

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 1 of 58

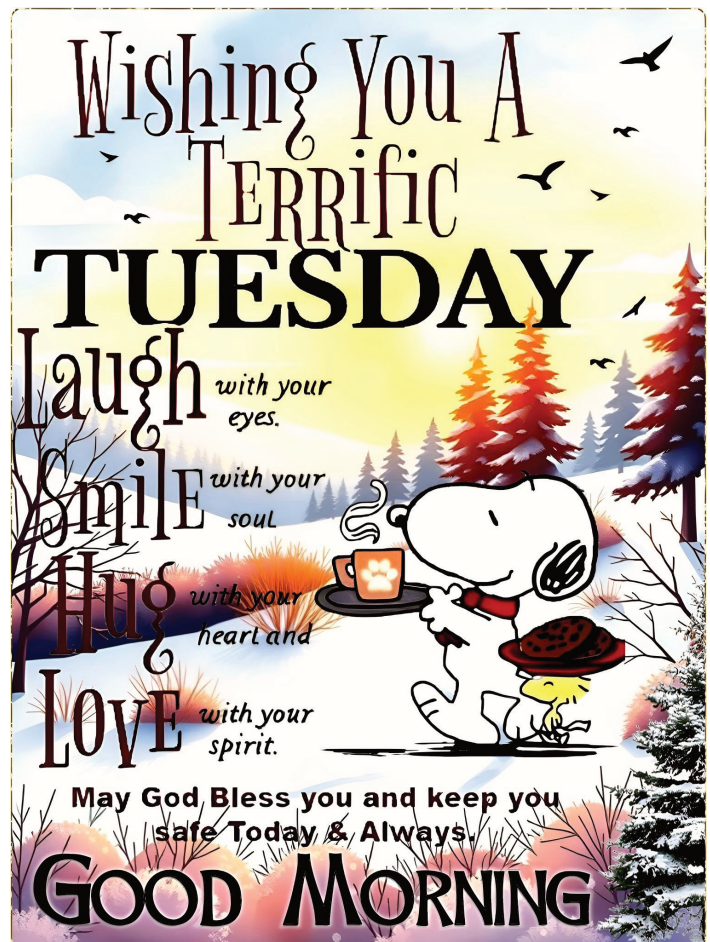
- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- City Council Agenda](#)
- [5- Brown County Commission Agenda](#)
- [6- Playing hockey on the rink](#)
- [7- Coming up this week on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [8- GDI Fitness Center Ad](#)
- [9- Groton to hold 88th Annual Carnival of Silver Skates](#)
- [10- SD News Watch: Small local farms growing stronger roots in South Dakota](#)
- [12- Turner County Fatal Crash](#)
- [13- Wolves Clamp Down Late to Defeat Cougars](#)
- [77-58](#)
- [14- SD SearchLight: Dairy leader expects difficulty finding workers 'if we don't allow more laborers in'](#)
- [15- SD SearchLight: Cruel months are piling up for South Dakota's public schools](#)
- [16- SD SearchLight: How South Dakota lawmakers get around a law that 'dictates' increased funding for schools](#)
- [17- SD SearchLight: Pentagon will try to penalize Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly for illegal orders video](#)
- [19- Weather Pages](#)
- [23- Daily Devotional](#)
- [24- Subscription Form](#)
- [25- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [26- News from the Associated Press](#)

Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2026

School Breakfast: Muffins.
School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, mashed potatoes.
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.
4th Grade GBB Practice, 5 p.m.
Basketball at Warner: (Welke: BJV-5, Arena: GJV-5, VGBB-6:30, VBBB-8:00)

Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2026

School Breakfast: Oatmeal.
School Lunch: Pizza crunchers, green beans.
Groton Chamber meeting at City Hall, Noon
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.
6th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.
3rd/4th Grade Volleyball Practice, 6 p.m.
5th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.



Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026

School Breakfast: Maple French toast.
School Lunch: Chicken patty, sweet potato puffs.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.
Carnival of Silver Skates costume hand-out at Emmanuel Lutheran
Groton Lions Club Meeting at 104 N Main, 6 p.m.
Basketball at Clark: (GJV/BC-4, BJV/GC-5, GV-6:30, BV-7:45)
2nd Grade BBB Practice, 5 p.m.
4th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.

Groton Daily Independent
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Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 2 of 58

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.

Maduro in Court

Deposed Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, pleaded not guilty yesterday to US drug- and terrorism-related charges in their first New York court appearance after being captured in a weekend operation.

The US has charged Maduro and Flores with narco-terrorism conspiracy, cocaine trafficking, and weapons offenses. Maduro's lawyers are expected to challenge the legality of his military capture and argue he is immune as head of state. Former Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega unsuccessfully tried the same defense after the US captured him for drug trafficking and other charges in 1990. The US doesn't recognize Maduro as Venezuela's legitimate leader after evidence that he lost by a wide margin in the 2024 reelection. Maduro and Flores maintain their innocence.

Meanwhile, Maduro ally and Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodríguez was sworn in as interim president, and the UN Security Council convened an emergency meeting over the military operation.

Later this week, the US energy secretary is expected to talk with oil executives about reviving Venezuela's energy sector. Venezuela is home to the world's largest oil reserves, though much of it is costly and difficult to extract and refine.

Childhood Vaccine Policy

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention overhauled its childhood vaccine schedule yesterday, reducing the number of recommended vaccines from 17 to 11. The changes were made without review from the CDC's vaccine advisory panel, and bring the US more in line with Denmark and 19 other developed countries.

The latest guidance removes recommendations for vaccines against flu, COVID-19, meningococcal disease, rotavirus, hepatitis A, and hepatitis B, instead suggesting parents decide on those vaccines in partnership with clinicians. Going forward, some of these vaccines—and others, including for respiratory syncytial virus and dengue—will be recommended for high-risk populations only. States mandate vaccine schedules and have historically deferred to federal guidelines. All recommended vaccines will be covered by insurance.

Separately, most women ages 30 to 65 will be able to self-administer HPV tests next year for routine cervical cancer screening, per new guidance. The approach marks a shift from the nearly 100-year-old Pap smear as a first line of screening for that age group.

Uvalde Shooting Trial

Opening statements are scheduled to begin today in the trial of a former school police officer charged with 29 counts of child abandonment or endangerment for his response to the 2022 school shooting in Uvalde, Texas.

Adrian Gonzales was among the first officers at Robb Elementary, where a gunman killed 19 students and two teachers. Gonzales allegedly failed to confront the gunman despite knowing his location, allowing roughly 77 minutes to pass before a tactical team led by federal agents killed the shooter. A guilty verdict for Gonzales would mark the first time a police officer is held criminally accountable for their response to a mass shooting. Each count carries up to two years in prison.

Former Uvalde schools police chief Pete Arredondo is the only other officer facing criminal charges for their response; his trial has not been scheduled. Both Gonzales' attorneys and some victims' family members have questioned why only two of the nearly 400 responding officers were charged.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 3 of 58

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Corporation for Public Broadcasting to dissolve months after losing over \$1B in federal funding; the private nonprofit funded NPR, PBS, and thousands of local news outlets nationwide since 1967.

Las Vegas Raiders, Arizona Cardinals, and Cleveland Browns fire coaches, bringing NFL head coach vacancies to six.

Netflix announces "Stranger Things" behind-the-scenes documentary, airing Jan. 12.

Science & Technology

Nvidia announces plans to launch robotaxi service with an unspecified partner as soon as 2027, joining the growing industry dominated by Alphabet's Waymo.

Lego unveils Smart Play, a technology that infuses toy bricks with responsive sensors, sounds, and lights.

Biological anthropologists find changes in the gut microbiome facilitate brain development, helping humans evolve the largest brains relative to body size of any primate.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +0.6%, Dow +1.2%, Nasdaq +0.7%) as oil stocks rise after the US' weekend strike on oil-rich Venezuela.

US-based multinational companies to be exempt from paying 15% global minimum tax as part of agreement between the US and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development nations.

General Motors Co. reports 5.5% annual sales gain in 2025, retaining position as America's largest vehicle seller; Stellantis' Jeep brand posts first annual sales gain since 2018.

Politics & World Affairs

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz (D) drops reelection bid amid scrutiny over allegations of widespread child care fraud.

Two thousand federal agents reportedly deploy to the state to investigate.

French court convicts 10 people on grounds of cyberbullying first lady Brigitte Macron by spreading allegations she was born a man; Macron is also pursuing a separate case against US podcaster Candace Owens.

Iranian government announces it will give citizens \$7 per month as protests enter 10th day, with at least 19 people killed.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 4 of 58

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

January 6, 2026 – 7:00pm
City Hall – 120 N Main Street

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Department Reports
4. Accept Retirement of Terry Herron
5. Authorization to Bid Exterior Painting of City Hall/Wage Memorial Library
6. Employee Salaries and Volunteer List
7. Minutes
8. Bills
9. Joint Utility Training School on January 20th – 22nd, 2026 – Sioux Falls, SD – Landon Johnson
10. Begin Accepting Applications for Summer Recreational Positions:
 - Baseball Coordinator
 - Softball Coordinator
 - Jr. Legion Coach
 - Jr. Teener Coach
 - Girls' Softball Coaches (U8/U10/U12/U14/U18)
 - Day Baseball/Softball Coach
 - Concessions Manager
 - Swimming Pool Manager
11. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
12. Adjournment

Broton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 5 of 58



BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA REORGANIZATION MEETING

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2026, 8:45 A.M.

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS

COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Blessing – Pastor Derek or Pastor Mike from Aldersgate Church
3. Elect 2026 Chairman
4. Elect 2026 Vice-Chairman
5. Approval of the Agenda
6. Commission Reorganization Meeting for 2026
 - a. Update Board Book
 - i. 2026 Committee Appointments
 - ii. Expense Policy – Brown County Boards
 - iii. ADA Coordinator
 - iv. Adopt Resolution for Bank Depositories/Investment Policy
 - v. Official Newspapers
 - vi. Adopt Resolution for Tax Deed Notices
 - vii. Volunteers for Work Comp Purposes
 1. Cert
 2. Chaplains
 3. Citizens Corp Council
 4. Dive Team
 5. Fair Board
 - viii. Board Appointments
 1. Communications Council
 2. Dacotah Prairie Museum
 3. Planning & Zoning Board
 4. Weed & Pest Board
 5. 4-H Promotion & Expansion Committee
 - ix. Range Suppression Assistance
 - x. Safety Committee
 - xi. SD Public Assurance Representatives
 - xii. Homeland Security Regional Review Board
 - xiii. Housing & Redevelopment Commission of Brown County
 - xiv. Regional Railroad Authority Commission
 - b. Approve Equalization Fees
 - c. Approve Fairgrounds Rental Rates
 - d. Approve Richmond Youth Camp Rental Rates
 - e. Approve Poor Relief Rates
 - f. Approve Planning & Zoning Fees
 - g. Approve Weed & Pest Fees
 - h. Approve Travel Reimbursement Rates
7. Adopt Resolution for Designation of Deputies in Auditor, Treasurer & Register of Deeds
8. Adopt Resolution for Interest Policy
9. Adopt Resolution for Expense Policy – Election Officials for 2026
10. Adopt Resolution for Vote Centers for 2026 Elections
11. Authorize Auditor to sign Claim Assignments from Collection Agencies
12. Authorize Chairman to sign Fair Contracts for Booth Rent, Campers, & Sponsorship Agreements for 2026 Fair as they are presented.
13. Opportunity for Public Comment

** Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes or at Boards Discretion. Presentations will be limited to 3 minutes.*
14. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign VSO Salary Reimbursement Agreement for 2026
15. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign Local Emergency Management Performance Grant (LEMPG) for 1st Qtr.
16. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign 2026 County Jail Housing Contract with Edmunds County

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 6 of 58

17. Adopt Resolution Establishing a Policy for Remittance of Fees Collected to the County Treasurer
18. Approve the Mental Health Board Members
19. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of the General Meeting Minutes for December 30, 2025
 - b. Claims
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Travel Requests
 - e. Landfill Tonnage Report for December 2025
20. Other Business
21. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
22. Adjourn

You can join the Brown County Commission Meeting via **your computer, tablet, or smartphone** at <https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>
You can also dial in using your phone. United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3311](tel:+18722403311) - Access Code: **601-168-909 #**
Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at [Commission Meetings | Brown County](#)



Several skaters were on the skating rink Monday afternoon playing hockey.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 7 of 58



Coming Up on
GDILIVE.COM

Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

GDILIVE



A production of the

Groton Daily Independent



For more info: GDILIVE.COM



Tues., Jan. 6, 2026

Rich Bosma and Mike Imrie
Paul Kosel and Jeslyn Kosel

**Doubleheader at Warner
Girls at 6:30 p.m., Boys at 8 p.m.**



Thurs., Jan. 8, 2026

Rich Bosma and Mike Imrie
Paul Kosel and Jeslyn Kosel

**Doubleheader at Clark/Willow Lake
Girls at 6:30 p.m., Boys at 8 p.m.**



Sat., Jan. 10, 2026

Rich Bosma and
Jeslyn Kosel

**Doubleheader at Lennox
Girls at 3:30 p.m., Boys at 5 p.m.**

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!**

Groton to hold 88th Annual Carnival of Silver Skates

Groton will host the 88th annual Carnival of Silver Skates, featuring over 90 figure skaters, on Sunday, January 25. Two performances of this unique outdoor ice skating show will be held at the Groton ice rink at 2:00 PM and 6:00 PM. All are invited to attend.

The theme for this year's 88th celebration is "Take Me to the Movies." As the audience watches the Groton skaters from pre-school through high school age, they will enjoy a wide variety of music. There will also be several specialty acts from local skaters, and there will be two synchronized skating acts performed by members of the Watertown Figure Skate Club.

The show promises to be entertaining and inspiring, with beautiful costumes and memorable music. Spectators will enjoy a wide variety of music from popular movies throughout the years. New spectators to the show each year marvel at the beautiful, professional-looking costumes.

Following tradition, the 2026 Carnival of Silver Skates Queen will be crowned during the 2:00 PM performance. The 2025 Queen Rylee Dunker will crown the new queen. This year's queen candidates are seniors: Mia Crank and Emma Davies and juniors: Avery Crank, Teagan Hanten, Addison Hoffman, Emerlee Jones, Claire Schuelke, and McKenna Tietz.

Admission for the show is just \$3.00 for those 13 and older, \$2.00 for ages 6-12, and free for children 5 and under. Plan now to attend the Carnival of Silver Skates in Groton on January 25 at 2:00 PM or 6:00 PM. The rink is located on the west side of town, near the baseball complex. Watch from the comfort of your own vehicle, listening to music and narration from your radio. There will be plenty of parking, with only cars allowed on the ice and larger vehicles allowed on upper tiers. Weather permitting, parking on the ice will begin at noon on Sunday for the first show and again at 4:30 PM for the evening show. You may prefer to dress for the weather of the day and enjoy the show from the bleachers, which will be provided.

Come be a part of this long-standing community tradition in Groton as you experience the Carnival of Silver Skates!



Small local farms growing stronger roots in South Dakota

Bart Pfankuch

South Dakota News Watch

STURGIS, S.D. – Driving up a dirt road to the small produce stand at Bear Butte Gardens just outside Sturgis, one would never imagine the incredibly diverse ways that the organic farm is capitalizing on the rising consumer interest in healthy foods and the farm-to-table movement.

The seasonal vegetables sold at the stand remain a viable revenue stream for co-owners Michelle and Rick Grosek, who have found myriad ways to attract customers and keep their 80-acre, organically certified farm financially strong.

They sell their produce and home-cooked foods to grocers and restaurants. They offer regular farm tours for adults and children. And they hold cooking and gardening classes and special meals like a recent five-course mushroom dinner.

They also host community festivals, including a woolen fiber festival where sheep were sheared and a Winter Wonderland Festival where Rick, whose natural beard outshines the whiskers of any mall Santa, dressed up like Kris Kringle.

Bear Butte Gardens also welcomes travelers, including campers and RVers as well as people who stay in a nightly Airbnb-style rental home that puts them in the middle of the farm and within easy gaze of the 1,200-foot-tall Bear Butte geological formation.

