.

In 2005, police in Palm Beach, Florida, where Epstein had a mansion, began interviewing teenage girls who told of being hired to give the financier sexualized massages. The FBI later joined the investigation.

Federal prosecutors in Florida prepared an indictment in 2007, but Epstein’s lawyers attacked the credibility of his accusers publicly while secretly negotiating a plea bargain that would let him avoid serious jail time.

In 2008, Epstein pleaded guilty to relatively minor state charges of soliciting prostitution from someone under age 18. He served most of his 18-month sentence in a work release program that let him spend his days in his office.

The U.S. attorney in Miami at the time, Alex Acosta, agreed not to prosecute Epstein on federal charges — a decision that outraged Epstein’s accusers. After the Miami Herald reexamined the unusual plea bargain in a series of stories in 2018, public outrage over Epstein’s light sentence led to Acosta’s resignation as Trump’s labor secretary.

A Justice Department report in 2020 found that Acosta exercised “poor judgment” in handling the investigation, but it also said he did not engage in professional misconduct.

A different federal prosecutor, in New York, brought a sex trafficking indictment against Epstein in 2019, mirroring some of the same allegations involving underage girls that had been the subject of the aborted investigation. Epstein killed himself while awaiting trial. His longtime confidant and ex-girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell, was then tried on similar charges, convicted and sentenced in 2022 to 20 years in prison.

Transcripts of the grand jury proceedings from the aborted federal case in Florida could shed more light on federal prosecutors’ decision not to go forward with it. Records related to state grand jury proceedings have already been made public.

When the documents will be released is unknown. The Justice Department asked the court to unseal them so they could be released with other records required to be disclosed under the Epstein Files Transparency Act. The Justice Department hasn’t set a timetable for when it plans to start releasing information, but the law set a deadline of Dec. 19.

The law also allows the Justice Department to withhold files that it says could jeopardize an active federal investigation. Files can also be withheld if they’re found to be classified or if they pertain to national defense or foreign policy.

One of the federal prosecutors on the Florida case did not answer a phone call Friday and the other declined to answer questions.

A judge had previously declined to release the grand jury records, citing the usual rules about grand jury secrecy, but Smith said the new federal law allowed public disclosure.

The Justice Department has separate requests pending for the release of grand jury records related to

the sex trafficking cases against Epstein and Maxwell in New York. The judges in those matters have said they plan to rule expeditiously.

The Supreme Court will decide whether Trump's birthright citizenship order violates the Constitution

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court agreed on Friday to take up the constitutionality of President Donald Trump's order on birthright citizenship declaring that children born to parents who are in the United States illegally or temporarily are not American citizens.

The justices will hear Trump's appeal of a lower-court ruling that struck down the citizenship restrictions. They have not taken effect anywhere in the country.

The case will be argued in the spring. A definitive ruling is expected by early summer.

The birthright citizenship order, which Trump signed Jan. 20, the first day of his second term, is part of his Republican administration's broad immigration crackdown. Other actions include immigration enforcement surges in several cities and the first peacetime invocation of the 18th-century Alien Enemies Act.

The administration is facing multiple court challenges, and the high court has sent mixed signals in emergency orders it has issued. The justices effectively stopped the use of the Alien Enemies Act to rapidly deport alleged Venezuelan gang members without court hearings. But the Supreme Court allowed the resumption of sweeping immigration stops in the Los Angeles area after a lower court blocked the practice of stopping people solely based on their race, language, job or location.

The justices also are weighing the administration's emergency appeal to be allowed to deploy National Guard troops in the Chicago area for immigration enforcement actions. A lower court has indefinitely prevented the deployment.

Birthright citizenship is the first Trump immigration-related policy to reach the court for a final ruling. His order would upend more than 125 years of understanding that the Constitution's 14th Amendment confers citizenship on everyone born on American soil, with narrow exceptions for the children of foreign diplomats and those born to a foreign occupying force.

In a series of decisions, lower courts have struck down the executive order as unconstitutional, or likely so, even after a Supreme Court ruling in late June that limited judges' use of nationwide injunctions.

The Supreme Court, however, did not rule out other court orders that could have nationwide effects, including in class action lawsuits and those brought by states. The justices did not decide at that time whether the underlying citizenship order was constitutional.

Every lower court that has looked at the issue has concluded that Trump's order violates or likely violates the 14th Amendment, which was intended to ensure that Black people, including former slaves, had citizenship. Birthright citizenship automatically makes anyone born in the United States an American citizen, including children born to mothers who are in the country illegally, under longstanding rules.

The case under review comes from New Hampshire. A federal judge in July blocked the citizenship order in a class action lawsuit including all children who would be affected. The American Civil Liberties Union is leading the legal team representing the children and their parents who challenged Trump's order.

"No president can change the 14th Amendment's fundamental promise of citizenship," Cecillia Wang, the ACLU's national legal director, said in a statement, adding, "We look forward to putting this issue to rest once and for all in the Supreme Court this term."

The administration had also asked the justices to review a ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. That court, also in July, ruled that a group of Democratic-led states that sued over Trump's order needed a nationwide injunction to prevent the problems that would be caused by birthright citizenship being in effect in some states and not others. The justices took no action in the 9th Circuit case.

The administration has asserted that children of noncitizens are not "subject to the jurisdiction" of the United States and therefore not entitled to citizenship.

"The Fourteenth Amendment's Citizenship Clause was adopted to grant citizenship to newly freed slaves

and their children — not ... to the children of aliens illegally or temporarily in the United States,” top administration top Supreme Court lawyer, D. John Sauer, wrote in urging the high court’s review.

Twenty-four Republican-led states and 27 Republican lawmakers, including Sens. Ted Cruz of Texas and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, are backing the administration.

Another line of attack: White House sets up a hall of shame for news outlets

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump’s White House is taking on the role of media critic and asking for help from “everyday Americans.”

The White House launched a web portal it says will spotlight bias on the part of news outlets, targeting the Boston Globe, CBS News, The Independent and The Washington Post in its first two “media offenders of the week.”

It’s the latest wrinkle in the fight against what Trump, back in his first term, labeled “fake news.” The Republican president has taken outlets like CBS News and The Wall Street Journal to court over their coverage, is fighting The Associated Press in court over media access and has moved to dismantle government-run outlets like Voice of America.

Trump has also engaged in personal attacks, last month alone saying “quiet, piggy,” to a female reporter who was questioning him on Air Force One, calling a reporter from The New York Times “ugly, both inside and out” and publicly telling an ABC News journalist she was “a terrible reporter.”

“It’s honestly overwhelming to keep up with it all and to constantly have to defend against this fake news and these attacks,” said press secretary Karoline Leavitt, who called the new web portal an attempt to hold journalists accountable.

After its debut, the White House asked for volunteers to submit their own examples of media bias. “So-called ‘journalists’ have made it impossible to identify every false or misleading story, which is why help from the American people is essential,” Trump’s press office said.

Devouring the media like hot french fries

Despite the attacks, Axios wrote this week that the mainstream media is ending the year as “dominant as ever” in capturing the president’s attention and setting Washington’s agenda, citing as one example The Washington Post’s reporting on military strikes against boats with alleged drug smugglers.

The irony is that Trump engages with reporters at a level he hasn’t seen with any other president in his lifetime, said Axios CEO Jim VandeHei, co-author of the report with Mike Allen.