The Groseks are also training to become organic farm inspectors for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"We're going strong, but we do a lot of diverse things with our products so we don't have all our eggs in one basket, so to speak," Michelle Grosek said of the farm that began operating in 2010.

She said 2025 was a slow sales year for the farm, likely due to a weak national economy and a reduction in tourists, especially from Canada.

Demand for locally grown foods rising

Despite the minor slowdown in 2025, the demand for locally grown vegetables and meats continues to rise in the U.S. and in South Dakota, said Angela Jackson, an organic transition advisor with the South Dakota Speciality Producers Association.

"The demand for these products is going up for sure," Jackson said. "We have a lot of young families especially who are seeking these products."

Jackson works with the specialty producers group and the USDA to help farmers navigate the process to become formally USDA-certified to legally label their products as organic. The certification provides consumers with guarantees about how foods are grown and processed and can enable producers to charge more for their goods.

In the locally grown food industry, there is a legal distinction between products that can be labeled as "organic" and those that are not. Many local producers use no or minimal pesticides, for example, but only those who go through certification can legally use that term on their products.

South Dakota remains in the bottom third nationally in the number of USDA organically certified farms and livestock operations, and the number of certified producers has fallen in recent years, Jackson said.

USDA data shows that the state had 124 certified producers in 2022 but had 87 as of December. In 2022, the last year the USDA published its national agricultural survey, South Dakota generated \$14 million in sales of organic goods.

Jackson said some producers let certifications lapse because the process became too expensive. Some farmers told News Watch that there was simply too much red tape to make certification worth the effort.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 11 of 58

"Going from farm to fork is very challenging," said Jackson, who operates a USDA-certified farm, PrairieSun Organics, near Vermillion.

Keeping revenues in the state

Jackson said she is working with a number of South Dakota farmers who are in the process of becoming USDA certified.

But whether certified or not, Jackson said farms that focus on growing healthy foods provide producers with the opportunity to serve a growing consumer base and hopefully keep more agricultural dollars in the state.

"We grow and process food on the farm and package it for direct sale to the consumer, and there's value in not losing that money to an out-of-state processor," she said. "We capitalize on that and increase our net profit."

Jackson said local producers also protect the environment and provide an overall boost to the local economy not seen when vegetables and other products are imported from other states and countries.

"I believe that it's better for the environment and it helps rural communities," she said.

Challenges to fast growth in South Dakota

One barrier to expanded production and consumption of locally grown foods in South Dakota is the geography and population of the state itself, said Blake Pulse, a researcher and Ph.D. candidate at South Dakota State University in Brookings.

The low population and spread-out nature of the state make it harder for small producers to get their products in front of interested consumers, Pulse said.

"When you think about South Dakota agriculture, it's the corn, the soybeans and the cattle, and not necessarily tomatoes and carrots and other fresh fruits and vegetables," he said. "Buying South Dakota-grown products requires more labor on the consumer's part because we haven't reached the institutional and grocery store level for those goods yet."

But Pulse said there are positive signs in the supply chain for locally grown and organic foods. One example is food hubs in which producers combine efforts to get products to eager consumer markets either in small stores and stands or in restaurants.

"It covers the intersection between producer and consumer," he said. "It allows for grouping of products to reach a larger market."

Poultry grower sees strong growth

The challenges in the supply chain have not stunted the growth of Odessa Farms, a small but thriving organic chicken production facility in Butte County.

Owners Meghan and Joe Volk of Nisland have doubled production in each of the past few years as the market for locally grown meat continues to increase in western South Dakota.

The Volks will raise and process about 5,500 meat chickens this year, selling them to restaurants, individual consumers and a few local organic grocery stores. Their birds arrive from North Dakota as chicks in May and July, then spend their days free-ranging on grass while being fed organic grain.

The birds are allowed to grow a few weeks longer than traditional commercial poultry and have smaller breasts, more dark meat and a richer flavor as a result, Megan Volk said. Prices for their products are a few dollars more per pound than chickens grown on larger production farms, she said.

"There's a market out there of people who want their food grown locally and humanely, and a big part of our farm is that we want our animals to live the absolute best life they can," she said. "We don't compete with Walmart or any big box stores on quantity, but they can't compete with us for quality."

This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit organization. Read more stories and donate at sdnewswatch.org and sign up for an email to get stories when they're published. Contact content director Bart Pfankuch at bart.pfankuch@sdnewswatch.org.

Turner County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash
Where: Third Street and Dewey Avenue in Chancellor, SD
When: 9:59 p.m., Monday, December 22, 2025

Driver 1: 66-year-old male from Springfield, SD, fatal injuries
Vehicle 1: 2005 Jeep Renegade
Seat belt Used: No

Turner County, S.D.- A Springfield, SD man has died from injuries sustained in a December 22 crash in Chancellor, SD.

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

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2005 Jeep Renegade was traveling on Third Street near Dewey Avenue in Chancellor, SD. The driver lost control of the vehicle and drove off the roadway to the east, struck a utility pole, side-swiped and RV, and came to rest in the front lawn of a residential property.

The driver was taken to Avera McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls with life-threatening injuries. He died from injuries sustained in the crash on January 2.

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.

Wolves Clamp Down Late to Defeat Cougars 77-58

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. — A dominant fourth-quarter performance on both ends of the floor propelled the Northern State Wolves to a 77-58 nonconference victory over the Sioux Falls Cougars on Thursday night.

Northern State broke the game open in the final 10 minutes, pouring in 26 points while holding the Cougars to just seven. The Wolves finished the night shooting 49.2 percent from the field, including 41.2 percent from three-point range, while adding 39 rebounds, 12 assists and nine steals.

Izzy Moore led the way in her hometown return, posting a double-double with 24 points and 12 rebounds to go with six steals. Moore went 8-for-19 from the floor and knocked down 7-of-9 free throws to anchor Northern's offense.

The Wolves placed four players in double figures, as Carli Kuyper added 16 points and eight rebounds, Lily Klein contributed 13 points with a well-rounded stat line of three rebounds, three assists, two steals and a block, and Taylor Tool chipped in 11 points.

Northern also received key production off the bench. Reagan Rus scored eight points on 60 percent shooting and pulled down five rebounds, while Morgan Fiedler directed the offense with a team-high five assists to go along with five points.

Sioux Falls was led by Anna Vaaler, who finished with 17 points and three rebounds. Ayla Brown added 12 points and eight rebounds for the Cougars.

With the win, Northern State improved to 8-6 overall and 3-5 in Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference play, while Sioux Falls fell to 8-6 overall and 5-3 in league action.

The Wolves will remain on the road as they travel to face the Wayne State Wildcats on Friday. Tipoff is scheduled for 7:30 p.m.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Dairy leader expects difficulty finding workers 'if we don't allow more laborers in'

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR

SIOUX FALLS — South Dakota's dairy industry has grown rapidly over the past two decades, but an industry leader warned Monday that maintaining the momentum could depend partly on the number of workers allowed into the United States.

During a Downtown Sioux Falls Rotary panel discussion focused on the state's dairy industry, Tim den Dulk, a dairy farmer and processor, was asked if uncertainty around labor is a concern. The federal government has implemented stricter immigration enforcement during the current Trump administration.

"We expect it to be extremely difficult to find employees, especially if we don't allow more laborers in," den Dulk said.

The dairy industry in the state has been affected by immigration enforcement actions. Drumgoon Dairy, near Lake Norden, lost 38 of its 50 employees this summer after a federal Department of Homeland Security audit flagged workers for inaccurate, outdated or incomplete proof of U.S. citizenship or permission to work in the country.

Former Gov. Dennis Daugaard moderated the Monday discussion and opened it with a look back at the dairy industry's growth. The number of dairy cows in the state increased 165% from 2006 to 2025, and is expected to grow another 18% this year to 253,475 cows. Most of the growth has taken place along the Interstate 29 corridor in the eastern part of the state. Panelists said the growth has helped generate jobs and broaden the state's agricultural economy.

However, without a reliable pipeline of workers, den Dulk said the industry's recent growth could be hard to sustain.

"We could pay some people \$35, \$40 an hour to milk a cow, and I still don't think we would get them to be milkers for a 12-hour shift, five to six days a week," he said.

South Dakota also has the nation's lowest unemployment rate, at 2%.

Jake Anderson, plant director at Bel Brands USA in Brookings, discussed the company's ongoing expansion aimed at doubling production of its Mini Babybel cheese wheels. Anderson said a key strategy for staying competitive in the job market is positioning the company as an employer of choice, including offering higher wages.

"Certainly, it is something that we do need to keep an eye on," Anderson said of workforce challenges. "It is certainly on the top of a lot of organizations' minds."

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

COMMENTARY

Cruel months are piling up for South Dakota's public schools

by Dana Hess

T.S. Eliot claimed "April is the cruelest month." Obviously he wasn't an administrator in South Dakota's public education system.

For anyone concerned about school funding in South Dakota, December is the cruelest month. That's when they find out what sort of increase, if any, education will receive in the governor's budget.

Once they digest that news, the rest of the month can be spent worrying about what sort of bright ideas lawmakers will present in the January legislative session about changing the school funding formula or the exciting new ways that the school system can be used to right the wrongs of society.

Governor aims tax credit at private schools

For public schools this year, November wasn't all that great a month, either. That's when Gov. Larry Rhoden announced that the state was signing on to the education tax credit program that was part of President Donald Trump's "big, beautiful bill." For some reason the governor was eager to join the program, even though the fine print on the tax credit won't be ready until 2027.

While the \$1,700 tax credit can be used for public school programs, that clearly wasn't Rhoden's target audience when he made the announcement. "I'd just as soon give those dollars to a private school than Uncle Sam," Rhoden said in a South Dakota Searchlight story. "I think they know how to spend it a little wiser than the federal government."

Maybe the governor's enthusiasm for a tax credit that doesn't exist yet is based on the fact that more families in South Dakota are choosing private schools or home schooling. Alternative education in this state has increased 216% since 2015.

No increase for education in governor's budget

Dec. 2 was a dark day for education, state workers and health care as the "big three" found out that Rhoden's budget didn't include a funding increase for any of them.

The governor blamed flat sales tax revenues for the lack of a funding increase. Those who advocate for education and health care point to the fact that not keeping up with inflation will actually serve as a funding cut as they must choose how to make due with flat funding while expenses continue to go up.

This is a curious political tactic for Rhoden. He was the last to enter the race for the Republican nomination, and now one of his first acts as a candidate is presenting a budget that's sure to be upsetting for many South Dakotans.

Property taxes in the legislative crosshairs

When the Legislature convenes next week to start considering Rhoden's budget — January is perhaps public education's second cruelest month — one of the top assignments will be finding a way to relieve the pressure on property taxpayers. Along with state funding, property taxes are a main source of public school funding.

A summer task force assigned to find ways to cut property taxes concluded its work with 19 recommendations. Some of the ideas that didn't get the endorsement of the task force will also likely end up in bills for the Legislature to consider.

In just about every legislative session, public schools find their funding the target of some legislator who hasn't been in a classroom for 30 years but thinks he knows what's best for education. As a special treat, this year public schools will face an entire legislative session where a major source of their funding is subject to the whims of legislators.

As the governor and lawmakers champion the needs of alternative education and prioritize the complaints of property taxpayers, they run the risk of losing track of the importance of public education. With a long state history of making funding for public education a priority, the current mood runs the risk of

giving more significance to other matters. That would be a mistake. Public education should be among the state's highest priorities, not just a political football to get tossed around every December and January.

Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

How South Dakota lawmakers get around a law that 'dictates' increased funding for schools

Governor is recommending flat funding for education in next budget

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

South Dakota Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden reminded lawmakers during his December budget address that state law "dictates" a minimum increase in education funding each year.

But in the next breath, he recommended flat funding for South Dakota schools.

During a press conference two days later, South Dakota Searchlight asked Rhoden to explain the contradiction.

"The same people that made the laws can suspend them, if you will," he said. "And there's times that it's been necessary to do so."

Lawmakers created the mandatory increase law in 1995, with an effective date in 1997. It required annual increases of 3% or inflation, whichever is less — an amount described as the "index factor."

Legislators and governors followed or exceeded that requirement for 13 years. Since 2010, however, they've provided less than the index factor four times. Rhoden's proposed budget would be the fifth.

How lawmakers get around the index factor

To get around mandatory funding increases, lawmakers amend the state education funding law. Instead of applying the mandatory increase to the prior year's baseline funding, they reset the baseline.

The mandatory increase remains in the law, but only as a requirement for the next year. When the next year arrives, if legislators want to go below or above the minimum increase, they reset the baseline again as needed.

Lt. Gov. Tony Venhuizen said the index factor now serves more as a "guideline or a goal."

"One Legislature can't bind a future Legislature by statute," Venhuizen said.

Dave Knudson was chief of staff to Gov. Bill Janklow when Janklow signed the mandatory minimum increase into law three decades ago. Knudson, who later served as a lawmaker, said the Legislature's recent treatment of the law signifies a declining commitment to schools.

"It seems like education isn't as high of a priority in these last few years as it was the prior 25 or so," Knudson said.

1990s law changes made schools 'very dependent on the state'

Janklow convinced lawmakers in 1995 to take more responsibility for school funding in an effort to reduce local property taxes.

Knudson said the index factor was established because Janklow's administration "knew state funding would have to be adjusted on an annual basis." Three percent was close to the annual rate of inflation around that time, he said.

Former lawmaker Lee Schoenbeck served in the Legislature then. He said there was an expectation that the index factor would provide what school districts "needed to have to operate."

The changes implemented in the 1990s made schools "very dependent on the state," Schoenbeck said, and put the onus on lawmakers to follow through with required funding increases.

"It ought to be a big deal to decide you won't do that," Schoenbeck said.

During the roughly 30-year history of the index factor law, lawmakers have increased education funding by exactly the index factor 10 times and gone above it 15 times. They provided increases smaller than the index factor four times, including one year of widespread budget cuts when education funding was reduced.

Rhoden said during his budget address that education funding has stayed above the index factor over the long term. Since his predecessor Kristi Noem became governor in 2019, state education funding has grown by 27.9%, Rhoden said, while the index factor over that time has been 21.7%

Impact of sales tax reduction

Sandra Waltman, the South Dakota Education Association's director of government relations and communications, said school districts set their budgets with the index factor as a guideline. Some enter into multi-year contracts with teachers based on the expectation.

Yet school leaders recognize it can be difficult to meet the index factor "in extreme times," Waltman said. "To ignore it consistently and have schools fall behind inflation is where we'd become concerned," she said.

Schoenbeck said the state could live up to the index factor this year by immediately returning the state's sales tax to 4.5%. The Legislature and then-Gov. Noem temporarily reduced the rate to 4.2% in 2023, costing the state more than \$100 million in annual revenue. The tax is scheduled to go back up to 4.5%, but not until 2027.

"Put that back to where we had it and you'd have your problem solved," Schoenbeck said. "Now these people in the Legislature will have to decide if they have the courage to pay their bills."

South Dakota Searchlight's Seth Tupper contributed to this report.

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.

Pentagon will try to penalize Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly for illegal orders video

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department will attempt to downgrade Arizona Democratic Sen. Mark Kelly's retirement rank and pay, seeking to punish him for making a video along with other Democrats in Congress, who told members of the military they didn't need to follow illegal orders.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth originally threatened to recall Kelly from military retirement and court-martial him for his participation in the video, but announced Monday that the department would instead try to downgrade his rank of captain as well as his retirement pay.

"Captain Kelly has been provided notice of the basis for this action and has thirty days to submit a response," Hegseth wrote in a social media post. "The retirement grade determination process directed by Secretary Hegseth will be completed within forty five days."

Hegseth added that Kelly's "status as a sitting United States Senator does not exempt him from accountability, and further violations could result in further action."

Kelly wrote in a social media post that he planned to challenge Hegseth's attempt to alter his retirement rank and pay, arguing it's an attempt to punish him for challenging the Trump administration.

"My rank and retirement are things that I earned through my service and sacrifice for this country. I got shot at. I missed holidays and birthdays. I commanded a space shuttle mission while my wife Gabby recovered from a gunshot wound to the head— all while proudly wearing the American flag on my shoulder," Kelly wrote. "Generations of servicemembers have made these same patriotic sacrifices for this country, earning the respect, appreciation, and rank they deserve."

Kelly added that Hegseth's goal with the process is to "send the message to every single retired service-member that if they say something he or Donald Trump doesn't like, they will come after them the same

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 18 of 58

way. It's outrageous and it is wrong. There is nothing more un-American than that."

Constitutional protection

Members of Congress are generally protected under the speech and debate clause of the U.S. Constitution, which states that unless a lawmaker is involved in treason, felony and breach of the peace, they are "privileged from Arrest during their Attendance at the Session of their respective Houses, and in going to and returning from the same; and for any Speech or Debate in either House, they shall not be questioned in any other Place."

The Defense Department letter of censure to Kelly alleged that his participation in the video undermined the military chain of command, counseled disobedience, created confusion about duty, brought discredit upon the Armed Forces and included conduct unbecoming of an officer.

Hegseth wrote in that letter that if Kelly continues "to engage in conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline, you may subject yourself to criminal prosecution or further administrative action."

Allegations of misconduct

The Department of Defense posted in late November that officials were looking into "serious allegations of misconduct" against Kelly for appearing in the video.

It didn't detail how Kelly might have violated the Uniform Code of Military Justice but stated that "a thorough review of these allegations has been initiated to determine further actions, which may include recall to active duty for court-martial proceedings or administrative measures."

Hegseth referred the issue to Navy Secretary John Phelan for any "review, consideration, and disposition" he deemed appropriate. Hegseth then asked for a briefing on the outcome of the review "by no later than December 10."

Kelly said during a press conference in early December the military's investigation and a separate one by the FBI were designed to intimidate the six lawmakers in the video from speaking out against Trump.

The lawmakers in the video, who have backgrounds in the military or intelligence agencies, told members of those communities they "can" and "must refuse illegal orders."

"No one has to carry out orders that violate the law or our Constitution. We know this is hard and that it's a difficult time to be a public servant," they said. "But whether you're serving in the CIA, in the Army, or Navy, or the Air Force, your vigilance is critical."

The other Democrats in the video — Michigan Sen. Elissa Slotkin, Colorado Rep. Jason Crow, Pennsylvania Reps. Chris Deluzio and Chrissy Houlahan, and New Hampshire Rep. Maggie Goodlander — are not subject to the military justice system.

Trump railed against the video a couple of days after it posted, saying the statements represented "SE-DITIOUS BEHAVIOR, punishable by DEATH!"

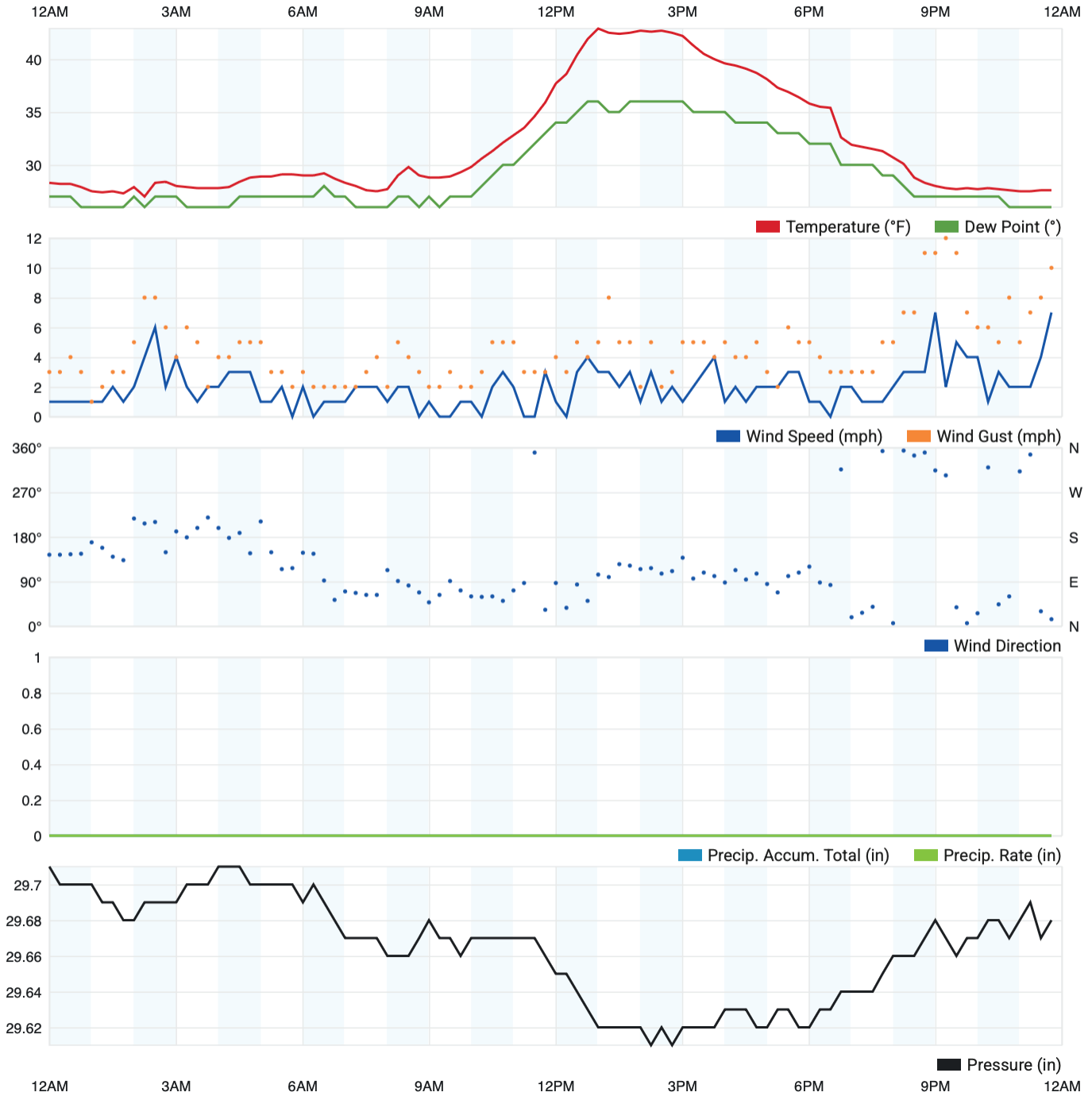
Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 19 of 58

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

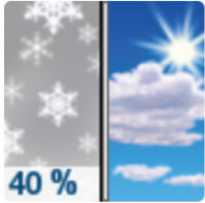
January 5, 2026



Broton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 20 of 58

Today



High: 35 °F
 Chance Snow and Patchy Dense Fog then Mostly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 25 °F
 Mostly Cloudy

Wednesday



High: 38 °F
 Mostly Sunny

Wednesday Night



Low: 25 °F
 Mostly Cloudy

Thursday

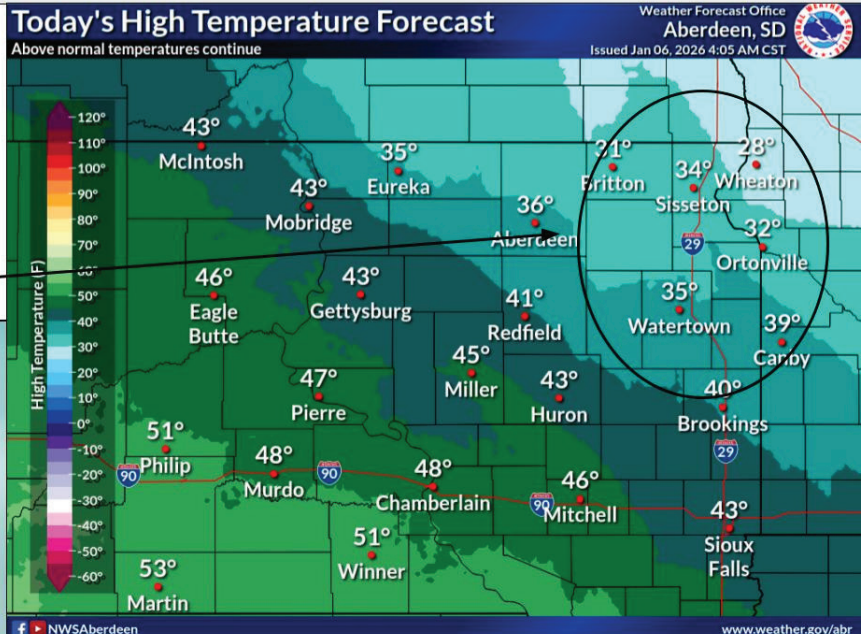


High: 35 °F
 Partly Sunny

Continued Mild - Mixed Precip Possible January 6, 2026 4:13 AM

- Above normal temperatures in the 30s and 40s for most areas.
- Chances for mixed precipitation today (20-40%) with **light freezing rain possible**. Little, if any icing accumulation.
- **Areas of fog (possibly dense) over northeast SD this morning.**

- Be ready for sudden changes in visibility
- Turn on your low-beam headlights when approaching fog
- Drive slowly, and keep your distance from other vehicles



Mild temperatures will continue across the region today, with most areas rising into the 30s and 40s. There will be a weak system moving eastward across the region, with patches of mixed precipitation possible (snow, freezing rain, rain), but any accumulations are forecast to remain very light with minimal impacts. Best chances mainly along and north of U.S. Hwy 14.

Groton Daily Independent

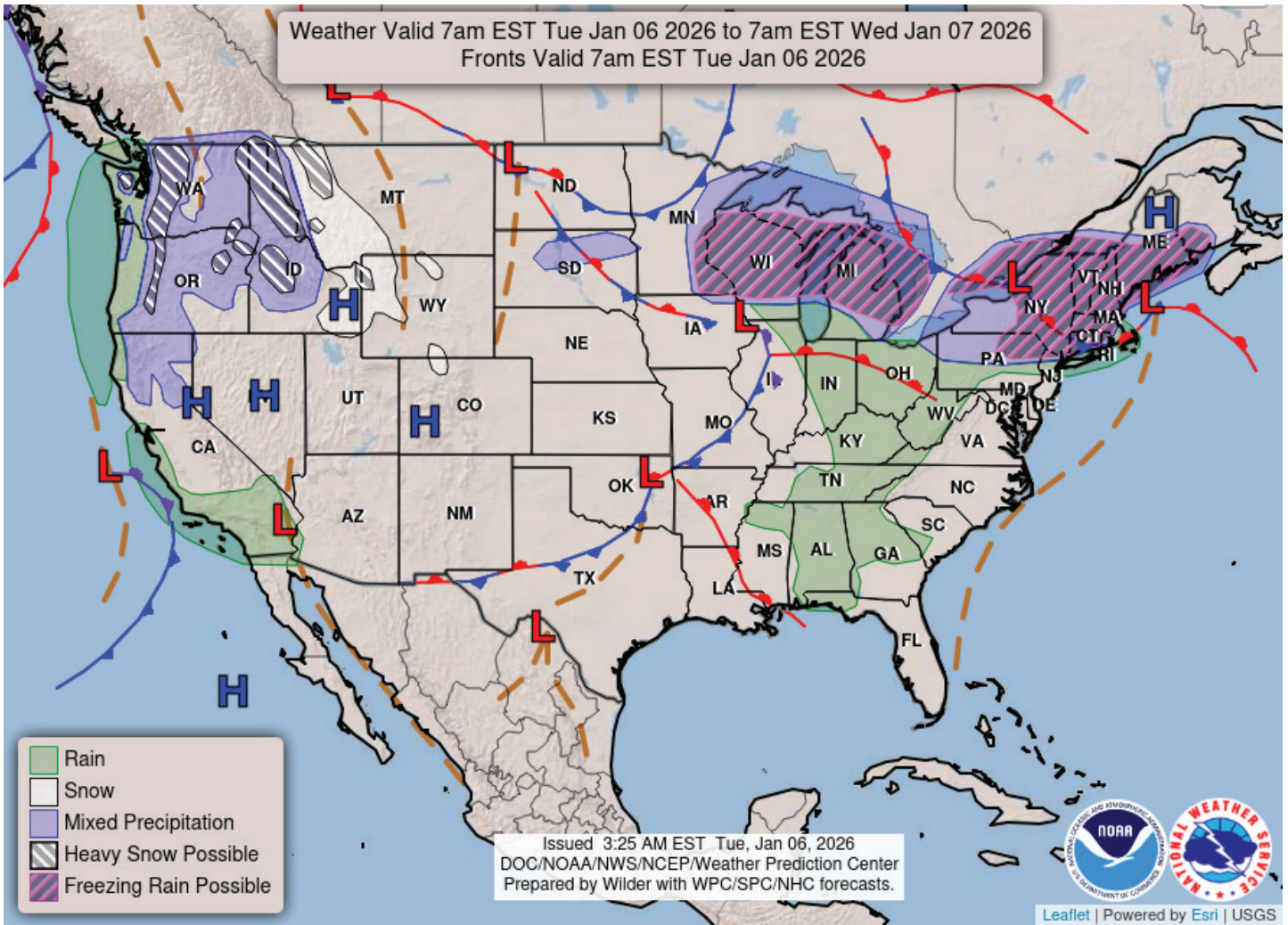
Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 21 of 58

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 43 °F at 1:01 PM
Low Temp: 26 °F at 2:06 AM
Wind: 15 mph at 9:17 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 49 in 2012
Record Low: -30 in 1909
Average High: 24
Average Low: 3
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.13
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.13
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:04 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:11 am



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 22 of 58

Today in Weather History

January 6, 1962: Snow, high winds, sub-zero temperatures, and near blizzard conditions caused hazardous driving conditions across the area from the 6th into the 9th. Snowfall of generally 2 to 6 inches with winds of 30 to 40 mph caused widespread low visibilities along with drifts up to 4 foot high across central and northeast South Dakota.

January 6, 2010: A strong Alberta Clipper system tracked southeast through the northern plains on Tuesday night, January 5th through Thursday, January 7th. Sufficient Pacific moisture interacted with bitter cold Arctic air surging south from Canada, resulting in widespread snowfall over northeast South Dakota. Snowfall amounts ranged from 6 to 11 inches. The snow began across northeastern South Dakota in the late evening of the 5th into the early morning hours of the 6th. Many schools closed on the 6th and the 7th. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches in Andover and Doland; 7 inches in Britton, Sisseton, and near Milbank; 8 inches in Aberdeen, Bryant, and near Summit; 9 inches at Wilmot and Castlewood; 10 inches in Clear Lake and 11 inches at Watertown.

January 6, 2014: The coldest air in recent history moved into the region during the early morning hours of the 5th and continued into the afternoon hours of the 6th. The combination of sub-zero temperatures with north winds produced dangerously cold wind chills from 40 below to around 55 degrees below zero. Winds gusted to over 40 mph at times. Several area activities were canceled, as well as many schools on Monday the 6th. Some of the coldest wind chills include; 56 below in Summit; 55 below near Hillhead; 54 below in Brandt and Webster; 53 below in Clear Lake; 52 below in Herreid; 51 below in Leola; 50 below in Watertown, Sisseton, Bowdle, and McIntosh.

1835 — It was a record cold morning in the eastern U.S. The mercury at the Yale Campus in New Haven CT plunged to 23 degrees below zero, and reached 40 below in the Berkshire Hills of Connecticut. (David Ludlum)

1886: The "Great Blizzard of 1886" struck the Midwest with high winds, subzero temperatures, and heavy snowfall. These conditions caused as many as 100 deaths, and 80% of the cattle in Kansas perished.