“He’s always bitched about the media and the press,” VandeHei told The Associated Press. “He gobbles this stuff up like hot McDonald’s french fries. He’s a mass consumer of this. He watches it, he calls reporters, he takes calls from reporters. ... That’s always been the contradiction with him.”

CBS, the Globe and The Independent were criticized for stories about Trump’s reaction to Democratic lawmakers who recorded a video reminding military members they were not required to follow unlawful orders. Trump accused the lawmakers of sedition “punishable by death.”

The White House said it was a misrepresentation to say Trump had called for their executions. The portal also said news outlets “subversively implied” that the president had issued illegal orders. The news articles they cited did not specifically say whether Trump had or had not ordered illegal activities.

Leavitt has been sharply critical of the Post’s story on Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth’s role in attacks on boats used by alleged drug smugglers in Central America. The portal this week accused the newspaper of trying to undermine anti-terrorist operations.

“Let’s be clear what’s happening here: the wrongful and intentional targeting of journalists by government officials for exercising a constitutionally protected right,” said the Post’s executive editor, Matt Murray. “The Washington Post will not be dissuaded and will continue to report rigorously and accurately in service to all of America.”

The new portal also contains an “Offender Hall of Shame” of articles it deems unfair and a leaderboard

ranking outlets with the most pieces it objects to. Twenty-three outlets are represented, led by the Post's six stories. CBS News, The New York Times and MS NOW, the network formerly known as MSNBC, had five apiece. No news outlets that appeal to conservatives were cited for bias.

Media watchdog welcomes the company

The conservative media watchdog Media Research Center, which has accused news outlets of having a liberal bias since 1987, welcomes the company.

"We're pleased," said Tim Graham, MRC's director of media analysis. "It's a stronger effort than Republican presidents have done before. I think all Republicans realize today that the media is on the other side and need to be identified as on the other side."

VandeHei said about the portal, "I can't think of anything I care less about. If they want to set up a site and point out bias, great. It's called free speech. Do it. I don't think it makes a damned bit of difference."

What is damaging, VandeHei said, is a constant drumbeat of claims that what people read in the media is false. "It makes people suspicious of the truth and the country suffers when we're not operating from some semblance of a common truth," he said.

Fed's preferred inflation gauge stayed elevated in September as spending weakened

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve's preferred measure of inflation changed little in September, likely easing the way to a widely expected interest rate cut by the central bank next week.

Prices rose 0.3% in September from August, the Commerce Department said Friday, in a report that was delayed five weeks by the government shutdown. It matched the increase recorded during the previous month. Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core prices rose 0.2% in September from August, the same as August, and a pace that if it continued for a year would bring inflation closer to the Fed's 2% target.

Compared with a year ago, overall prices rose 2.8%, up slightly from 2.7% in August. Core prices also rose 2.8% from a year earlier, a small decline from the previous month's figure of 2.9%.

The data indicate that core inflation was muted in September and will bolster the case for a cut to the Fed's key interest rate at its next meeting Dec. 9-10. Inflation remains above the central bank's 2% target, partly because of President Donald Trump's tariffs, but many Fed officials argue that weak hiring, modest economic growth, and slowing wage gains will steadily reduce price gains in the coming months.

At the same time, there were some warning signs in the figures. Omair Sharif, chief economist at Inflation Insights, said that Friday's report overall will likely reassure the Fed that core inflation is mostly cool. But he noted that a measure of services inflation in the report remains elevated and could raise concerns among some Fed policymakers, since the higher figure doesn't stem from tariffs, but instead broader inflationary pressures.

"It hasn't really shown any sign of slowing down," Sharif said. "That has to be concerning for them."

The Fed is facing a tricky decision next week: It would typically keep rates high to fight inflation. At the same time, it is worried about weak hiring and a slowly rising unemployment rate. It hopes that reducing rates will spur more borrowing and boost the economy.

Friday's report also showed that consumer spending grew, though at a slower monthly pace in September than the previous month, suggesting Americans were willing to spend despite high prices and stagnant hiring. Spending rose 0.3% in September, down from 0.5% in August.

More recently, Americans appeared to step up their spending on Black Friday and the weekend after Thanksgiving, which could boost growth in this year's fourth quarter. Online spending jumped 7.7% during the five days after Thanksgiving, compared to the same period last year, according to Adobe Analytics.

Incomes, meanwhile, rose at a solid 0.4% in September for the second straight month.

The economy is sending unusually mixed signals, as growth appears solid even as the unemployment rate has ticked up to a four-year high of 4.4%. Home sales are moribund and factories have been cutting

jobs, yet a boom in investment in artificial intelligence data centers has boosted the broader economy. But on Wednesday, payroll processor ADP said that businesses shed 32,000 jobs in November, a sign that companies are starting to lay off workers. Should job cuts continue, consumers would likely rapidly dial back their shopping, weakening the economy.

The government will issue its own jobs report for November on December 16, which for now is forecast to show a small gain, according to data provider FactSet.

Trump's security strategy slams European allies and asserts US power in the Western Hemisphere

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's administration has set forth a new national security strategy that paints European allies as weak and aims to reassert America's dominance in the Western Hemisphere.

The document released Friday by the White House is sure to roil long-standing U.S. allies in Europe for its scathing critiques of their migration and free speech policies, suggesting they face the "prospect of civilizational erasure" and raising doubts about their long-term reliability as American partners.

At the same time the administration is sharply critical of its democratic allies in Europe and carrying out a pressure campaign of boat strikes in South America, it chides past U.S. efforts to shape or criticize Middle Eastern nations and seeks to discourage attempts for changes in those countries' governments and policies.

The strategy reinforces, in sometimes chilly and bellicose terms, Trump's "America First" philosophy, which favors nonintervention overseas, questions decades of strategic relationships and prioritizes U.S. interests.

The U.S. strategy "is motivated above all by what works for America — or, in two words, 'America First,'" the document said.

This is the first national security strategy, a document the administration is required by law to release, since the Republican president's return to office in January. It is a stark break from the course set by President Joe Biden's Democratic administration, which sought to reinvigorate alliances after many were rattled in Trump's first term and to check a more assertive Russia.

Democratic Rep. Jason Crow of Colorado, who sits on House committees overseeing intelligence and the armed forces, called the strategy "catastrophic to America's standing in the world and a retreat from our alliances and partnerships."

"The world will be a more dangerous place and Americans will be less safe if this plan moves forward," Crow said.

Criticism of Europe

The United States is seeking to broker an end to Russia's nearly 4-year-old war in Ukraine, a goal that the national security strategy says is in America's vital interests. But the document makes clear that the U.S. wants to improve its relationship with Russia after years of Moscow being treated as a global pariah and that ending the war is a core U.S. interest to "reestablish strategic stability with Russia."

The document also accuses America's longstanding European allies, which have found themselves sometimes at odds with Trump's shifting approaches to the Russia-Ukraine war, of facing not just domestic economic challenges but, according to the U.S., an existential crisis.

Economic stagnation in Europe "is eclipsed by the real and more stark prospect of civilizational erasure," the strategy document said.

The U.S. suggests that Europe is being enfeebled by its immigration policies, declining birthrates, "censorship of free speech and suppression of political opposition" and a "loss of national identities and self-confidence."

"Should present trends continue, the continent will be unrecognizable in 20 years or less. As such, it is far from obvious whether certain European countries will have economies and militaries strong enough to remain reliable allies," the document said.

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The document also gives a nod to the rise of far-right political parties in Europe, which have been outspoken in their opposition to illegal immigration and climate policies.

"America encourages its political allies in Europe to promote this revival of spirit, and the growing influence of patriotic European parties indeed gives cause for great optimism," the strategy said.

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul acknowledged the U.S. is "our most important ally" in NATO but said questions about freedom of expression or "the organization of our free societies" are not part of alliance discussions.

"We also don't think that anyone needs to give us any advice on this," Wadephul told reporters.

Markus Frohniauer, a lawmaker with the far-right, anti-immigration Alternative for Germany party, described the U.S. strategy as "a foreign policy reality check for Europe and particularly for Germany."

Setting sights on power in the Americas

Despite Trump's "America First" maxim, his administration has carried out a series of military strikes on alleged drug trafficking boats in the Caribbean Sea and the eastern Pacific Ocean while weighing possible military action in Venezuela to pressure President Nicolás Maduro.

The moves are part of what the national security strategy lays out as "a 'Trump Corollary' to the Monroe Doctrine" to "restore American preeminence in the Western Hemisphere." The 1823 Monroe Doctrine, formulated by President James Monroe, was originally aimed at opposing any European meddling in the Western Hemisphere and was used to justify U.S. military interventions in Latin America.

Trump's strategy document says it aims to combat drug trafficking and control migration. The U.S. also is reimagining its military footprint in the region even after building up the largest military presence there in generations.

That means, for instance, "targeted deployments to secure the border and defeat cartels, including where necessary the use of lethal force to replace the failed law enforcement-only strategy of the last several decades," it says.

Shifting focus away from the Middle East

With a shift to the Americas, the U.S. will seek a different approach in the Middle East.

The U.S., according to the strategy, should abandon "America's misguided experiment with hectoring" nations in the Middle East, especially monarchies in the Gulf, about their traditions and forms of government.

Trump has bolstered ties with nations there and sees Middle Eastern countries as ripe for economic opportunities, and the Arab nations are "emerging as a place of partnership, friendship, and investment," the document says.

"We should encourage and applaud reform when and where it emerges organically, without trying to impose it," it says.

This year, Trump made his first major foreign trip to the Middle East, and his efforts to settle the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza has been a major focus. But the U.S. plans to shift its focus from the region, the administration says, as America is less dependent on its oil supply.

'Rebalance' of US relationship with China

Meanwhile, as the U.S. under Trump has overturned decades of free trade policies with his sweeping global tariffs, its ties with China have been a prime focus. America under Trump is seeking to "rebalance" the U.S.-China relationship while also countering Beijing's aggressive stance toward Taiwan, according to the document.

The Trump administration wants to prevent a war over Taiwan, the self-governing island that Beijing claims as its own and to which the U.S. is obligated by its own laws to give military support, by maintaining a military advantage over China.

But the U.S. wants allies in the region to do more to push back against Chinese pressure and contribute more to their defense.

"The American military cannot, and should not have to, do this alone," the strategy says. "Our allies must step up and spend — and more importantly do — much more for collective defense."

From Pope Francis to Charlie Kirk, many deaths in 2025 had a wide impact

By BERNARD McGHEE Associated Press

The death of Pope Francis brought change to the Catholic Church, which counts 1.4 billion adherents and is now led — for the first time — by an American pope. The fatal shooting of conservative activist Charlie Kirk as he spoke before a crowd horrified many and prompted somber conversations about political violence.

And when trafficking victim Virginia Giuffre died by suicide, it brought additional scrutiny to the investigations of sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. They were among the noteworthy and influential people who died in 2025 where the deaths themselves had a widespread impact.

The deaths of Oscar-winning actor Gene Hackman and his wife became a source of both sadness and mystery after their bodies were found in their home in February. Authorities ultimately determined that Hackman, who was in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's, died of heart disease, likely unaware that Betsy Arakawa had died from hantavirus a week earlier.

EDITOR'S NOTE — This story includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know needs help, the national suicide and crisis lifeline in the U.S. is available by calling or texting 988. There is also an online chat at 988lifeline.org. Helplines outside the U.S. can be found at www.iasp.info/suicidalthoughts.

Meanwhile, the death of heavy metal icon Ozzy Osbourne, which came just weeks after his farewell concert, marked the end of an era in music. The year also saw the death of boxing great George Foreman, who memorably lost a much-watched match to Muhammad Ali but whose career had inspiring second and third acts as a world champion and successful business owner.

And the world said goodbye this year to Dick Cheney, the hard-charging conservative whose long career in public service included becoming one of the most powerful vice presidents in U.S. history under President George W. Bush.

Here is a roll call of some influential figures who have died this year (cause of death cited, if available):

JANUARY

Wayne Osmond, 73. The singer and guitarist was a founding member of The Osmonds, a million-album-selling family act known for such 1970s teen hits as "One Bad Apple," "Yo-Yo" and "Down By the Lazy River." Jan. 1.

Rosita Missoni, 93. She was the matriarch of the iconic Italian fashion house that made colorful zigzag-patterned knitwear high fashion and helped launch Italian ready-to-wear. Jan. 1.

James Arthur Ray, 67. A self-help guru, his multimillion-dollar business toppled after his sweat lodge ceremony in Arizona left three people dead. Jan. 3.

Costas Simitis, 88. As prime minister, the socialist leader was the architect of Greece's joining the common European currency, the euro. Jan. 5.

Jean-Marie Le Pen, 96. The founder of France's far-right National Front was known for fiery rhetoric against immigration and multiculturalism, earning him staunch support and widespread condemnation. Jan. 7.

Peter Yarrow, 86. The singer-songwriter was best known as one-third of Peter, Paul and Mary, the folk music trio whose impassioned harmonies transfixed millions as they lifted their voices in favor of civil rights and against war. Jan. 7.

Nancy Leftenant-Colon, 104. The first Black woman to join the U.S. Army Nurse Corps after the military was desegregated in the 1940s retired as a major and was remembered by relatives and friends for quietly breaking down racial barriers during her long military career. Jan. 8.

Sam Moore, 89. He was the higher voice of the 1960s duo Sam & Dave, known for such definitive hits of the era as "Soul Man" and "Hold On, I'm Comin.'" Jan. 10.

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David Lynch, 78. The filmmaker was celebrated for his uniquely dark and dreamlike vision in such movies as "Blue Velvet" and "Mulholland Drive," and the TV series "Twin Peaks." Jan. 16.

Bob Uecker, 90. He parlayed a forgettable playing career into a punch line for movie and TV appearances as "Mr. Baseball" and a Hall of Fame broadcasting tenure. Jan. 16.

Joan Plowright, 95. She was an award-winning British actor who, with her late husband Laurence Olivier, did much to revitalize the U.K.'s theatrical scene after World War II. Jan. 16.

Cecile Richards, 67. A national advocate for abortion access and women's rights, she led Planned Parenthood for 12 tumultuous years. Jan. 20.

Mauricio Funes, 65. After serving as president of El Salvador, he spent the final years of his life in Nicaragua to avoid various criminal sentences. Jan. 21.

Valérie André, 102. An aviator and parachutist with a medical degree, she was the first woman to become a general officer in France. Jan. 21.

Garth Hudson, 87. The Band's virtuoso keyboardist and all-around musician drew from a unique palette of sounds and styles to add a conversational touch to such rock standards as "Up on Cripple Creek," "The Weight" and "Rag Mama Rag." Jan. 21.

Richard Williamson, 84. An ultratraditionalist Catholic bishop, his denial of the Holocaust created a scandal in 2009 when Pope Benedict XVI rehabilitated him and other members of his breakaway society. Jan. 29.