1904 — Bitterly cold air gripped the northeastern U.S. Morning lows of -42 degrees at Smethport PA and -34 at River Vale NJ established state records. (The Weather Channel)

1913 — The temperature at the east portal to Strawberry Tunnel reached 50 degrees below zero to tie the record established at Woodruff on February 6, 1899. (David Ludlum)

1982 — A three day rainstorm in the San Francisco area finally came to an end. Marin County and Cruz County were drenched with up to 25 inches of rain, and the Sierra Nevada Range was buried under four to eight feet of snow. The storm claimed at least 36 lives, and caused more than 300 million dollars damage. (Storm Data)

1987 — A massive winter storm spread heavy snow from the southwestern U.S. into the Rockies. In Utah, the Alta ski resort reported a storm total of 42 inches of snow. Winds gusted to 64 mph at Albuquerque NM. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Thunderstorms helped produce heavy snow in the Lower Great Lakes Region. Snow fell at the rate of four to five inches per hour, and snowfall totals ranged up to 69 inches at Highmarket NY. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — A strong Pacific cold front produced heavy snow and high winds in Nevada. Winds gusted to 80 mph north of Reno, while up to two feet of snow blanketed the Lake Tahoe ski area. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — Thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the Central Gulf Coast Region. New Orleans, LA, was drenched with 4.05 inches of rain in 24 hours. An overnight storm blanketed the mountains of northern Utah with up to eleven inches of snow. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1996: A severe nor'easter paralyzed the East Coast from January 6 to the 8. In Washington D.C., this storm is also known as the "Great Furlough Storm" because it occurred during the 1996 federal government shutdown. Snowfall amounts from this event include 47 inches in Big Meadows, Virginia; 30.7" in Philadelphia; 27.8" in Newark; 24.6" at the Dulles International Airport; 24.2" in Trenton; 24" in Providence; 22.5" in Baltimore; 18.2" in Boston; 17.1" in D.C.; and 9.6" in Pittsburgh.

Refusing to Wait on God

God's timing is always perfect—trust Him even when it's hard to wait.

Psalms 27:7-14: 7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice, And be gracious to me and answer me.
8 When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, O LORD, I shall seek."
9 Do not hide Your face from me, Do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; Do not abandon me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation!
10 For my father and my mother have forsaken me, But the LORD will take me up.
11 Teach me Your way, O LORD, And lead me in a level path Because of my foes.
12 Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries, For false witnesses have risen against me, And such as breathe out violence.
13 I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living.
14 Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.

It's always best to follow God's timing, but inevitably, there will be times when we get it wrong. For instance, even the right thing done at the incorrect time can leave us vulnerable to sin or postpone the blessings God has planned for us.

By refusing to wait on the Lord, we often cause ourselves needless grief. For example, if we spend beyond our means to purchase alluring but unnecessary things, we could end up struggling to pay for our debts. But when we manage money in accordance with biblical principles, we'll have freedom and peace of mind.

Here's another example: Quitting a job before the Lord has released us from it can short-circuit what He planned to teach us, had we remained. We might subsequently discover that if we'd held on a while longer, God would have changed either our circumstances or our attitude about the situation.

Certain character qualities are necessary if we are to develop a natural inclination to wait on the Lord. We need patience to endure our present situation and steadfastness to carry out our current responsibilities. In addition, we must have courage to trust the Lord as we await His solution in the midst of our discomfort. (See Isaiah 40:31.)

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

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 24 of 58

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Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 25 of 58



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.02.26

6 13 34 43 52 4

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$180,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 30 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.05.26

12 19 21 30 47 5

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$12,100,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 45 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.05.26

2 7 8 21 45 15

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.03.26

7 13 17 28 30

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$172,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.05.26

15 22 39 41 62 9

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 29 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.05.26

4 18 24 51 56 14

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$105,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 29 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Belfield, N.D. 75, Harding County 70
Elk Point-Jefferson 63, Canton 58
Hankinson, N.D. 67, Waverly-South Shore 38
Lennox 62, West Lyon, Inwood, Iowa 54
McCook Central-Montrose 61, Scotland/Menno 50
Northwestern 69, Herried-Selby 57
Sioux Falls Lutheran 80, Arlington 45
Tri-Valley 63, Elkton-Lake Benton 32

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

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Canton 64, Elk Point-Jefferson 61, OT
Chester 54, Gayville-Volin High School 38
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 69, Standing Rock, N.D. 62
DeSmet 50, Deuel 33
Edgemont 49, Crazy Horse 16
Hettinger-Scranton, N.D. 58, Bison 35
Ipswich 49, Ellendale, N.D. 34
Lakota Tech 78, White River 55
Lennox 49, West Lyon, Inwood, Iowa 19
Sioux Falls Christian 75, Western Christian, Iowa 25
Sisseton 69, Tri-State, N.D. 32

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

'Dances with Wolves' actor Nathan Chasing Horse disrupts court week before sex abuse trial

By JESSICA HILL Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Nathan Chasing Horse, the former "Dances with Wolves" actor accused of sexual abuse, was temporarily thrown out of court Monday after he disrupted proceedings with demands he be allowed to fire his defense attorney a week before trial.

Judge Jessica Peterson in Las Vegas ordered his jury trial to proceed next week as planned.

Chasing Horse has pleaded not guilty to 21 charges, including allegations that he sexually assaulted women and girls and that he filmed himself sexually abusing a girl younger than 14. Prosecutors allege he used his reputation as a spiritual leader and healer to take advantage of Native American women and girls over two decades.

Peterson ordered him removed from court Monday for trying to speak over her. He argued that his attorney, Craig Mueller, did not come to visit him and did not file timely. He asked that a public defender who previously represented him be his attorney.

Mueller, a private defense attorney, told the court his client was ready and privately told the judge that one of his investigators had visited with Chasing Horse. He declined to comment to The Associated Press.

Best known for portraying the character Smiles A Lot in the 1990 movie "Dances with Wolves," Chasing Horse was born on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, which is home to the Sicangu Sioux, one

of the seven tribes of the Lakota nation.

After starring in the Oscar-winning film, according to prosecutors, Chasing Horse began propping himself up as a self-proclaimed Lakota medicine man while traveling around North America to perform healing ceremonies. When he was arrested in 2023, he was living in a North Las Vegas house with his five wives, according to prosecutors.

The case sent shock waves across Indian Country. The original indictment was dismissed in 2024 after the Nevada Supreme Court ruled prosecutors abused the grand jury process when they provided a definition of grooming as evidence without any expert testimony. However, the court left open the possibility of charges being refiled, and a new indictment was brought later that year.

Prosecutors claim Chasing Horse led a cult called The Circle, and his followers believed he could speak with spirits. His victims went to him for medical help, according to a transcript from a grand jury hearing.

Prosecutors expect the trial to last three weeks. It is scheduled to begin Monday.

Trump administration's capture of Maduro raises unease about the international legal framework

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — From the smoldering wreckage of two catastrophic world wars in the last century, nations came together to build an edifice of international rules and laws. The goal was to prevent such sprawling conflicts in the future.

Now that world order — centered at the United Nations headquarters in New York, near the courtroom where Nicolás Maduro was arraigned Monday after his removal from power in Venezuela — appears in danger of crumbling as the doctrine of “might makes right” muscles its way back onto the global stage.

U.N. Undersecretary-General Rosemary A. DiCarlo told the body's Security Council on Monday that the “maintenance of international peace and security depends on the continued commitment of all member states to adhere to all the provisions of the (U.N.) Charter.”

U.S. President Donald Trump insists capturing Maduro was legal. His administration has declared the drug cartels operating from Venezuela to be unlawful combatants and said the U.S. is now in an “armed conflict” with them, according to an administration memo obtained in October by The Associated Press.

The mission to snatch Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores from their home on a military base in the capital Caracas means they face charges of participating in a narco-terrorism conspiracy. The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Mike Waltz, defended the military action as a justified “surgical law enforcement operation.”

The move fits into the Trump administration's National Security Strategy, published last month, that lays out restoring “American preeminence in the Western Hemisphere” as a key goal of the U.S. president's second term in the White House.

But could it also serve as a blueprint for further action?

Worry rises about future action

On Sunday evening, Trump also put Venezuela's neighbor, Colombia, and its leftist president, Gustavo Petro, on notice.

In a back-and-forth with reporters, Trump said Colombia is “run by a sick man who likes making cocaine and selling it to the United States.” The Trump administration imposed sanctions in October on Petro, his family and a member of his government over accusations of involvement in the global drug trade. Colombia is considered the epicenter of the world's cocaine trade.

Analysts and some world leaders — from China to Mexico — have condemned the Venezuela mission. Some voiced fears that Maduro's ouster could pave the way for more military interventions and a further erosion of the global legal order.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot said the capture of Maduro “runs counter to the principle of the non-use of force, which forms the basis of international law.”

He warned the “increasing number of violations of this principle by nations vested with the important

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 28 of 58

responsibility of permanent membership on the United Nations Security Council will have serious consequences for global security and will spare no one."

Here are some global situations that could be affected by changing attitudes on such issues.

Ukraine

For nearly four years, Europe has been dealing with Russia's war of aggression in neighboring Ukraine, a conflict that grates against the eastern flank of the continent and the transatlantic NATO alliance and has widely been labeled a grave breach of international law.

The European Union relies deeply on U.S. support to keep Ukraine afloat, particularly after the administration warned that Europe must look after its own security in the future.

Vasily Nebenzya, the Russian ambassador to the U.N., said the mission to extract Maduro amounted to "a turn back to the era of lawlessness" by the United States. During the U.N. Security Council's emergency meeting, he called on the 15-member panel to "unite and to definitively reject the methods and tools of U.S. military foreign policy."

Volodymyr Fesenko, chairman of the board of the Penta think tank in Kyiv, Ukraine, said Russian President Vladimir Putin has long undermined the global order and weakened international law.

"Unfortunately," he said, "Trump's actions have continued this trend."

Greenland

Trump fanned another growing concern for Europe when he openly speculated about the future of the Danish territory of Greenland.

"It's so strategic right now. Greenland is covered with Russian and Chinese ships all over the place," Trump told reporters Sunday as he flew back to Washington from his home in Florida. "We need Greenland from the standpoint of national security, and Denmark is not going to be able to do it."

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said in a statement that Trump has "no right to annex" the territory. She also reminded Trump that Denmark already provides the U.S., a fellow NATO member, broad access to Greenland through existing security agreements.

Taiwan

The mission to capture Maduro has ignited speculation about a similar move China could make against the leader of Taiwan, Lai Ching-te. Just last week, in response to a U.S. plan to sell a massive military arms package to Taipei, China conducted two days of military drills around the island democracy that Beijing claims as its own territory.

Beijing, however, is unlikely to replicate Trump's action in Venezuela, which could prove destabilizing and risky.

Chinese strategy has been to gradually increase pressure on Taiwan through military harassment, propaganda campaigns and political influence rather than to single out Lai as a target. China looks to squeeze Taiwan into eventually accepting a status similar to Hong Kong and Macau, which are governed semi-autonomously on paper but have come under increasing central control.

For China, Maduro's capture also brings a layer of uncertainty about the Trump administration's ability to move fast, unpredictably and audaciously against other governments. Beijing has criticized Maduro's capture, calling it a "blatant use of force against a sovereign state" and saying Washington is acting as the "world's judge."

On Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said the United States had "wantonly trampled on Venezuela's sovereignty and security."

The Mideast

Israel's grinding attack on Gaza in the aftermath of the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks by Hamas underscored the international community's inability to stop a devastating conflict. The United States, Israel's staunchest ally, vetoed Security Council resolutions calling for ceasefires in Gaza.

Trump already has demonstrated his willingness to take on Israel's neighbor and longtime U.S. adversary Iran over its nuclear program with military strikes on sites in Iran in June 2025.

On Friday, Trump warned Iran that if Tehran "violently kills peaceful protesters," the U.S. "will come to

their rescue." Violence sparked by Iran's ailing economy has killed at least 35 people, activists said Tuesday. Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned the "illegal U.S. attack against Venezuela."

Europe and Trump

The 27-nation European Union, another post-World War II institution intended to foster peace and prosperity, is grappling with how to respond to its traditional ally under the Trump administration. In a clear indication of the increasingly fragile nature of the transatlantic relationship, Trump's national security strategy painted the bloc as weak.

While insisting Maduro has no political legitimacy, the EU said in a statement on the mission to capture him that "the principles of international law and the U.N. Charter must be upheld," adding that members of the U.N. Security Council "have a particular responsibility to uphold those principles."

But outspoken Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, a close Trump ally, spoke disparagingly about the role international law plays in regulating the behavior of countries.

International rules, he said, "do not govern the decisions of many great powers. This is completely obvious."

Danish prime minister says a US takeover of Greenland would mark the end of NATO

By ANDERS KONGSHAUG, CLAUDIA CIOBANU and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said Monday an American takeover of Greenland would amount to the end of the NATO military alliance. Her comments came in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's renewed call for the strategic, mineral-rich Arctic island to come under U.S. control in the aftermath of the weekend military operation in Venezuela.

The dead-of-night operation by U.S. forces in Caracas to capture leader Nicolás Maduro and his wife early Saturday left the world stunned, and heightened concerns in Denmark and Greenland, which is a semiautonomous territory of the Danish kingdom and thus part of NATO.

Frederiksen and her Greenlandic counterpart, Jens Frederik Nielsen, blasted the president's comments and warned of catastrophic consequences. Numerous European leaders expressed solidarity with them.

"If the United States chooses to attack another NATO country militarily, then everything stops," Frederiksen told Danish broadcaster TV2 on Monday. "That is, including our NATO and thus the security that has been provided since the end of the Second World War."

20-day timeline deepens fears

Trump called repeatedly during his presidential transition and the early months of his second term for U.S. jurisdiction over Greenland, and has not ruled out military force to take control of the island. His comments Sunday, including telling reporters "let's talk about Greenland in 20 days," further deepened fears that the U.S. was planning an intervention in Greenland in the near future.

Frederiksen also said Trump "should be taken seriously" when he says he wants Greenland. "We will not accept a situation where we and Greenland are threatened in this way," she added.

Nielsen, in a news conference Monday, said Greenland cannot be compared to Venezuela. He urged his constituents to stay calm and united.

"We are not in a situation where we think that there might be a takeover of the country overnight and that is why we are insisting that we want good cooperation," he said.

Nielsen added: "The situation is not such that the United States can simply conquer Greenland."

Ask Rostrup, a TV2 political journalist, wrote on the station's live blog Monday that Mette previously would have flatly rejected the idea of an American takeover of Greenland. But now, Rostrup wrote, the rhetoric has escalated so much that she has to acknowledge the possibility.

Trump slams Denmark's security efforts in Greenland

Trump on Sunday also mocked Denmark's efforts at boosting Greenland's national security posture, saying the Danes have added "one more dog sled" to the Arctic territory's arsenal.

"It's so strategic right now," Trump had told reporters Sunday as he flew back to Washington from his

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 30 of 58

home in Florida. "Greenland is covered with Russian and Chinese ships all over the place."

He added: "We need Greenland from the standpoint of national security, and Denmark is not going to be able to do it."

But Ulrik Pram Gad, a global security expert from the Danish Institute for International Studies, wrote in a report last year that "there are indeed Russian and Chinese ships in the Arctic, but these vessels are too far away to see from Greenland with or without binoculars."

U.S. space base in northwestern Greenland

Greenlanders and Danes were further rankled this weekend by a social media post following the raid by a former Trump administration official turned podcaster, Katie Miller. The post shows an illustrated map of Greenland in the colors of the Stars and Stripes accompanied by the caption: "SOON."

"And yes, we expect full respect for the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Denmark," Ambassador Jesper Møller Sørensen, Denmark's chief envoy to Washington, said in a post responding to Miller, who is married to Trump's influential deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller.

The U.S. Department of Defense operates the remote Pituffik Space Base in northwestern Greenland. It was built following a 1951 defense agreement between Denmark and the United States. It supports missile warning, missile defense and space surveillance operations for the U.S. and NATO.

On Denmark's mainland, the partnership between the U.S. and Denmark has been long-lasting. The Danes buy American F-35 fighter jets and just last year, Denmark's parliament approved a bill to allow U.S. military bases on Danish soil.

Critics say the vote ceded Danish sovereignty to the U.S. The legislation widens a previous military agreement, made in 2023 with the Biden administration, where U.S. troops had broad access to Danish air bases in the Scandinavian country.