Dick Button, 95. He was one of the most accomplished men's figure skaters in history, and one of his sport's great innovators and promoters. Jan. 30.

Marianne Faithfull, 78. The British pop star, muse, libertine and old soul inspired and helped write some of the Rolling Stones' greatest songs and endured as a torch singer and survivor of the lifestyle she once embodied. Jan. 30.

FEBRUARY

Horst Köhler, 81. A managing director of the International Monetary Fund, he became a popular German president before stunning the country by resigning abruptly in a flap over comments about its military. Feb. 1.

Barbie Hsu, 48. A Taiwanese actress who starred in the popular TV drama "Meteor Garden" that swept Asia, she died of pneumonia triggered by the flu. Feb. 2.

The Aga Khan, 88. He became the spiritual leader of the world's millions of Ismaili Muslims at age 20 as a Harvard undergraduate and poured billions of dollars in tithes into building homes, hospitals and schools in developing countries. Feb. 4.

Kultida Woods, 80. Tiger Woods credited his Thai-born mother with instilling his dominant spirit and encouraging him to wear red shirts on Sundays as his power color. Feb. 4.

Irv Gotti, 54. A music mogul who founded Murder Inc. Records, he was behind major hip-hop and R&B artists such as Ashanti and Ja Rule. Feb. 5.

Tony Roberts, 85. The versatile, Tony Award-nominated performer in plays and musicals appeared in several Woody Allen movies — often as Allen's best friend. Feb. 7.

Sam Nujoma, 95. Known as the father of Namibia, the fiery, white-bearded freedom fighter led his nation's independence from apartheid South Africa in 1990 and served as its first president for 15 years. Feb. 8.

Anne Marie Hochhalter, 43. She lived in pain for 25 years after being partially paralyzed in the Columbine High School shooting and her death of sepsis, related to her injuries, was ruled a homicide. Feb. 16.

Gene Hackman, 95. The Oscar-winning actor whose studied portraits ranged from reluctant heroes to conniving villains and made him one of the industry's most respected and honored performers. Feb. 18. Found dead with his wife Betsy Arakawa.

Paquita la del Barrio, 77. The Mexican musical legend was known for her powerful voice and fierce defense of women. Feb. 17.

James Harrison, 88. He was credited with saving 2.4 million babies through his record-breaking blood plasma donations over six decades in Australia. Feb. 17.

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Souleymane Cissé, 84. The Malian filmmaker was a pioneer of African cinema with a career spanning 50 years. Feb. 19.

Mabel Staton, 92. The Black track and field standout broke through barriers as the only woman to compete for the United States in the long jump at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics. Feb. 20.

Clint Hill, 93. The Secret Service agent leaped onto the back of President John F. Kennedy's limousine after the president was shot, then was forced to retire early because he remained haunted by memories of the assassination. Feb. 21.

Joe Fusco, 87. A College Football Hall of Fame coach, he won four NAIA Division II national championships in 19 years at Westminster College. Feb. 22.

Roberta Flack, 88. The Grammy-winning singer and pianist's intimate vocal and musical style made her one of the top recording artists of the 1970s and an influential performer long after that. Feb. 24.

Michelle Trachtenberg, 39. A former child star in the hit 1996 movie "Harriet the Spy," she went on to co-star in two buzzy millennial-era TV shows — "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Gossip Girl." The cause and manner of her death were officially listed as undetermined. Feb. 26.

Boris Spassky, 88. A Soviet-era world chess champion, he lost his title to American Bobby Fischer in a legendary 1972 match that became a proxy for Cold War rivalries. Feb. 27.

MARCH

Angie Stone, 63. The Grammy-nominated R&B singer, a member of the all-female hip-hop trio The Sequence who was known for the hit song "Wish I Didn't Miss You," died when her van crashed. March 1.

Lincoln Diaz-Balart, 70. He was a Cuban American who opposed his uncle Fidel Castro and spent 18 years in the U.S. House of Representatives as a member of a politically powerful South Florida family. March 3.

Carl Dean, 82. Dolly Parton's devoted husband of nearly 60 years avoided the spotlight and inspired her timeless hit "Jolene." March 3.

Oleg Gordievsky, 86. The Soviet KGB officer helped change the course of the Cold War by covertly passing secrets to Britain. March 4.

Roy Ayers, 84. The jazz vibraphonist, keyboardist, composer and vocalist was known for his spacy, funky 1976 hit "Everybody Loves the Sunshine," sampled by such R&B and rap heavyweights as Mary J. Blige, N.W.A., Dr. Dre, 2Pac, Mos Def and Ice Cube. March 4.

Robert G. Clark, 95. He was elected in 1967 as Mississippi's first Black lawmaker of the 20th century and rose to the second-highest leadership role in the state House of Representatives. March 4.

D'Wayne Wiggins, 64. He co-founded the Grammy-nominated group Tony! Toni! Tone! behind the classic songs "Anniversary," "It Never Rains (In Southern California)" and "(Lay Your Head on My) Pillow." March 7.

Junior Bridgeman, 71. A basketball standout who led Louisville to a Final Four, he starred for the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks and then launched an even more successful career as a business owner with stakes in restaurants, publishing and the Bucks franchise. March 11.

Alan Simpson, 93. The former U.S. senator was a political legend whose quick wit bridged partisan gaps in the years before today's political acrimony. March 14.

Nita Lowey, 87. The former congresswoman was a long-serving New York Democrat and the first woman to chair the powerful House Appropriations Committee. March 15.

Émilie Dequenne, 43. The Belgian actor who won a top Cannes Film Festival prize for her breakout role in "Rosetta" died of a rare form of cancer. March 16.

Eddie Jordan, 76. He was a Formula 1 team owner and media personality whose humor, strong opinions and often extravagant dress sense made him a popular TV pundit after selling the team. March 20.

George Foreman, 76. The fearsome heavyweight boxer lost the "Rumble in the Jungle" to Muhammad Ali before his inspiring second and third acts as a 45-year-old world champion and a successful business owner. March 21.

Kitty Dukakis, 88. The wife of former Massachusetts governor and Democratic presidential candidate

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Michael Dukakis spoke openly about her struggles with depression and addiction. March 21.

Mia Love, 49. A daughter of Haitian immigrants, the first Black Republican woman elected to Congress died of brain cancer. March 23.

David Childs, 83. He was the lead architect of the One World Trade Center skyscraper that rose from the site where the twin towers collapsed in New York City during the 9/11 attacks. March 26.

Richard Chamberlain, 90. The handsome hero of the 1960s television series "Dr. Kildare" came out as gay four decades later and was known as the "king of the miniseries" for his roles in "The Thorn Birds" and "Shogun." March 29.

APRIL

Val Kilmer, 65. The brooding, versatile actor who played fan favorite Iceman in "Top Gun," donned a voluminous cape as Batman in "Batman Forever" and portrayed Jim Morrison in "The Doors," died of pneumonia. April 1.

Theodore McCarrick, 94. The formerly powerful Catholic cardinal was defrocked by Pope Francis in 2019 after a Vatican investigation determined he had molested adults and children. April 3.

Jay North, 73. He starred as the towheaded mischief-maker on TV's "Dennis the Menace" for four seasons starting in 1959. April 6.

Clem Burke, 70. His versatile drumming propelled the iconic rock group Blondie during its decades performing everything from new-wave punk to disco-infused tunes. April 6.

Rubby Pérez, 69. Known for songs such as "Volveré," "El Africano" and "Tu Vas a Volar" during a career devoted to merengue, the signature musical style of the Dominican Republic, he died after a nightclub roof collapsed. April 8.

Octavio Dotel, 51. He pitched for 13 major league teams in a 15-year career and won a World Series with the St. Louis Cardinals, and died in the same roof collapse in the Dominican Republic. April 8.

Kim Shin-jo, 82. He was a North Korean commando who resettled in South Korea as a pastor after the failure of his mission to assassinate South Korean President Park Chung-hee in 1968. April 9.

Mario Vargas Llosa, 89. The Peruvian author was a Nobel literature laureate and a giant of Latin American letters. April 13.

Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, 85. The former Malaysian prime minister was a moderate who extended the country's political freedoms but was criticized for lackluster leadership. April 14.

Wink Martindale, 91. The genial host of such hit game shows as "Gambit" and "Tic-Tac-Dough" also did one of the first recorded television interviews with a young Elvis Presley. April 15.

Nora Aunor, 71. She became one of the biggest stars of Philippine cinema during a career that spanned seven decades. April 16.

Bob Filner, 82. A 10-term U.S. congressman, his political career ended abruptly after he was elected mayor of San Diego and driven from office amid sexual misconduct allegations. April 20.

Pope Francis, 88. History's first Latin American pontiff charmed the world with his humble style and concern for poor people but alienated conservatives with critiques of capitalism and climate change. April 21.

Steve McMichael, 67. A star defensive tackle on the Chicago Bears' 1985 Super Bowl championship team whose larger-than-life personality later made him a natural for professional wrestling as "Ming the Merciless," he died after battling ALS. April 23.

Virginia Giuffre, 41. She accused Britain's Prince Andrew and other influential men of sexually exploiting her as a teenager trafficked by financier Jeffrey Epstein. An advocate for sex trafficking survivors after emerging as a central figure in Epstein's downfall, she died by suicide according to her publicist. April 25.

Dick Barnett, 88. A basketball Hall of Famer, he played on both New York Knicks NBA championship teams after being part of a historic college powerhouse at Tennessee A&I. April 27.

MAY

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Ruth Buzzi, 88. She rose to fame as the frumpy and bitter Gladys Ormphby on the groundbreaking sketch comedy series "Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In" and made more than 200 television appearances during a 45-year career. May 1.

Jill Sobule, 66. The award-winning singer-songwriter whose witty and poignant writing attracted widespread attention with the gay-themed song "I Kissed a Girl," died in a house fire. May 1.

George Ryan, 91. A tough-on-crime Republican who as Illinois governor cleared the state's death row, he was disgraced by a corruption scandal that landed him in prison. May 2.

David H. Souter, 85. The retired Supreme Court justice was an ascetic bachelor and New Hampshire Republican who became a favorite of liberals during nearly 20 years on the bench. May 8.

Johnny Rodriguez, 73. The country music star was a popular Mexican American singer whose 1970s hits included "I Just Can't Get Her Out of My Mind," "Ridin' My Thumb to Mexico" and "That's the Way Love Goes." May 9.

Robert Benton, 92. The Oscar-winning filmmaker co-created "Bonnie and Clyde," and received mainstream validation as the writer-director of "Kramer vs. Kramer" and "Places in the Heart." May 11.

Christopher "Kit" Bond, 86. The Republican was Missouri's youngest governor and later brought billions of dollars in federal funding to the state as a four-term U.S. senator. May 13.

José Mujica, 89. The former Uruguayan president and Marxist guerrilla's radical brand of democracy, plainspoken philosophy and simple lifestyle as a flower farmer fascinated people around the world. May 13.

George Wendt, 76. An actor with an everyman charm, he played the affable barfly Norm on the hit 1980s TV comedy "Cheers" and performed on Broadway in "Art," "Hairspray" and "Elf." May 20.

Susan Brownmiller, 90. A feminist whose landmark 1975 book "Against Our Will" was an intensely debated bestseller about sexual assault. May 24.

Phil Robertson, 79. The "Duck Dynasty" patriarch turned his small duck-calling interest in the sportsman's paradise of northern Louisiana into a big business and conservative cultural phenomenon. May 25.

Charles Rangel, 94. The former New York congressman was an outspoken, gravel-voiced Harlem Democrat spent nearly five decades on Capitol Hill and was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus. May 26.

Presley Chweneyagae, 40. The South African actor gained international recognition for his leading role in the 2005 film "Tsotsi," which won South Africa's first-ever Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. May 27.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 87. The revered Kenyan man of letters was a voice of dissent who, in dozens of fiction and nonfiction books, traced his country's history from British imperialism to home-ruled tyranny. May 28.

Bernard Kerik, 69. He served as New York City's police commissioner on 9/11 and later pleaded guilty to tax fraud before being pardoned. May 29.

Loretta Swit, 87. She won two Emmy Awards playing Maj. Margaret Houlihan, the demanding head nurse of a Korean War surgical unit on the pioneering hit TV series "M.A.S.H." May 30.

Etienne-Emile Baulieu, 98. The French scientist was best known as the inventor of the abortion pill. May 30.

JUNE

Shigeo Nagashima, 89. He was known in Japan as "Mr. Pro Baseball," one of the most famous people in the country during his playing days. June 3.

Jim Marshall, 87. The former Minnesota Vikings defensive end was one of four members of the famed Purple People Eaters, the backbone of four Super Bowl teams. June 3.

Niède Guidon, 92. The Brazilian archaeologist discovered hundreds of prehistoric cave paintings in north-eastern Brazil, and her research challenged theories of ancient human presence in the Americas. June 4.

Edgar Lungu, 68. The former Zambian president led the southern African nation from 2015 to 2021. June 5.

Nina Kuscsik, 86. She campaigned for women's inclusion in long-distance running and then won the Boston Marathon the first year women were officially allowed to run. June 8.

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Sly Stone, 82. The revolutionary musician and dynamic showman led Sly and the Family Stone, transforming popular music in the 1960s and '70s and beyond with such hits as "Everyday People," "Stand!" and "Family Affair." June 9.

Frederick Forsyth, 86. The British author wrote "The Day of the Jackal" and other bestselling thrillers. June 9.

Brian Wilson, 82. The Beach Boys' visionary and fragile leader whose genius for melody, arrangements and wide-eyed self-expression inspired "Good Vibrations," "California Girls" and other summertime anthems, becoming one of the world's most influential recording artists. June 11.

Ananda Lewis, 52. The former MTV and BET host who became a beloved television personality in the 1990s with her warmth and authenticity died of breast cancer. June 11.

Anne Burrell, 55. The TV chef coached culinary fumlbers through hundreds of episodes of "Worst Cooks in America." June 17.

Mick Ralphs, 81. The guitarist, singer and songwriter was a founding member of the classic British rock bands Bad Company and Mott the Hoople. June 23.

Bobby Sherman, 81. His winsome smile and shaggy mop top helped make him into a teen idol in the 1960s and '70s with bubblegum pop hits like "Little Woman" and "Julie, Do Ya Love Me." June 24.

Carolyn McCarthy, 81. She served nine terms in Congress after being elected in 1996 as a crusader for gun control following a mass shooting on a New York commuter train that left her husband dead and her son severely wounded. June 26.

D. Wayne Lukas, 89. The Hall of Famer became one of horse racing's most accomplished trainers and a face of the sport for decades. June 28.