At least 35 people have been killed and 1,200 detained in Iran's economic protests

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The death toll in violence surrounding protests in Iran has risen to at least 35 people, activists said Tuesday, as the country's theocracy acknowledged the unrest in one western province where security forces reportedly raided a hospital.

The figure came from the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, which said more than 1,200 people have been detained in the protests, which have been ongoing for more than a week.

It said 29 protesters, four children and two members of Iran's security forces have been killed. Demonstrations have reached over 250 locations in 27 of Iran's 31 provinces,

The group, which relies on an activist network inside of Iran for its reporting, has been accurate in past unrest.

The semiofficial Fars news agency, believed close to Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, reported late Monday that some 250 police officers and 45 members of the Guard's all-volunteer Basij force have been hurt in the demonstrations. However, Iran's government has offered no overall statistics or information about the unrest.

Iran promises Ilam investigation

Late Monday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian assigned the country's interior ministry to form a special team for a "full-fledged investigation" of what had been happening in Ilam province. Malekshahi County in Iran's Ilam province, some 515 kilometers (320 miles) southwest of Iran's capital, Tehran, has seen protesters killed as online videos purported to show security forces firing on civilians.

The presidency also acknowledged an "incident in a hospital in the city of Ilam." Online video showed security forces wearing riot gear raiding a hospital, where activists said they were seeking demonstrators.

The hospital assault drew criticism from the U.S. State Department, which in Iran's Farsi language called the incident "a crime."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 31 of 58

"Storming the wards, beating medical staff and attacking the wounded with tear gas and ammunition is an clear crime against humanity," a post on the social platform X read. "Hospitals are not battlefields."

A report by Fars earlier alleged without offering evidence that demonstrators carried firearms and grenades. Firearms are more prevalent in western Iran, along the border with Iraq, but there's been no clear evidence provided by the government to support allegations of demonstrators being armed. Ilam has hundreds of kilometers (miles) of border with Iraq.

Iran's rural Ilam province is mainly home to the country's Kurdish and Lur ethnic groups and faces severe economic hardship.

Protester deaths a focus of Trump

The growing death toll carries with it the chance of American intervention. U.S. President Donald Trump warned Iran on Friday that if Tehran "violently kills peaceful protesters," the United States "will come to their rescue."

While it remains unclear how and if Trump will intervene, his comments sparked an immediate, angry response, with officials within the theocracy threatening to target American troops in the Mideast. The comments took on new importance after the U.S. military on Saturday captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, a longtime ally of Tehran.

The protests have become the biggest in Iran since 2022, when the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police custody triggered nationwide demonstrations. However, the protests have yet to be as widespread and intense as those surrounding the death of Amini, who was detained over not wearing her hijab, or headscarf, to the liking of authorities.

Iran has faced rounds of nationwide protests in recent years. As sanctions tightened and Iran struggled after a 12-day war with Israel, its rial currency collapsed in December, reaching 1.4 million to \$1. Protests began soon after, with demonstrators chanting against Iran's theocracy.

On Tuesday, \$1 traded at 1.46 million rials.

Understanding the scale of this latest round of protests has been difficult. Iranian state media has provided little information about the demonstrations. Online videos offer only brief, shaky glimpses of people in the streets or the sound of gunfire. Journalists in Iran also face limits on reporting in general such as requiring permission to travel around the country, as well as the threat of harassment or arrest by authorities.

But the protests do not appear to be stopping, even after Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday said "rioters must be put in their place."

The most interesting tech AP saw on Day 1 of CES

By SHAWN CHEN and RIO YAMAT Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Sure, Nvidia, AMD and Intel all had important chip and AI platform announcements on the first day of CES 2026, but all audiences wanted to see more of was Star Wars and Jensen Huang's little robot buddies.

CES is a huge opportunity annually for companies both large and small to parade products they plan to put on shelves this year. And, as predicted, artificial intelligence was anchored in nearly everything as tech firms continue to look for AI products that will attract customers.

AP has been on the ground looking at booths and covering big announcements, here is a roundup of the highlights we saw on the first day of CES.

Nvidia gets physical

The biggest buzzword in the air at CES is "physical AI," Nvidia's term for AI models that are trained in a virtual environment using computer generated, "synthetic" data, then deployed as physical machines once they've mastered their purpose.

CEO Jensen Huang showed off Cosmos, an AI foundation model trained on massive datasets, capable of simulating environments governed by actual physics. He also announced Alpamayo, an AI model specifically designed for autonomous driving. Huang revealed that Nvidia's next generation AI superchip platform, dubbed Vera Rubin, is in full production, and that Nvidia has a new partnership with Siemens.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 32 of 58

All of this shows Nvidia is going to fight increased competition to retain its reputation as the backbone of the AI industry.

But once Huang called for two little, waddling, chirping robots to join him on stage, that's all the audience wanted to see more of.

The chips are back in town

AMD CEO Lisa Su announced a new line of its famed Ryzen AI processors as the company continues to expand its footprint in the world of AI-powered personal computers.

For gamers, AMD also showed off the latest version of its gaming-focused processor, the AMD Ryzen 7 9850X3D.

Meanwhile, Intel announced its new AI chip for laptops, Panther Lake (also known as the Intel Core Ultra Series 3), and said the company has plans to launch a new platform to address a growing market for handheld video gaming machines.

Intel, a Silicon Valley pioneer that enjoyed decades of growth as its processors powered the personal computer boom, fell into a slump after missing the shift to the mobile computing era unleashed by the iPhone. It fell further behind after the AI boom propelled Nvidia into the spotlight.

President Donald Trump's administration stepped in recently to secure a 10% stake in the company, making the government one of Intel's biggest shareholders. Federal officials said they invested in Intel to support U.S. technology and domestic manufacturing.

Uber dives back into the robotaxi game

Uber is giving the public a first look at their robotaxi at this CES this week. Uber, along with luxury electric vehicle manufacturer Lucid Motors and vehicle tech company Nuro, introduced an autonomous vehicle with an Uber-designed in-cabin experience.

Uber calls it the most luxurious robotaxi yet. It features cameras, sensors and radars that provide 360-degree perception and a low-profile roof "halo" with integrated LEDs that will display riders' initials to help them spot their car and track their ride status. Inside, riders can personalize everything from climate and seat heating to music, while real-time visuals show exactly what the vehicle is seeing on the road and the route it plans to take.

Autonomous on-road testing began last month in San Francisco, led by Nuro, marking a major step toward what the companies said is a planned launch before the end of the year.

Star Wars and Lego announce new a partnership

When Lucasfilm chief creative officer David Filoni brought out an array of X-Wing pilots, Chewbacca, R2D2 and C-3PO, he won the Star Wars fandom for Lego.

Lego announced its Lego Smart Play platform on Monday, which introduces new smart bricks, tags and special minifigs for your collection. The new bricks contain sensors that enable them to sense light and distance, and to provide an array of responses, essentially lights and sounds, when they are used in unison.

Combine this with a newly announced partnership with the Star Wars franchise and now you can create your own interactive space battles and light-saber duels.

LG reveals a new robot to help around the home

File this one under intrigued, for now.

The Korean tech giant gave the media a glimpse Monday of its humanoid robot that is designed to handle household chores such as folding laundry and fetching food. Although many companies have robots on display at CES, LG certainly is one of the biggest tech companies to promise to put a service robot in homes.

It will be on display — and we assume demonstrating some of its purported abilities — beginning Tuesday, so we'll have more to report soon.

What's new with lollipops?

Music you can taste was on display Monday at CES: Lollipop Star unveiled a candy that plays music while you eat it. The company says it uses something called "bone induction technology," which lets you hear songs — like tracks from Ice Spice and Akon — through the lollipop as you lick it or bite it in the back of your mouth, according to spokesperson Cassie Lawrence.

The musical lollipops will go on sale after CES on Lollipop Star's website for \$8.99 each. And if that wasn't enough star power, Akon was expected to visit the company's booth Tuesday when CES opens to the public.

Atlas holds up Hyundai's (manufacturing) world

Hyundai-owned Boston Dynamics publicly demonstrated its humanoid robot Atlas for the first time at the CES tech showcase, ratcheting up a competition with Tesla and other rivals to build robots that look like people and do things that people do.

The company said a version of the robot that will help assemble cars is already in production and will be deployed by 2028 at Hyundai's electric vehicle manufacturing facility near Savannah, Georgia.

Delta gets spherical

Delta Air Lines is taking entertainment to new heights as the "official airline" of the Sphere in Las Vegas. The airline announced a new multiyear partnership with Sphere Entertainment Co. that it says will deliver premium experiences to the venue, including a Delta SKY360° Club lounge.

The carrier said SkyMiles members can unlock exclusive access to other experiences at the Sphere, starting during the final weekend of the Backstreet Boys' residency in February with features including private suite seating, food and beverages. The partnership brings Delta branding to the Sphere's massive exterior LED screen. Delta says more exclusive SkyMiles experiences will roll out in 2026 and beyond.

Maduro says 'I was captured' as he pleads not guilty to drug trafficking charges

By MICHAEL R. SISAK, LARRY NEUMEISTER and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A defiant Nicolás Maduro declared himself "the president of my country" as he protested his capture and pleaded not guilty Monday to federal drug trafficking charges that the Trump administration used to justify removing him from power in Venezuela.

"I was captured," Maduro said in Spanish as translated by a courtroom interpreter before being cut off by the judge. Asked later for his plea to the charges, he stated: "I am innocent. I am not guilty. I am a decent man, the constitutional president of my country."

Maduro's court appearance in Manhattan, his first since he and his wife, Cilia Flores, were seized from their Caracas home Saturday in a stunning middle-of-the-night military operation, kicked off the U.S. government's most consequential prosecution in decades of a foreign head of state. She also pleaded not guilty.

The criminal case is unfolding against a broader diplomatic backdrop of an audacious U.S.-engineered regime change that President Donald Trump has said will enable his administration to "run" the South American country.

Maduro, 63, was brought to court under heavy security early Monday — flown by helicopter to Manhattan from Brooklyn, where he is jailed, and then driven to the courthouse in an armored vehicle. He and Flores were led into court just before noon. Both were in leg shackles and jail-issued garb, and both put on headsets to hear the English-language proceeding as it was translated into Spanish.

As Maduro left the courtroom, a man in the audience denounced him as an "illegitimate" president.

A legal fight begins

As a criminal defendant in the U.S. legal system, Maduro will have the same rights as any other person charged with a crime in the country — including the right to jury trial. But, given the circumstances of his arrest and the geopolitical stakes at play, he'll also be nearly — but not quite — unique.

That was made clear from the outset as Maduro, who took copious notes throughout the proceedings and wished Happy New Year to reporters as he entered the courtroom, repeatedly pressed his case that he had been unlawfully abducted.

"I am here kidnapped since Jan. 3, Saturday," Maduro said, standing and leaning his tall frame toward a tabletop microphone. "I was captured at my home in Caracas."

U.S. District Judge Alvin Hellerstein, a 92-year-old jurist who was appointed to the federal bench in 1998 by Bill Clinton, interrupted him, saying: "There will be a time and place to go into all of this." Hellerstein added that Maduro's lawyer could do so later.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 34 of 58

"At this point in time, I only want to know one thing," the judge said. "Are you Nicolás Maduro Moros?" "I am Nicolás Maduro Moros," the defendant responded.

Maduro's lawyer, Barry Pollack, said he expects to contest the legality of his "military abduction."

Pollack, a prominent Washington lawyer whose clients have included WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, said Maduro is "head of a sovereign state and is entitled to the privileges and immunities that go with that office."

Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega unsuccessfully tried the same immunity defense after the U.S. captured him in a similar military invasion in 1990. But the U.S. doesn't recognize Maduro as Venezuela's legitimate head of state — particularly after a much-disputed 2024 reelection.

Flores, who identified herself to the judge as "first lady of the Republic of Venezuela," had bandages on her forehead and right temple. Her lawyer, Mark Donnelly, said she suffered "significant injuries" during her capture.

A 25-page indictment accuses Maduro and others of working with drug cartels to facilitate the shipment of thousands of tons of cocaine into the U.S. They could face life in prison if convicted.

Among other things, the indictment accuses Maduro and his wife of ordering kidnappings, beatings and murders of those who owed them drug money or undermined their drug trafficking operation. That included the killing of a local drug boss in Caracas, the indictment said.

Outside the courthouse, police separated those protesting the U.S. military action from pro-intervention demonstrators. Inside the courtroom, as the proceeding wrapped up and Maduro prepared to leave, 33-year-old Pedro Rojas stood up and began speaking forcefully at him in Spanish.

Rojas said later that he had been imprisoned by the Venezuelan regime. As deputy U.S. marshals led Maduro from the courtroom, the deposed leader looked directly at the man and shot back in Spanish: "I am a kidnapped president. I am a prisoner of war."

Demands for Maduro's return

Trump said Saturday the U.S. would "run" Venezuela temporarily and reiterated Sunday night that "we're in charge," telling reporters "we're going to run it, fix it."

Secretary of State Marco Rubio tried to strike a more cautious tone, telling Sunday morning talk shows that the U.S. would not govern the country day-to-day other than enforcing an existing "oil quarantine."

Before his capture, Maduro and his allies claimed U.S. hostility was motivated by lust for Venezuela's rich oil and mineral resources.

Trump has suggested that removing Maduro would enable more oil to flow out of Venezuela, but oil prices rose 1.7% on Monday. There are uncertainties about how fast oil production can be ramped up in Venezuela after years of neglect, as well as questions about governance and oversight of the sector.

Venezuela's new interim leader, Delcy Rodríguez, has demanded that the U.S. return Maduro, who long denied any involvement in drug trafficking — although late Sunday she struck a more conciliatory tone in a social media post, inviting collaboration with Trump and "respectful relations" with the U.S.

Rodríguez was sworn in on Monday by her brother, National Assembly leader Jorge Rodríguez.

"I come with sorrow for the suffering inflicted upon the Venezuelan people following an illegitimate military aggression against our homeland," she said with her right hand up. "I come with sorrow for the kidnapping of two heroes."

Maduro's son and Venezuelan congressman Nicolás Maduro Guerra warned on Monday that his father's capture could set a dangerous precedent globally and demanded that his parents be returned.

"If we normalize the kidnapping of a head of state, no country is safe. Today it's Venezuela. Tomorrow it could be any nation that refuses to submit. This is not a regional problem. It is a direct threat to global political stability," Maduro Guerra said

Also Monday, the United Nations Security Council held an emergency meeting, with the top U.N. official warning that America may have violated international law with its unilateral action. The world body also spotlighted the profound humanitarian needs in Venezuela. Its people have endured a yearslong, complex economic crisis.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 35 of 58

This Jan. 6 plaque was made to honor law enforcement. It's nowhere to be found at the Capitol

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Approaching the fifth anniversary of the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, the official plaque honoring the police who defended democracy that day is nowhere to be found.

It's not on display at the Capitol, as is required by law. Its whereabouts aren't publicly known, though it's believed to be in storage.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Louisiana Republican, has yet to formally unveil the plaque. And the Trump administration's Department of Justice is seeking to dismiss a police officers' lawsuit asking that it be displayed as intended. The Architect of the Capitol, which was responsible for obtaining and displaying the plaque, said in light of the federal litigation, it cannot comment.

Determined to preserve the nation's history, some 100 members of Congress, mostly Democrats, have taken it upon themselves to memorialize the moment. For months, they've mounted poster board-style replicas of the Jan. 6 plaque outside their office doors, resulting in a Capitol complex awash with makeshift remembrances.

"On behalf of a grateful Congress, this plaque honors the extraordinary individuals who bravely protected and defended this symbol of democracy on Jan. 6, 2021," reads the faux bronze stand-in for the real thing. "Their heroism will never be forgotten."

Jan. 6 void in the Capitol

In Washington, a capital city lined with monuments to the nation's history, the plaque was intended to become a simple but permanent marker, situated near the Capitol's west front, where some of the most violent fighting took place as rioters breached the building.

But in its absence, the missing plaque makes way for something else entirely — a culture of forgetting.

Visitors can pass through the Capitol without any formal reminder of what happened that day, when a mob of President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the building trying to overturn the Republican's 2020 reelection defeat to Democrat Joe Biden. With memory left unchecked, it allows new narratives to swirl and revised histories to take hold.