JULY

Jimmy Swaggart, 90. The televangelist amassed an enormous following and multimillion-dollar ministry, only to be undone by his penchant for prostitutes. July 1.

Alex Delvecchio, 93. A member of the Hockey Hall of Fame, he helped the Detroit Red Wings win the Stanley Cup three times in the 1950s. July 1.

Michael Madsen, 67. The actor best known for his coolly menacing, steely-eyed, often sadistic characters in the films of Quentin Tarantino, including "Reservoir Dogs" and "Kill Bill: Vol. 2." July 3.

Muhammadu Buhari, 82. He led Nigeria twice, as a military head of state and a democratic president. July 13.

Fauja Singh, 114. An Indian-born runner nicknamed the Turbaned Torpedo, believed to be the world's oldest marathoner, died after being hit by a car. July 14.

Bradley John Murdoch, 67. Known as the "Outback Killer," he was convicted of murdering British backpacker Peter Falconio, who vanished in arid central Australia in 2001. July 15.

Connie Francis, 87. The wholesome pop star's 1950s and '60s hits included "Pretty Little Baby" and "Who's Sorry Now?" — the latter serving as an ironic title for a personal life filled with heartbreak and tragedy. July 16.

Felix Baumgartner, 56. The extreme athlete stunned the world in 2012 by skydiving faster than the speed of sound during a 24-mile (39-kilometer) leap from the stratosphere. He died in a paragliding crash. July 17.

Alan Bergman, 99. The Oscar-winning lyricist teamed with his wife, Marilyn, in a loving partnership that produced "How Do You Keep the Music Playing?," "It Might Be You" and the classic "The Way We Were." July 17.

Rex White, 95. He was NASCAR's oldest living champion and a 2015 inductee into its Hall of Fame. July 18.

Malcolm-Jamal Warner, 54. His 40-year career as an actor and director began as teenage son Theo Huxtable on "The Cosby Show," a cultural phenomenon that helped define the 1980s. He drowned in the Caribbean Sea. July 20.

Thomas Anthony Durkin, 78. The criminal defense attorney was a fixture for five decades in Chicago's

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courthouses, known for his relentless advocacy for a roster of notorious clients. July 21.

Ozzy Osbourne, 76. The gloomy, demon-invoking lead singer of the pioneering band Black Sabbath became the godfather of heavy metal and then a doddering dad on reality TV. July 22.

Chuck Mangione, 84. The two-time Grammy Award-winning musician achieved international success in 1977 with his jazz-flavored single "Feels So Good" and later became a voice actor on the animated TV comedy "King of the Hill." July 22.

Joey Jones, 70. The Welsh soccer hero won two European Cups with Liverpool and was dubbed "Mr. Wrexham." July 22.

Hulk Hogan, 71. The mustachioed, headscarf-wearing, bicep-busting icon of professional wrestling turned the sport into a massive business and stretched his influence into TV, pop culture and conservative politics during a long and scandal-plagued second act. July 24.

Cleo Laine, 97. Her husky contralto was one of the most distinctive voices in jazz, and she was regarded by many as Britain's greatest contribution to the quintessentially American genre. July 24.

Dwight Muhammad Qawi, 72. The Hall of Fame fighter took up boxing in prison and became a two-weight world champion. July 25.

Ryne Sandberg, 65. The Hall of Fame second baseman became one of baseball's best all-around players while starring for the Chicago Cubs. July 28.

Flaco Jimenez, 86. The legendary accordionist from San Antonio won multiple Grammys as he expanded the popularity of conjunto, Tejano and Tex-Mex music. July 31.

AUGUST

Jeannie Seely, 85. She was the soulful country music singer behind such standards as "Don't Touch Me." Aug. 1.

Stella Rimington, 90. Dame Stella was the first female chief of Britain's MI5 intelligence agency and later a successful thriller writer. Aug. 3.

Loni Anderson, 79. She played a struggling radio station's empowered receptionist on the hit TV comedy "WKRP in Cincinnati." Aug. 3.

Ion Iliescu, 95. Romania's first freely elected president after the fall of communism in 1989 later faced charges of crimes against humanity for his role in the bloody revolution. Aug. 5.

James Lovell, 97. The commander of Apollo 13 helped turn a failed moon mission into a triumph of on-the-fly can-do engineering. Aug. 7.

Myint Swe, 74. He became Myanmar's acting president under controversial circumstances after the military seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Aug. 7.

William H. Webster, 101. His troubleshooting skills and integrity helped restore public confidence as director of the FBI from 1978 to 1987 and the CIA from 1987 to 1991. Aug. 8.

Genshitsu Sen, 102. He promoted peace as a grand master of the Japanese tea ceremony after being trained to be a Kamikaze pilot during World War II. Aug. 14.

Mike Castle, 86. The Republican moderate and former Delaware governor served 18 years in Congress, championing the popular 50 State Quarters Program. Aug. 14.

Tristan Rogers, 79. He played super spy Robert Scorpio on ABC's "General Hospital." Aug. 15.

Terence Stamp, 87. The British actor often played the role of a complex villain, including that of General Zod in the early Superman films. Aug. 17.

Humpy Wheeler, 86. He was a pioneering motorsports promoter as president and general manager of Charlotte Motor Speedway. Aug. 20.

Frank Caprio, 88. A retired municipal judge in Rhode Island, he found online fame as a caring jurist and host of "Caught in Providence." Aug. 20.

James Dobson, 89. Founder of the conservative Christian ministry Focus on the Family, the child psychologist was a politically influential campaigner against abortion and LGBTQ+ rights. Aug. 21.

Ron Turcotte, 84. The Hall of Fame jockey rode Secretariat to the Triple Crown in 1973. Aug. 22.

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Angela Mortimer Barrett, 93. She overcame partial deafness and an intestinal infection to win three Grand Slam singles titles, including the 1961 Wimbledon. Aug. 25.

Randy "Duke" Cunningham, 83. His feats as a U.S. Navy flying ace during the Vietnam War catapulted him to Congress, where the Republican served eight House terms before pleading guilty to accepting \$2.4 million in bribes. Aug. 27.

SEPTEMBER

Graham Greene, 73. A trailblazing Indigenous actor, his long career included an Oscar nomination for his portrayal of Kicking Bird in "Dances with Wolves." Sept. 1.

Giorgio Armani, 91. The iconic Italian designer turned the concept of understated elegance into a multibillion-dollar fashion empire. Sept. 4.

Joseph McNeil, 83. He was one of four North Carolina college students whose refusal to leave a racially segregated Woolworth's lunch counter 65 years ago helped spark nonviolent civil rights sit-ins across the South. Sept. 4.

The Duchess of Kent, 92. Born Katharine Lucy Mary Worsley, she famously broke royal protocol to hug a Wimbledon runner-up and stepped away from family duties to teach music in a public school. Sept. 4.

Polly Holliday, 88. The Tony Award-nominated screen and stage actor turned the catchphrase "Kiss my grits!" into a national retort as the gum-chewing, beehive-wearing server on the long-running CBS sitcom "Alice." Sept. 9.

Charlie Kirk, 31. Rising from a teenage conservative campus activist to a top podcaster and ally of President Donald Trump, he was fatally shot during an appearance at a college in Utah. Sept. 10.

Bobby Hart, 86. The songwriter was a key part of the Monkees' multimedia empire, teaming with Tommy Boyce on such hits as "Last Train to Clarksville" and "I'm Not Your Steppin' Stone." Sept. 10.

Kim Seong-Min, 63. The defector who founded Seoul-based Free North Korea Radio used USB sticks and a network of sources in the secretive country to inform the North Korean public about their authoritarian government. Sept. 12.

Ricky Hatton, 46. The former boxing world champion who rose to become one of the most popular fighters in the sport had mental health struggles and was found dead due to hanging. Sept. 14.

Robert Redford, 89. The Hollywood golden boy became an Oscar-winning director, liberal activist and godfather for independent cinema under the name of one of his best-loved characters. Sept. 16.

Brett James, 57. The Grammy award-winning country songwriter whose top hits included "Jesus, Take the Wheel" by Carrie Underwood and "When the Sun Goes Down" by Kenny Chesney died in a plane crash. Sept. 18.

Sonny Curtis, 88. A vintage rock 'n' roller, he wrote the raw classic "I Fought the Law" and posed the enduring question "Who can turn the world on with her smile?" as the writer-crooner of the theme song to "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Sept. 19.

Bernie Parent, 80. Considered one of the greatest hockey goalies, the Hall of Famer anchored the net for the Philadelphia Flyers' two Stanley Cup championships in the 1970s. Sept. 21.

Bobby Cain, 85. As one of the so-called Clinton 12 in 1956, he endured racist violence to become the first Black student in Tennessee to graduate from an integrated state-run school. Sept. 22.

Claudia Cardinale, 87. The acclaimed Italian actor starred in some of the most celebrated European films of the 1960s and 1970s. Sept. 23.

Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al-Sheikh, in his 80s. Saudi Arabia's grand mufti served as the kingdom's top religious figure for a quarter of a century as the ultraconservative Muslim nation socially liberalized. Sept. 23.

Sara Jane Moore, 95. She was imprisoned for more than 30 years after she made an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate President Gerald Ford in 1975. Sept. 24.

Assata Shakur, 78. The Black liberation activist was given political asylum in Cuba after her 1979 escape

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from a U.S. prison where she had been serving a life sentence for killing a law enforcement officer. Sept. 25.
Russell M. Nelson, 101. He was the oldest-ever president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Sept. 27.

OCTOBER

Jane Goodall, 91. The conservationist was renowned for her groundbreaking chimpanzee field research and globe-spanning environmental advocacy. Oct. 1.

Jilly Cooper, 88. The bestselling British author chronicled class and sex in risqué novels, including "Rivals" and "Riders." Oct. 5.

Joan B. Kennedy, 89. The former wife of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy endured family tragedies, her husband's infidelities and decades-long struggles with alcoholism and mental health. Oct. 8.

Diane Keaton, 79. The Oscar-winning star's quirky manner and emotional depth enthralled fans in movies including "Annie Hall," "The Godfather" films and "Father of the Bride." Oct. 11.

D'Angelo, 51. The Grammy-winning R&B singer recognized by his raspy yet smooth voice and for garnering mainstream attention with the shirtless "Untitled (How Does It Feel)" music video died of cancer. Oct. 14.

Raila Odinga, 80. The populist campaigns of the former prime minister and perennial presidential candidate challenged one-party rule, rattled authorities and gave him outsized influence in Kenya. Oct. 15.

Ace Frehley, 74. The original lead guitarist and founding member of the glam-rock band Kiss captivated audiences with his elaborate galactic makeup and smoking guitar. Oct. 16.

Susan Stamberg, 87. The "founding mother" of National Public Radio was the first female broadcaster to host a national news program. Oct. 16.

Kanchha Sherpa, 92. The Nepalese mountain guide was last surviving member of the expedition team that first conquered Mount Everest. Oct. 16.

Tomiichi Murayama, 101. Japan's former prime minister was known for his 1995 "Murayama statement" apologizing to Asian victims of his country's aggression. Oct. 17.

Chen Ning Yang, 103. The Chinese Nobel Prize-winning physicist was one of the most influential scientists in modern physics. Oct. 18.

Daniel Naroditsky, 29. The chess grandmaster who started as a child prodigy quickly became one of the most influential American voices in the sport. His cause of death was not made public. Oct. 20.

June Lockhart, 100. She became a mother figure for a generation of television viewers, whether at home in "Lassie" or "Lost in Space." Oct. 23.

Queen Mother Sirikit, 93. She supervised royal projects in Thailand to help the rural poor, preserve traditional craft-making and protect the environment. Oct. 24.

Nick Mangold, 41. As a New York Jets center he was one of the franchise's greatest players, twice helping lead the team to the AFC championship game. He died of complications of kidney disease. Oct. 25.

Prunella Scales, 93. A versatile actor, she was best known as acid-tongued Sybil Fawcety in the classic British sitcom "Fawlty Towers." Oct. 27.

NOVEMBER

Martha Layne Collins, 88. She was the first and only woman elected governor of Kentucky. Nov. 1.

Stanley Chesley, 89. A class-action lawsuit pioneer who took on cigarette companies and the makers of faulty breast implants, his legal career ended amid accusations of unethical conduct. Nov. 2.

George Banks, 83. He became one of the most notorious mass murderers in the U.S. by shooting 14 people, and killing 13, including his own children, during a 1982 rampage in Pennsylvania. Nov. 2.

Dick Cheney, 84. The hard-charging conservative was a leading advocate for invading Iraq as one of the most powerful and polarizing vice presidents in U.S. history. Years later, he became a critic and target of President Donald Trump. Nov. 3.

Diane Ladd, 89. The actor was nominated three times for Academy Awards, as the brash waitress in

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"Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore," the scheming parent in "Wild at Heart" and her role with daughter Laura Dern in "Rambling Rose." Nov. 3.

Kim Yong Nam, 97. North Korea's longtime ceremonial head of state was best known for his deep, booming voice in propaganda-filled speeches supporting the ruling Kim dynasty. Nov. 3.

James D. Watson, 97. His co-discovery of the twisted-ladder structure of DNA in 1953 helped light the long fuse on a revolution in medicine, crimefighting, genealogy and ethics. Nov. 6.

Paul Tagliabue, 84. He helped bring labor peace and riches to the NFL during his 17 years as commissioner but was criticized for not taking stronger action on concussions. Nov. 9.

Sally Kirkland, 84. The stage, film and TV actor was best known for sharing the screen with Paul Newman and Robert Redford in "The Sting" and her Oscar-nominated title role in the 1987 movie "Anna." Nov. 11.

Juan Ponce Enrile, 101. He was the Philippines' defense chief during the martial-law era notorious for human rights atrocities, democratic setbacks and plunder, then broke from Ferdinand Marcos, leading to the dictator's overthrow in a 1986 "people power" uprising. Nov. 13.

Todd Snider, 59. The singer's thoughtfully freewheeling tunes and cosmic-stoner songwriting made him a beloved figure in American roots music. Nov. 14.

H. Rap Brown, 82. One of the most vocal leaders of the Black Power movement, he died serving a life sentence for the killing in 2000 of a Georgia sheriff's deputy. Nov. 23.

Dharmendra, 89. A defining screen presence of 1970s and 1980s Bollywood films, he was one of Indian cinema's most popular stars. Nov. 24.

Jimmy Cliff, 81. The charismatic reggae pioneer and actor starred in the landmark movie "The Harder They Come" and preached joy, defiance and resilience in such classics as "Many Rivers to Cross," "You Can Get it If You Really Want" and "Vietnam." Nov. 24.