Five years ago, the jarring scene watched the world over was declared an "insurrection" by the then-GOP leader of the Senate, while the House GOP leader at the time called it his "saddest day" in Congress. But those condemnations have faded.



A replica plaque commemorating the Jan. 6, 2021 Capitol riot stands outside the office of House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., Tuesday, Dec. 30, 2025, at the U.S. Capitol in Washington.

(Julia Demaree Nihkinson - AP)

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 36 of 58

Trump calls it a "day of love." And Johnson, who was among those lawmakers challenging the 2020 election results, is now the House speaker.

"The question of January 6 remains – democracy was on the guillotine — how important is that event in the overall sweep of 21st century U.S. history," said Douglas Brinkley, a professor of history at Rice University and noted scholar.

"Will January 6 be seen as the seminal moment when democracy was in peril?" he asked. Or will it be remembered as "kind of a weird one-off?"

"There's not as much consensus on that as one would have thought on the fifth anniversary," he said.

Memories shift, but violent legacy lingers

At least five people died in the riot and its aftermath, including Trump supporter Ashli Babbitt, who was fatally shot by police while trying to climb through a window toward the House chamber. More than 140 law enforcement officers were wounded, some gravely, and several died later, some by suicide.

All told, some 1,500 people were charged in the Capitol attack, among the largest federal prosecutions in the nation's history. When Trump returned to power in January 2025, he pardoned all of them within hours of taking office.

Unlike the twin light beams that commemorated the Sept. 11, 2001, attack or the stand-alone chairs at the Oklahoma City bombing site memorial, the failure to recognize Jan. 6 has left a gap not only in memory but in helping to stitch the country back together.

"That's why you put up a plaque," said Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon, D-Pa. "You respect the memory and the service of the people involved."

Police sue over Jan. 6 plaque, DOJ seeks to dismiss

The speaker's office said in a statement late Monday the statute authorizing the plaque is "not implementable" and proposed alternatives also "do not comply." Johnson's spokesman said if Democrats are serious about commemorating the police, they're free to work with the appropriate committees to develop a framework for proper vetting and consideration.

Lawmakers approved the plaque in March 2022 as part of a broader government funding package. The resolution said the U.S. "owes its deepest gratitude to those officers," and it set out instructions for an honorific plaque listing the names of officers "who responded to the violence that occurred." It gave a one-year deadline for installation at the Capitol.

This summer, two officers who fought the mob that day sued over the delay.

"By refusing to follow the law and honor officers as it is required to do, Congress encourages this rewriting of history," said the claim by officers Harry Dunn and Daniel Hodges. "It suggests that the officers are not worthy of being recognized, because Congress refuses to recognize them."

The Justice Department is seeking to have the case dismissed. U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro and others argued Congress "already has publicly recognized the service of law enforcement personnel" by approving the plaque and displaying it wouldn't alleviate the problems they claim to face from their work.

"It is implausible," the Justice Department attorneys wrote, to suggest installation of the plaque "would stop the alleged death threats they claim to have been receiving."

The department also said the plaque is required to include the names of "all law enforcement officers" involved in the response that day — some 3,600 people.

Makeshift memorials emerge

Lawmakers who've installed replicas of the plaque outside their offices said it's important for the public to know what happened.

"There are new generations of people who are just growing up now who don't understand how close we came to losing our democracy on Jan 6, 2021," said Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., a member of the Jan. 6 committee, which was opposed by GOP leadership but nevertheless issued a nearly 1,000-page report investigating the run-up to the attack and the attempt to overturn the 2020 election.

Raskin envisions the Capitol one day holding tours around what happened. "People need to study that as an essential part of American history," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 37 of 58

"Think about the dates in American history that we know only by the dates: There's the 4th of July. There's December 7th. There's 9/11. And there's January 6th," said Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., who also served on the committee and has a plaque outside her office.

"They really saved my life, and they saved the democracy and they deserve to be thanked for it," she said.

But as time passes, there are no longer bipartisan memorial services for Jan. 6. On Tuesday, the Democrats will reconvene members from the Jan. 6 committee for a hearing to "examine ongoing threats to free and fair elections," House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York announced. It's unlikely Republicans will participate.

The Republicans under Johnson have tapped Rep. Barry Loudermilk of Georgia to stand up their own special committee to uncover what the speaker calls the "full truth" of what happened. They're planning a hearing this month.

"We should stop this silliness of trying to whitewash history -- it's not going to happen," said Rep. Joe Morelle, D-N.Y., who helped lead the effort to display the replica plaques.

"I was here that day so I'll never forget," he said. "I think that Americans will not forget what happened."

The number of makeshift plaques that fill the halls is a testimony to that remembrance, he said.

Instead of one plaque, he said, they've "now got 100."

Walz, Democrats' 2024 VP pick, drops bid for third term as Minnesota governor; Klobuchar considers

By STEVE KARNOWSKI and BILL BARROW Associated Press

ST PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, Democrats' 2024 candidate for vice president, is ending his bid for a third term amid President Donald Trump's relentless focus on a fraud investigation into the state's child care programs and its Somali community.

Less than four months after announcing his reelection campaign, Walz said Monday that negative attention and Republican attacks have contributed to an "extraordinarily difficult year for our state," making it impossible for him to serve full time as governor while also being a candidate to keep his job.

"Every minute that I spend defending my own political interest would be a minute I can't spend defending the people of Minnesota against the criminals who prey on our generosity and the cynics who want to prey on our differences," Walz said at the state capitol. "So I've decided to step out of this race, and I'll let others worry about the election while I focus on the work that's in front of me for the next year."

Walz did not take questions from reporters after speaking for about seven minutes, much of which involved repeating his earlier written statement announcing his decision.

"Donald Trump and his allies — in Washington, in St. Paul, and online — want to make our state a colder, meaner place," Walz said, referring to the Trump administration withholding funds for the programs and the Republican president's attacks on Somali immigrants in Minnesota.

Walz did not explicitly acknowledge the impact of a viral video from a right-wing influencer who claimed he'd found rampant fraud at day care centers operated by Somali residents in Minneapolis. But the Trump administration has cited the video in its decision to cut off certain federal funding streams, and the video's creator, Nick Shirley, was happy to take credit for the governor's decision.

"I ENDED TIM WALZ," Shirley posted Monday on social media.

Trump wrote on social media that Walz was not running "because he was caught, REDHANDED" with "stealing Tens of Billions of Taxpayer Dollars," an accusation against the governor that lacked evidence despite widely acknowledged fraud problems. The president said Walz "has destroyed the State of Minnesota."

The candidates to replace Walz

Walz's exit scrambles the contest in a Democratic-leaning state that Republicans have insisted they can win. Democrats hold 24 of 50 governor's seats nationwide, with 36 seats, including Minnesota's, on the ballot this year.

Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar is considering entering the Minnesota race, according to a person close

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 38 of 58

to her. The person, who wasn't authorized to speak publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity, said the senator, who ran for president in 2020, has not made a final decision.

Around a dozen Republicans are already running. They include MyPillow founder and chief executive Mike Lindell, an election denier who is close to Trump. They also include Minnesota House Speaker Lisa Demuth, of Cold Spring; Dr. Scott Jensen, a former state senator from Chaska who was the party's 2022 candidate; state Rep. Kristin Robbins, of Maple Grove; defense lawyer and former federal prosecutor Chris Madel; and former executive Kendall Qualls.

A military veteran, union supporter and former high school educator and coach, Walz helped enact an ambitious Democratic agenda for his state, including sweeping protections for abortion rights and generous aid to families.

Kamala Harris picked Walz as her running mate in the 2024 presidential election after his attack line against Trump and his running mate, then-Ohio Sen. JD Vance — "These guys are just weird" — spread widely.

Walz continued building his national profile since his and Harris' defeat in November. He was a sharp critic of Trump as he toured early caucus and primary states. In May, he called on Democrats in South Carolina to stand up to the Republican president, saying, "Maybe it's time for us to be a little meaner."

On Monday evening, Harris wrote on social media that Walz is "always guided by what's best for the people of Minnesota," and "his decision not to seek reelection reflects that same selfless commitment to the people he serves."

There were partisan reactions to Walz's announcement

Democratic National Committee Chairman Ken Martin, who led Minnesota Democrats when Walz was first elected governor in 2018, said Walz "entered public life for the right reasons and never lost sight of them." Walz's guiding principle, Martin added, "has always been showing up and doing the work that actually makes their lives better."

Klobuchar, posting on X, praised Walz as "a true public servant" who made a "difficult decision" but said nothing about her own pending choice.

Another Minnesotan, Republican House Majority Whip Tom Emmer, was more succinct, issuing a statement that said only: "Good riddance."

At the Republican Governors Association, spokeswoman Courtney Alexander blasted Walz for "failed leadership" and said the state's next Democratic candidate "will need to defend years of mismanagement and misplaced priorities."

Walz stood by his stewardship, saying "a single taxpayer dollar wasted on fraud should be intolerable" and insisting that his administration has been working diligently to address the problem.

A look at Walz's time as governor

During his two terms, Walz navigated a closely divided legislature. In his first term, he served alongside a Democratic-led House and Republican-controlled Senate that resisted his proposals to use higher taxes to boost money for schools, health care and roads. But he helped broker compromises.

He used the office's emergency power during the COVID-19 pandemic to shutter businesses and schools, prompting Republican pushback.

Republicans also were critical of Walz over what they saw as his slow response to sometimes violent unrest that followed the killing of George Floyd, a Black man, by a white Minneapolis police officer in 2020. Walz pleaded for calm after Floyd's death but stood out as a white political leader who expressed empathy toward Black Americans and their experiences with police violence.

In his second term, Walz worked with Democratic majorities in both legislative chambers to chart a more liberal course in state government, aided by a huge budget surplus. Minnesota eliminated nearly all the state abortion restrictions enacted in the past by Republicans, protected gender-affirming care for transgender youths and legalized the recreational use of marijuana. Walz and his fellow Democrats also enacted free school meals for all students and a paid family and medical leave program that went live on Jan. 1.

That record, combined with Walz's rural background and experience representing southern Minnesota in Congress, landed him on Harris' radar after she replaced Joe Biden at the top of the Democratic ticket.

After a whirlwind search, she opted for Walz over other candidates including North Carolina's Roy Cooper, Kentucky's Andy Beshear, Pennsylvania's Josh Shapiro and former Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg.

Walz got a warm welcome from Democratic voters but drew mixed reviews for his lone debate against Vance. Even Harris wrote in her book about being disappointed in his performance.

More recently, Walz has been frustrated in his efforts to enact new gun control measures following a mass shooting last August at Annunciation School in Minneapolis, which left two children dead and injured dozens. He had hoped to call a special session to consider a list of gun safety proposals.

Jury seated in trial for ex-officer accused in police response to Uvalde school shooting

By VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (AP) — A Texas judge seated a jury Monday in the trial of a former school police officer in Uvalde who was part of the hesitant law enforcement response to one of the worst school shootings in U.S. history and has been charged with failing to protect children from the gunman.

Adrian Gonzales, one of the first officers to respond to the 2022 attack, is charged with 29 counts of child abandonment or endangerment in a rare prosecution of an officer accused of not doing more to save lives. Authorities waited more than an hour to confront the teenage shooter who killed 19 students and two teachers at Robb Elementary.

Gonzales has pleaded not guilty, and his attorney has said the officer tried to save children that day.

The panel of 12 jurors and four alternates were seated Monday evening by Judge Sid Harle, after hundreds of prospective jurors were asked what they knew about the response and their impressions of what happened. The judge had said the court was not looking for jurors who knew nothing about the shooting but wanted those who could be impartial.

About 100 people were dismissed after saying they already formed opinions. One man said more officers should be on trial, while a teacher said she would throw herself in front of her students to protect them.

Bill Turner, a special prosecutor, told potential jurors they would need to consider whether the inaction of the officer proved harmful.

"If there is a duty to act and you fail to act, that's child endangerment," he said.

The judge said the trial was expected to last about two weeks.

Among the potential witnesses are FBI agents, rangers with the Texas Department of Public Safety, school employees and family members of the victims.

Nearly 400 officers from state, local and federal law enforcement agencies responded to the school, but 77 minutes passed from the time authorities arrived until a tactical team breached the classroom and killed the shooter, Salvador Ramos. An investigation later showed that Ramos was obsessed with violence and notoriety in the months leading up to the attack.

Gonzales and former Uvalde schools police chief Pete Arredondo were among the first on the scene, and they are the only two officers to face criminal charges over the response. Arredondo's trial has not been scheduled.

The charges against Gonzales carry up to two years in prison if he is convicted.

Police and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott initially said swift law enforcement action killed Ramos and saved lives. But that version quickly unraveled as families described begging police to go into the building and 911 calls emerged from students pleading for help.

The indictment alleges Gonzales placed children in "imminent danger" of injury or death by failing to engage, distract or delay the shooter and by not following his active shooter training. The allegations also say he did not advance toward the gunfire despite hearing shots and being told where the shooter was.

State and federal reviews of the shooting cited cascading problems in law enforcement training, communication, leadership and technology, and questioned why officers waited so long.

According to the state review, Gonzales told investigators that once police realized there were students

still sitting in other classrooms, he helped evacuate them.

Some family members of the victims have said more officers should be indicted.

"They all waited and allowed children and teachers to die," said Velma Lisa Duran, whose sister Irma Garcia was one of the two teachers who were killed.

Prosecutors will likely face a high bar to win a conviction. Juries are often reluctant to convict law enforcement officers for inaction, as seen after the Parkland, Florida, school massacre in 2018.

Sheriff's deputy Scot Peterson was charged with failing to confront the shooter in that attack. It was the first such prosecution in the U.S. for an on-campus shooting, and Peterson was acquitted by a jury in 2023.

At the request of Gonzales' attorneys, the trial was moved about 200 miles (320 kilometers) southeast to Corpus Christi. They argued Gonzales could not receive a fair trial in Uvalde, and prosecutors did not object.

Uvalde, a town of 15,000, still has several prominent reminders of the shooting. Robb Elementary is closed but still stands, and a memorial of 21 crosses and flower sits near the school sign.

Jesse Rizo, whose 9-year-old niece Jackie was one of the students killed, said even with a three-hour drive to Corpus Christi, the family would like to have someone attend the trial every day.

"It's important that the jury see that Jackie had a big, strong family," Rizo said.

After Maduro capture, Trump's tough talk evokes a return to the days of American imperialism

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump hasn't minced words about the larger message he's trying to send the world with the U.S. military raid to capture Nicolás Maduro and spirit the deposed Venezuelan leader and his wife to the United States to face federal drug trafficking charges.

"American dominance in the Western Hemisphere," Trump declared following Maduro's capture, "will never be questioned again."

In the days since the audacious raid, Trump and his team have doubled down on the notion that the new focus on American preeminence in the hemisphere is here to stay. He also held up Maduro's capture to make the case to neighbors to get in line or potentially face consequences.

Trump's rhetoric harkens back to the muscular talk of the late 19th and early 20th centuries when American presidents deployed the military for territorial and resource conquests, including to Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Honduras, Panama, Nicaragua, Mexico, Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

"There's been periods, Vietnam and Iraq, which have evoked questions about a return to American imperialism, but the U.S. leaders' messages in those periods were cloaked in talk of democracy. The way Trump is talking about it is something we haven't seen in a very long time," said Edward Frantz, a historian at the University of Indianapolis.

In the aftermath of the operation, Trump's tough talk has been directed at titular allies in Greenland — where he renewed calls for the U.S. to take over the Danish territory for national security reasons — and Mexico. Trump says America's southern neighbor needs to "get their act together" fighting drug cartels.

Trump has also warned that longtime adversary Cuba is "going down" now that Maduro, who has provided deeply discounted oil to the economically isolated government in Havana, has been deposed. And the president has heightened anxiety with Venezuela's neighbor, telling reporters that a military operation in Colombia — the epicenter of global cocaine production — "sounds good to me."

The Republican president has also said his administration will "run" Venezuela policy and threatened the country's new leader, interim President Delcy Rodríguez, with an outcome worse than Maduro's if she does not "do what's right." He's made plain that he expects Caracas to open its vast oil reserves to U.S. energy companies, further igniting speculation about American overreach.

"We're going to have our very large United States oil companies, the biggest anywhere in the world, go in, spend billions of dollars, fix the badly broken infrastructure — the oil infrastructure — and start making money for the country," Trump said over the weekend.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 41 of 58

The Venezuela incursion has split Latin America, with Trump-aligned leaders mostly from the right applauding the ouster, and non-aligned leaders condemning it on sovereignty grounds. It's sharpened concerns that Trump might actually be serious about his desire to annex Greenland as well.

Leaning on Monroe Doctrine, Trump puts neighbors on edge

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen warned Monday that Trump would mark the undoing of the transatlantic military alliance, NATO, if he attempts to follow through on his assertion that the U.S. "absolutely" needs to take over Greenland for national security reasons. The alliance, which includes the U.S. and Denmark, has been a linchpin of post-World War II security.

"If the United States chooses to attack another NATO country militarily, then everything stops," Frederiksen told Danish broadcaster TV2.

In the early part of the 20th century, American leaders repeatedly turned to the Monroe Doctrine, a foundational U.S. foreign policy document authored by the nation's fifth president, which had been aimed at opposing European meddling in the Western Hemisphere.

Now, Trump too is leaning on the doctrine to justify U.S. intervention in Venezuela and threaten action around the hemisphere in the name of protecting the safety and welfare of Americans.

"Trump's rhetoric conjures up images of Teddy Roosevelt and gunboat diplomacy. The rhetoric is a return to a pre-Great War era," Frantz said, referring to the 26th president's intercessions in unstable Caribbean and Central American economies as well as his backing of Panama's secession from Colombia in the name of the U.S. national interest.

Just weeks before the ouster of Maduro, Trump rolled out a long-awaited National Security Strategy that had some disparate elements that seemed to be at odds with each other.

On one hand, Trump, who has long eschewed America's role in foreign wars, asserted that the administration would have a "predisposition to non-interventionism." But the strategy document also made clear that the administration would push "to restore American preeminence in the Western Hemisphere."

With the ouster of Maduro, the administration has clearly doubled down on the latter.

"This is the Western Hemisphere," Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in an appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday. "This is where we live — and we're not going to allow the Western Hemisphere to be a base of operation for adversaries, competitors and rivals of the United States."

Anger at U.N. Security Council

The capture of Maduro and Trump's rhetoric could certainly be a level-setting moment for global leaders as they consider what may lay ahead in the final three years of Trump's second term.

At an emergency U.N. Security Council meeting Monday, Colombian Ambassador Leonor Zalabata Torres said the raid in Venezuela was reminiscent of "the worst interference in our area in the past."

"Democracy cannot be defended or promoted through violence and coercion, and it cannot be superseded, either, by economic interests," said Zalabata Torres, whose country requested the meeting.

At the same time, Democrats are questioning whether Trump's actions have created a permission structure for Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has designs of capturing further territory from neighboring Ukraine, and Chinese President Xi Jinping, who has vowed to annex the self-ruled island of Taiwan.

"What the president's done in this case has essentially given Putin and Xi Jinping a hall pass," said Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, in an appearance on CNN.

The Russians, for their part, have condemned Trump's action in Venezuela. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia, the country's U.N. envoy, said the world body "cannot allow the United States to proclaim itself as some kind of a supreme judge" to the world.

Cuba faces uncertain future after US topples Venezuelan leader Maduro

By DÁNICA COTO and ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Cuban officials on Monday lowered flags before dawn to mourn 32 security officers they say were killed in the U.S. weekend strike in Venezuela, the island nation's closest ally, as residents here

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 42 of 58

wonder what the capture of President Nicolás Maduro means for their future.

The two governments are so close that Cuban soldiers and security agents were often the Venezuelan president's bodyguards, and Venezuela's petroleum has kept the economically ailing island limping along for years. Cuban authorities over the weekend said the 32 had been killed in the surprise attack "after fierce resistance in direct combat against the attackers, or as a result of the bombing of the facilities."

The Trump administration has warned outright that toppling Maduro will help advance another decades-long goal: Dealing a blow to the Cuban government. Severing Cuba from Venezuela could have disastrous consequences for its leaders, who on Saturday called for the international community to stand up to "state terrorism."

On Saturday, Trump said the ailing Cuban economy will be further battered by Maduro's ouster.

"It's going down," Trump said of Cuba. "It's going down for the count."

Loss of key supporter

Many observers say Cuba, an island of about 10 million people, exerted a remarkable degree of influence over Venezuela, an oil-rich nation with three times as many people. At the same time, Cubans have long been tormented by constant blackouts and shortages of basic foods. And after the attack, they woke to the once-unimaginable possibility of an even grimmer future.

"I can't talk. I have no words," 75-year-old Berta Luz Sierra Molina said as she sobbed and placed a hand over her face.

Even though 63-year-old Regina Méndez is too old to join the Cuban military, she said that "we have to stand strong."

"Give me a rifle, and I'll go fight," Méndez said.

Maduro's government was shipping an average of 35,000 barrels of oil daily over the last three months, about a quarter of total demand, said Jorge Piñón, a Cuban energy expert at the University of Texas at Austin Energy Institute.

"The question to which we don't have an answer, which is critical: Is the U.S. going to allow Venezuela to continue supplying Cuba with oil?" he said.

Piñón noted that Mexico once supplied Cuba with 22,000 barrels of oil a day before it dropped to 7,000 barrels after U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited Mexico City in early September.

"I don't see Mexico jumping in right now," Piñón said. "The U.S. government would go bonkers."

Ricardo Torres, a Cuban economist at American University in Washington, said that "blackouts have been significant, and that is with Venezuela still sending some oil."

"Imagine a future now in the short term losing that," he said. "It's a catastrophe."

Piñón noted that Cuba doesn't have the money to buy oil on the international market.

"The only ally that they have left out there with oil is Russia," he said, noting that it sends Cuba about 2 million barrels a year.

"Russia has the capability to fill the gap. Do they have the political commitment, or the political desire to do so? I don't know," he said.

Torres also questioned whether Russia would extend a hand.

"Meddling with Cuba could jeopardize your negotiation with the U.S. around Ukraine. Why would you do it? Ukraine is far more important," he said.

Torres said Cuba should open its doors to the private sector and market and reduce its public sector, moves that could help prompt China to step in and help Cuba.

"Do they have an alternative? I don't think they do," he said.

Rebuilding Venezuela's oil industry

On Monday, Trump told NBC News in an interview that the U.S. government could reimburse oil companies making investments in Venezuela to maintain and increase oil production in that country.

He suggested that the necessary rebuilding of the country's neglected infrastructure for extracting and shipping oil could happen in less than 18 months.

"I think we can do it in less time than that, but it'll be a lot of money," Trump said. "A tremendous amount

of money will have to be spent and the oil companies will spend it, and then they'll get reimbursed by us or through revenue."

It still remains unclear how quickly the investment could occur given the uncertainties about Venezuela's political stability and the billions of dollars needed to be spent.

Venezuela produces on average about 1.1 million barrels of oil a day, down from the 3.5 million barrels a day produced in 1999 before a government takeover of the majority of oil interests and a mix of corruption, mismanagement and U.S. economic sanctions led output to fall.

Here's what to know about the unprecedented changes to child vaccine recommendations

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. health officials made broad changes to childhood vaccine recommendations Monday, alarming pediatricians and other medical experts who say they will sow confusion and undermine children's health.

The overhaul is effective immediately, meaning that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will now recommend that all children get vaccinated against 11 diseases, down from 18 a year ago.

The changes come as U.S. vaccination rates have been slipping and the share of children with exemptions has reached an all-time high, according to federal data. At the same time, rates of diseases that can be protected against with vaccines, such as measles and whooping cough, are rising.

Here's what to know about the changes:

Here's what federal vaccine recommendations have changed

Once broadly recommended, the federal government now only recommends protection against these diseases for certain children at high risk or based on individual doctor advice in what's called "shared decision-making."

- Flu
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Meningococcal disease
- Rotavirus
- RSV
- COVID-19, a change made in 2025

Here's what federal vaccine recommendations stayed the same

The following vaccines were left on the recommended-for-all list:

- Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)
- Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis or whooping cough (DTaP)
- Polio
- Chickenpox
- Human papillomavirus, or HPV. But in a surprise, the guidance reduces the number of recommended vaccine doses against HPV from two or three shots to just one.
- Hib, or Haemophilus influenzae type B, bacteria that despite the name isn't related to flu
- PCV or pneumococcal conjugate vaccine

Why were the vaccine recommendations changed?

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services said the overhaul was in response to a request from President Donald Trump in December. Trump asked the agency to review how peer nations approach vaccine recommendations and consider revising U.S. guidance accordingly.

HHS said its comparison to 20 peer nations found that the U.S. was an "outlier" in both the number of vaccinations and the number of doses it recommended to all children. Officials with the agency framed the change as a way to increase public trust by recommending only the most important vaccinations for children to receive.

However, many European countries recommend some of the vaccines the U.S. removed from its list. What do doctors and pediatricians say?

The nation's large doctors' groups, including the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, say they will continue to recommend the vaccines that the Trump administration has now demoted. They said there was no new science that warranted the changes, including no signs that the former U.S. vaccine schedule harmed children.

Dr. Sean O'Leary of the AAP said the changes could increase child illness and death from preventable disease. He voiced special concern that the U.S. would no longer recommend flu vaccine for children, just as the flu season is becoming severe and after last winter's particularly harsh season.

The pediatricians' group has issued its own child vaccine recommendations. Also, states, not the federal government, have the authority to require vaccinations for schoolchildren. While CDC requirements often influence those state regulations, some states have begun creating their own alliances to counter the Trump administration's guidance on vaccines.

What will change for families?

It's not yet clear. Because of the countering recommendations from pediatricians, doctor visits may not change. However, medical specialists say when the U.S. government doesn't explicitly recommend a shot, it will raise questions among parents, leading to more difficult conversations at the doctor's office.

If the changes mean fewer children are vaccinated, outbreaks that have historically been prevented by high vaccination rates could spread more widely, leading to more disease and more missed school and work.

Will insurance continue to cover vaccines?

The Trump administration said coverage will continue for families that still want the shots. Health insurers generally find vaccination a good deal, as shots are cheaper than hospitalizations, and many had previously said they'd planned to cover what was recommended last year through 2026.

Man who broke windows at Vance's Ohio home is detained, the Secret Service says

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and KATHY McCORMACK Associated Press

A man who broke windows at Vice President JD Vance's Ohio home and caused other property damage was detained early Monday, the U.S. Secret Service said.

William D. DeFoor, 26, is facing federal charges for allegedly damaging government property, engaging in physical violence against property in a restricted area and assaulting, resisting or impeding federal officers, according to the United States Attorney's office in Ohio's southern district.

DeFoor was detained shortly after midnight by Secret Service agents assigned to Vance's home, east of downtown Cincinnati, agency spokesperson Anthony Guglielmi said in a statement emailed to The Associated Press. The vice president and his family were not at home, having returned to Washington on Sunday after a weekend there, his office said.

The Secret Service saw a man running along the front fence of Vance's residence and breach the property line around midnight, according to an affidavit filed Monday. The man was armed with a hammer and vandalized an unmarked Secret Service vehicle on his way up the home's driveway before moving toward the front of the home and breaking its glass windows, the affidavit says.

DeFoor was detained after he tried to flee from officers on foot. He is accused of causing around \$28,000 in damage, the affidavit says.

Public records list DeFoor as living in Cincinnati. Calls to the listings for possible relatives and an attorney who previously represented DeFoor were not immediately returned.

Vance expressed gratitude to the Secret Service and Cincinnati police for responding quickly to the incident in a post on the social platform X.

"I appreciate everyone's well wishes about the attack at our home," Vance tweeted. "As far as I can tell, a crazy person tried to break in by hammering the windows."

Court records show that DeFoor faced an earlier charge of vandalism in 2024 and agreed to treatment

under the county's Mental Health Court system.

The Secret Service is coordinating with the Cincinnati Police Department and the U.S. attorney's office as charging decisions are reviewed, Guglielmi said.

The Vance home is located in one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, on hills overlooking the city. Throughout Vance's vice presidency, protesters have often gathered outside the home — clashing at one point last spring with Vance himself.

Vance, a Republican, was a U.S. senator representing Ohio before becoming vice president. He moved to Cincinnati after a stint in Silicon Valley following law school, and his half brother ran unsuccessfully for mayor there last year. Vance was raised in nearby Middletown, which figured heavily in his bestselling memoir, "Hillbilly Elegy."

US cuts the number of vaccines recommended for every child, a move slammed by physicians

By ALI SWENSON and LAURAN NEERGAARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. took the unprecedented step Monday of cutting the number of vaccines it recommends for every child — a move that leading medical groups said would undermine protections against a half-dozen diseases.

The change is effective immediately, meaning that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will now recommend that all children get vaccinated against 11 diseases. What's no longer broadly recommended is protection against flu, rotavirus, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, some forms of meningitis or RSV. Instead, protections against those diseases are only recommended for certain groups deemed high risk, or when doctors recommend them in what's called "shared decision-making."

Trump administration officials said the overhaul, a move long sought by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., won't result in families who want the vaccines losing access to them, and said insurance will continue to pay. But medical experts said the decision creates confusion for parents and could increase preventable diseases.

States, not the federal government, have the authority to require vaccinations for schoolchildren. While CDC requirements often influence those state regulations, some states have begun creating their own alliances to counter the Trump administration's guidance on vaccines.

The change comes as U.S. vaccination rates have been slipping and the share of children with exemptions has reached an all-time high, according to federal data. At the same time, rates of diseases that can be protected against with vaccines, such as measles and whooping cough, are rising across the country.

Review came at the request of President Trump

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services said the overhaul was in response to a request from President Donald Trump in December. Trump asked the agency to review how peer nations approach vaccine recommendations and consider revising U.S. guidance accordingly.

HHS said its comparison to 20 peer nations found that the U.S. was an "outlier" in both the number of vaccinations and the number of doses it recommended to all children. Officials with the agency framed the change as a way to increase public trust by recommending only the most important vaccinations for children to receive.

"This decision protects children, respects families, and rebuilds trust in public health," Kennedy said in a statement Monday.

Trump, reacting to the news on his Truth Social platform, said the new schedule is "far more reasonable" and "finally aligns the United States with other Developed Nations around the World."

Among those left on the recommended-for-everyone list are vaccines against measles, whooping cough, polio, tetanus, chickenpox and human papillomavirus, or HPV. The guidance reduces the number of recommended vaccine doses against HPV from two or three shots depending on age to one for most children.

Medical experts said Monday's changes without what they said was public discussion or a transparent

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 46 of 58

review of the data would put children at risk.

"Abandoning recommendations for vaccines that prevent influenza, hepatitis and rotavirus, and changing the recommendation for HPV without a public process to weigh the risks and benefits, will lead to more hospitalizations and preventable deaths among American children," said Michael Osterholm of the Vaccine Integrity Project, based at the University of Minnesota.

Dr. Sean O'Leary of the American Academy of Pediatrics said countries carefully consider vaccine recommendations based on levels of disease in their populations and their health systems.

"You can't just copy and paste public health and that's what they seem to be doing here," said O'Leary. "Literally children's health and children's lives are at stake."

Most high-income countries recommend vaccinations against a dozen to 15 serious pathogens, according to a recent review by the Vaccine Integrity Project, a group that works to safeguard vaccine use.

France today recommends all children get vaccinated against 14 diseases, compared to the 11 that the U.S. now will recommend for every child under the new schedule.

Doctors' groups criticize decision

The changes were made by political appointees, without any evidence that the current recommendations were harming children, O'Leary said.

The pediatricians' group has issued its own childhood vaccine schedule that its members are following, and it continues to broadly recommend vaccines that the Trump administration demoted.