Viola Ford Fletcher, 111. As one of the last survivors of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre in Oklahoma, she spent her later years seeking justice for the deadly attack by a white mob on the thriving Black community where she lived as a child. Nov. 24.

Fuzzy Zoeller, 74. One of golf's most gregarious characters, the two-time major champion's career was tainted by a racially insensitive joke about Tiger Woods. Nov. 27.

Tom Stoppard, 88. The British playwright was a playful, probing dramatist who won an Academy Award for his screenplay for 1998's "Shakespeare In Love." Nov. 29.

DECEMBER

Charles Shay, 101. The decorated Native American veteran was a 19-year-old U.S. Army medic when he landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day and helped save lives. Dec. 3.

Steve Cropper, 84. A lean, soulful guitarist and songwriter, he helped anchor the celebrated Memphis backing band Booker T. and the M.G.'s at Stax Records and co-wrote the classics "Green Onions," "(Sittin' on) the Dock of the Bay" and "In the Midnight Hour." Dec. 3.

Around the world, refugees are shut out of the US by Trump's new policies

By REBECCA SANTANA, DAKE KANG and GISELA SALOMON Associated Press

When President Donald Trump suspended the refugee program on day one of his current administration, thousands of people around the world who'd been so close to a new life in America found themselves abandoned.

As part of Trump's crackdown on legal and illegal migration, the Republican president has upended the decades-old refugee program that has served as a beacon for those fleeing war and persecution. In October, he resumed the program but set a historic low of refugee admissions at 7,500 — mostly white South Africans.

New restrictions were announced after an Afghan national became the suspect in the shooting of two

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National Guard members last week. The Trump administration also plans a review of refugees let in during the Democratic Biden administration. Trump's administration has cited economic and national security concerns for its policy changes.

About 600,000 people were being processed to come to the U.S. as refugees when the program was halted, according to the administration. Aside from dozens of white South Africans let in this year, only about 100 others have been admitted as a result of a lawsuit by advocates seeking to restore the refugee program, said Mevlüde Akay Alp, a lawyer arguing the case.

The Associated Press spoke to three families whose lives have been thrown into disarray because of the changing policies.

A family separated by tightened restrictions

The Dawoods fled civil war in Syria and settled in northern Iraq. They hoped to find a new home that could provide better medical care for a daughter who had fallen from the fourth floor of the family's apartment building.

After they were accepted as refugees to the U.S., son Ibrahim and his sister Ava relocated to Connecticut in November 2024. His parents and one of his brothers were scheduled to fly in January.

But just two days before they were to board their flight, mother Hayat Fatah fainted at a medical check and her departure was postponed. Mohammed, another sibling, didn't want to leave his parents behind.

Nearly a year later, he and his parents are still waiting.

In America, Ibrahim wakes up early to tutor people online before going to his job as a math teacher at a private school, and then he takes care of his sister when he gets home. He said his mother often cries when they talk because she wishes she were in America to help care for her daughter.

A Chinese pastor wonders when his turn will come

Chinese Christian Lu Taizhi fled to Thailand more than a decade ago, fearing persecution for his beliefs. He's lived in legal limbo since, waiting to be resettled in the United States.

Lu said he has long admired the U.S. for what he calls its Christian character — a place where he feels he and his family "can seek freedom."

Lu was born into a family branded as "hostile elements" by the Chinese Communist Party for its land ownership and ties to a competing political party. A teacher and poet, Lu grew interested in history banned by the Chinese state, penning tributes to the bloody 1989 Tiananmen crackdown on pro-democracy protests in Beijing.

In 2004, Lu was arrested after police found poems and essays he secretly published criticizing Chinese politics and the education system. After his release, Lu became a Christian and began preaching, drawing scrutiny from local authorities.

With Chinese leader Xi Jinping's rise to power, controls tightened. When Beijing arrested hundreds of rights lawyers in 2015, Lu took his family and fled, settling in Thailand, where they applied for refugee status with the United Nations.

Eight years later, the U.N. notified Lu the U.S. had accepted his application. But after several delays, his most recent flight was canceled shortly after Trump's inauguration. His application has been put on hold indefinitely.

'I don't want to lose her'

Louis arrived in the United States as a refugee in September 2024. He left his wife and two children in East Africa, hoping they could soon be reunited in the U.S.

But that dream faded a few months later with Trump's return to the presidency.

Louis, who insisted on being identified only by his first name out of concern that speaking publicly could complicate his case, was told in January that a request he had made to bring his family to the U.S. had been frozen due to changes in refugee policies.

Now, the family members live thousands of miles apart without knowing when they will be reunited. His wife, Apolina, and the children, 2 and 3 years old, are in a refugee camp in Uganda. Louis is in Kentucky.

"I don't want to lose her, and she does not want to lose me," said Louis, who resettled in Kentucky with

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the help of the International Rescue Committee.

Louis and Apolina's families applied for refugee status after fleeing war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Louis' application, initiated by his parents, was approved, Apolina's, made separately by her parents, was not.

Apolina thought that, as the wife of a refugee, it would take her no more than one year to reunite with her husband, who now works in an appliance factory and has already applied for permanent residency.

The separation hasn't been easy for her and the children, who live in a tent in the refugee camp.

Today in History: December 6 13th Amendment ratified, abolishing slavery

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, Dec. 6, the 340th day of 2025. There are 25 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Dec. 6, 1865, the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, abolishing slavery, was ratified as Georgia became the 27th state to endorse it.

Also on this date:

In 1907, at least 361 men and boys died in a coal mine explosion in Monongah, West Virginia; it was the worst mining disaster in U.S. history.

In 1917, more than 1,700 people were killed when an explosives-laden French cargo ship, the *Mont Blanc*, collided with the Norwegian merchant vessel *SS Imo* in the harbor in Halifax, Nova Scotia, setting off a blast that devastated the Canadian city.

In 1923, a presidential address was broadcast nationally on radio for the first time as Calvin Coolidge spoke to a joint session of Congress.

In 1957, America's first attempted satellite launch failed as Vanguard TV3 rose about four feet off a Cape Canaveral launch pad before crashing down and exploding.

In 1969, a free concert by The Rolling Stones at the Altamont Speedway in Alameda County, California, was marred by the deaths of four people, including one who was stabbed by a member of the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club that was hired to provide concert security.

In 1973, Republican House Minority Leader Gerald R. Ford was sworn in as vice president after he was selected by President Richard Nixon to replace Spiro T. Agnew, who resigned amid an extortion and tax evasion scandal.

In 1998, in Venezuela, former Lt. Col. Hugo Chavez, who had staged a bloody coup attempt against the government six years earlier, was elected president.

In 2017, President Donald Trump officially recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, announcing plans to move the U.S. Embassy there from Tel Aviv.

In 2021, ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi was sentenced to four years (later reduced to two) for inciting public unrest and breaching COVID-19 protocols; she is currently serving a 27-year prison sentence after a series of cases brought by the military that had seized power from her elected government.

Today's Birthdays: Actor JoBeth Williams is 77. Craigslist founder Craig Newmark is 73. Actor Tom Hulse is 72. Comedian Steven Wright is 70. Rock musician Peter Dinklage (R.E.M.) is 69. Animator Nick Park is 67. Actor Janine Turner is 63. Writer-director Judd Apatow is 58. Actor Sarah Rafferty is 53. NBA star Giannis Antetokounmpo (YAH'-nihs an-teh-toh-KOON'-poh) is 31. Actor Stefanie Scott is 29.