O'Leary singled out the flu vaccine, which the government and leading medical experts have long urged for nearly everyone starting at age 6 months. He said the government is "pretty tone deaf" for ending its recommendation while the country is at the beginning of a severe flu season, and after 280 children died from flu last winter, the most since 2009.

Even a disease that parents may not have heard of, rotavirus, could come roaring back if vaccination erodes, he added. That diarrheal disease once hospitalized thousands of children each winter, something that no longer happens.

The decision was made without input from an advisory committee that typically consults on the vaccine schedule, said senior officials at HHS. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the changes publicly.

The officials added that the new recommendations were a collaborative effort between federal health agencies but wouldn't specify who was consulted.

Scientists at the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases were asked to present to the agency's political leadership about vaccine schedules in other countries in December, but they were not allowed to give any recommendations and were not aware of any decisions about vaccine schedule changes, said Abby Tighe, executive director of the National Public Health Coalition, an advocacy organization of current and former CDC employees and their supporters.

"Changes of this magnitude require careful review, expert and public input, and clear scientific justification. That level of rigor and transparency was not part of this decision," said Dr. Sandra Fryhofer, of the American Medical Association. "The scientific evidence remains unchanged, and the AMA supports continued access to childhood immunizations recommended by national medical specialty societies."

Kennedy is a longtime vaccine skeptic

The move comes as Kennedy, a longtime activist against vaccines, has repeatedly used his authority in government to translate his skepticism about the shots into national guidance.

In May, Kennedy announced the CDC would no longer recommend COVID-19 vaccines for healthy children and pregnant women — a move immediately questioned by public health experts who saw no new data to justify the change.

In June, Kennedy fired an entire 17-member CDC vaccine advisory committee — later installing several of his own replacements, including multiple vaccine skeptics.

Kennedy in November also personally directed the CDC to abandon its position that vaccines do not cause autism, without supplying any new evidence to support the change.

FACT FOCUS: Fabricated and misrepresented images shared widely online after US removal of Maduro

By MELISSA GOLDIN Associated Press

As deposed Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro pleaded not guilty to federal drug trafficking charges in a U.S. courtroom Monday, an array of misrepresented and fabricated images that began circulating soon after his capture over the weekend continued to multiply on social media.

President Donald Trump contributed to the deluge, sharing multiple videos he falsely claimed showed Venezuelans celebrating the operation. Meanwhile, fabricated images of Maduro being apprehended were shared widely across multiple platforms.

Here's a closer look at the facts.

CLAIM: A video of a large crowd that starts running on a dark street shows Venezuelans celebrating after Maduro was captured.

THE FACTS: This is false. The video, shot from above, shows students at the University of California, Los Angeles, participating this past December in the "Undie Run," a quarterly tradition during which students run in their underwear Wednesday night of finals week.

Trump was among those misrepresenting the video. In the version he shared on Truth Social, the crowd is heard cheering loudly as ominous music plays in the background. A caption reads, "Venezuela celebrates, Democrats cry."

But UCLA landmarks are clearly visible, including the Wasserman Football Center and the Meyer and Renee Luskin Conference Center. The crowd is gathered at the intersection of Strathmore Place and Charles E. Young Drive West, right before the tunnel where the run begins.

The original video was posted to TikTok on Dec. 11 with the caption "ants #uclarundierun," which also appears in the version being misrepresented online. There is no background music.

CLAIM: A video, shot during the day from above, of a street packed with people shows Venezuelans celebrating the end of the Maduro administration.

THE FACTS: This is false. The video shows a massive July 2024 demonstration in Caracas protesting the country's disputed election, which election authorities called for Maduro.

Trump also misrepresented this video on Truth Social. He shared a version that included a screenshot of an X post that reads: "INCREDIBLE! Millions of Venezuelans are celebrating the news of the collapse of the Maduro regime."

The video is filled with a cacophony of sounds coming from the crowd as the camera pans to show people packing the street. Two cars make their way slowly through the crowd, followed soon after by a float carrying Venezuelan opposition leaders María Corina Machado and Edmundo González.

The original version was posted to Instagram on July 30, 2024. The same float that appears in the video can be seen in images published by major media outlets at the time of the demonstration.

CLAIM: Images show Maduro detained by the U.S. military and Drug Enforcement Administration agents.

THE FACTS: These images were fabricated. Many include a watermark crediting an Instagram user who describes himself as a "professional in artificial intelligence." The images no longer appear on the user's profile, but some can be seen in an archived version.

In the images, a man who is allegedly Maduro is surrounded by men wearing military-style uniforms, some with an American flag patch on the front and others with a patch reading "DEA." The supposed Maduro is wearing a white shirt and a dark-colored jacket. There is a small plane in the background.

Trump shared an image Saturday morning on Truth Social captioned, "Nicolas Maduro on board the USS Iwo Jima." The man in the image is wearing a gray sweatsuit. Both his ears and his eyes are covered.

Hegseth censures Sen. Kelly after Democrats' video urging troops to resist unlawful orders

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN, BEN FINLEY, and MEG KINNARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced Monday that he censured Democratic Sen. Mark Kelly of Arizona over the former Navy pilot's participation in a video that called on troops to resist unlawful orders.

Hegseth said the censure — by itself simply a formal letter with little practical consequence — was “a necessary process step” to proceedings that could result in a demotion from Kelly's retired rank of captain and subsequent reduction in retirement pay.

Investigating and now punishing a sitting U.S. senator is an extraordinary move for the Pentagon, which until President Donald Trump's second term had usually gone out of its way to act and appear apolitical. A legal expert says the choice to go after a lawmaker will complicate an already unique case.

In a lengthy post on social media, Kelly said he “never expected” what he called an “attack” from Trump and Hegseth, recounting his 25 years of Navy service as well as combat and space missions.

Calling Hegseth's move “outrageous” and “un-American,” Kelly said he would fight the censure “with everything I've got — not for myself, but to send a message back that Pete Hegseth and Donald Trump don't get to decide what Americans in this country get to say about their government.”

Hegseth's action follows video about illegal orders

The censure comes after Kelly participated in a video in November with five other Democratic lawmakers — all veterans of the armed services and intelligence community — in which they called on troops to uphold the Constitution and defy “illegal orders.”

Trump, a Republican, accused the lawmakers of sedition “punishable by DEATH” in a social media post days later.

The 90-second video was first posted from Sen. Elissa Slotkin's X account. In it, the six lawmakers — Slotkin, Kelly and Reps. Jason Crow, Chris Deluzio, Maggie Goodlander and Chrissy Houlahan — speak directly to U.S. service members, whom Slotkin acknowledges are “under enormous stress and pressure right now.”

The lawmakers didn't mention specific circumstances. But their message was released amid a series of military attacks on boats accused of smuggling drugs in the Caribbean Sea and the eastern Pacific Ocean and Trump's attempts to deploy National Guard troops to American cities.

The Pentagon announced that it began an investigation of Kelly in late November, citing a federal law that allows retired service members to be recalled to active duty on orders of the defense secretary for possible court-martial or other measures.

While all six lawmakers served in the military or the intelligence community, Hegseth previously said Kelly was the only one facing investigation because he is the only one of the lawmakers who formally retired from the military and is still under the Pentagon's jurisdiction.

Kelly said last month that the investigation was part of an effort to silence dissent: “This is just about sending a message to retired service members, active duty service members, government employees — do not speak out against this president or there will be consequences.”

Kelly, along with some of the other Democrats in the initial video, have sent out fundraising messages based off Trump's reaction to their comments, efforts that have gone toward filling their own campaign coffers and further elevating their national-level profiles.

What accusations Hegseth is leveling against Kelly

In his post Monday, Hegseth charged that Kelly's remarks in the video and afterward violated Uniform Code of Military Justice provisions against conduct unbecoming an officer and violating good order and discipline.

“Captain Kelly's status as a sitting United States Senator does not exempt him from accountability, and further violations could result in further action,” Hegseth said.

Todd Huntley, a retired Navy captain and judge advocate general, called this is a “novel” situation that

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 49 of 58

raises legal questions.

One issue, Huntley said, is whether Kelly's comments fall under the constitutional protections of the speech or debate clause, which is intended to protect members of Congress from questioning about official legislative acts.

A 1968 Supreme Court decision said the provision's intent was "to prevent legislative intimidation by and accountability to the other branches of government."

"You can't punish him for making statements that are consistent with the office he is holding," said Colby Vokey, a prominent civilian military lawyer and former military prosecutor, citing the Constitution's speech and debate clause.

Huntley said that while the type of process Hegseth is using — known as a retirement grade determination — is fairly routine, "as far as I know, they've always been based on conduct during the individual's active duty service, even if it only came to light after retirement."

"So, I don't know if conduct totally after retirement would fit the requirement for such a determination," he added.

Vokey also expressed skepticism, saying that while the Navy secretary can reduce a retired officer's rank and pay grade if it's determined that good cause exists, "I have no idea what the good cause would be. I think that's pretty questionable."

According to Hegseth, Kelly now has 30 days to submit a response to the proceedings that will decide if he is demoted. The decision will be made within 45 days, Hegseth's post added.

Huntley noted that Kelly also will have options to appeal the finding both within the military and in federal court. Vokey said a lawsuit in federal court would likely be the more effective course of action for Kelly.

The Golden Globes are this week. Here's what to know about the first major show of awards season

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — The Golden Globes return Sunday. The boozy, bubbly kickoff to Hollywood's awards season will feature nominees including Timothée Chalamet, Leonardo DiCaprio, Michael B. Jordan, Ariana Grande, Cynthia Erivo and Emma Stone.

The 83rd Golden Globe Awards ceremony begins at 8 p.m. Eastern at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California, and will be televised live on CBS and streamed live on Paramount+.

Here are more key things to know about the ceremony:

Who's hosting the Golden Globes?

The comedian and actor Nikki Glaser will return as host for the second year, after a well-reviewed 2025 debut when she became the first woman to host the show solo.

Glaser didn't go easy on the Hollywood crowd, but wasn't nearly as barbed as she was in her star-making performance in a roast of Tom Brady. In her first monologue, she called the ceremony "Ozempic's biggest night."

When she was rehired, Glaser said in a statement that it was "the most fun I have ever had in my career."

"I can't wait to do it again, and this time in front of the team from 'The White Lotus' who will finally recognize my talent and cast me in Season Four as a Scandinavian Pilates instructor with a shadowy past," she said.

Last year's telecast drew an average of about 10 million viewers, holding steady from the year before. There are far fewer viewers than there were a decade ago, but the Globes remain the most watched awards show after the Oscars and the Grammys.

Who's nominated for Golden Globes this year?

Oscar front-runner "One Battle After Another" leads all nominees with nine, including acting nods for DiCaprio and Chase Infiniti and a directing nomination for Paul Thomas Anderson.

The Globes divides films between drama and musical or comedy in the top categories, and "One Battle" was categorized as a comedy. Competing against DiCaprio will be Chalamet for "Marty Supreme" and George Clooney for "Jay Kelly."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 50 of 58

Infiniti's competition includes Erivo for "Wicked: For Good," Stone for "Bugonia" and Rose Byrne for "If I Had Legs I'd Kick You."

The Danish film "Sentimental Value" was second with eight nominations, including an acting nod for star Renate Reinsve. Her competition on the drama side includes Jessie Buckley from "Hamnet," Julia Roberts for "After the Hunt" and Jennifer Lawrence for "Die My Love."

Male actors nominated for dramas include Jordan for "Sinners" and Dwayne Johnson for "The Smashing Machine."

Grande, Teyana Taylor, Paul Mescal, Adam Sandler and Jacob Elordi are among those nominated in the supporting categories.

"The White Lotus" leads all TV nominees with six.

You can see a full list of nominees here: <https://apnews.com/hub/golden-globe-awards>

What are the Golden Globes?

The Globes, held annually in early January, are the first major ceremony of the awards season. They're not exactly an Oscar bellwether — they have an entirely different voting base of journalists and critics — but they're embraced as a champagne-soaked party with some of the biggest stars in film and television sitting together at tables like a nightclub.

A Globes win can still help build momentum for a movie or actor's Oscar campaign, and it's the first time the public may hear an acceptance speech that may be repeated with some variations for months, leading up to the Academy Awards, held this year on March 15.

Who's getting a lifetime achievement award?

Helen Mirren will be honored with the Golden Globes' Cecil B. DeMille Award for a life of work on screen, and Sarah Jessica Parker will get the Carol Burnett Award for her career in television.

Mirren and Parker this week will get a separate Beverly Hilton gala, a recording of which will air Thursday at 8 p.m. Eastern and Pacific on CBS and also stream on Paramount+ on what's being called "Golden Eve."

Mirren, 80, an Oscar winner for her 2006 portrayal of Elizabeth II in "The Queen," has also won three Golden Globes and is up for a fourth this year for her role in the series "MobLand." She was named a Dame of the British Empire in 2003 in acknowledgment of her artistic achievements.

The DeMille award dates to 1952, when it was given to the legendary filmmaker himself. Other recipients include Walt Disney, Bing Crosby, Judy Garland, Barbra Streisand, Sidney Poitier, Meryl Streep, Oprah Winfrey, Tom Hanks and Viola Davis.

Parker will get the much newer Carol Burnett Award, presented to an honoree who has "made outstanding contributions to television on or off screen." The 60-year-old Parker, who won six Golden Globes and two Emmys as the star of "Sex and the City," is being honored for her work as actor and producer.

The award was launched in 2019, when it went to Burnett. Other winners include Norman Lear, Ryan Murphy and Ellen DeGeneres.

5-year-old and her uncle killed in airstrike in Gaza as Israel says it targeted an imminent threat

By WAFAA SHURAFU and SALLY ABOU ALJOUND Associated Press

DEIR AL BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — An Israeli strike in Gaza on Monday hit a tent housing displaced people, killing a 5-year-old girl and her uncle and wounding two other children, hospital officials said.

The strike took place in the Muwasi area northwest of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, officials at Nasser Hospital said. The Associated Press couldn't independently verify those details. Family members wept over the bodies as they were brought to the hospital.

The dead are among the more than 400 people killed in Gaza since an October ceasefire began, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

The Israeli military said on social media it struck a Hamas militant who planned an imminent attack on Israeli troops in the southern Gaza Strip. It said the strike complied with the ceasefire agreement, and was done in a targeted way to mitigate civilian harm.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 51 of 58

It was not immediately clear if the statement referred to the fatal tent strike. The military also said that, because of continued ceasefire violations, it had begun striking Hezbollah and Hamas terror targets in southern and eastern Lebanon.

The strikes came a few days before Lebanon's army commander is scheduled to brief the government on its mission of disarming Hezbollah in areas along the border with Israel.

Israel and the Lebanese militant group exchanged fire for over a year before reaching a ceasefire in November 2024. Israel continues to control small parts of Lebanese territory and has continued to carry out strikes, accusing the group of trying to rearm.

Earlier on Monday, the Gaza Health Ministry reported that two other bodies had been brought to local hospitals over the past 24 hours. The ministry, part of the Hamas-run government, said that 422 bodies have been brought to hospitals since the ceasefire went into effect on Oct. 10. The ministry maintains detailed casualty records that are seen as generally reliable by U.N. agencies and independent experts.

Five others were brought to hospitals with injuries over the last day, it said. They are among the 1,189 wounded since the ceasefire. Another 684 people have been found dead in the rubble strewn across Gaza during the same period.

The overall Palestinian death toll from the Israel-Hamas war rose to at least 71,388, the ministry said. Another 171,269 have been wounded, it said.

Swiss police identify all 116 people injured in deadly New Year's bar fire

CRANS-MONTANA, Switzerland (AP) — Swiss police said Monday they've identified all the people who were injured in the fire that tore through a New Year's celebration in a crowded bar. They put the total at 116, more than two-thirds still in hospitals.

Authorities had previously given a figure of 119 injured, on top of the 40 people killed. But police said Monday that three people admitted to hospitals on the night of the disaster in Crans-Montana had been linked in error to the blaze at the crowded Le Constellation bar.

The injured include 68 Swiss citizens, 21 French nationals, 10 Italians, four Serbs, two Poles and one person each from Australia, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Portugal and the Republic of Congo, according to a police statement. There were also four dual nationals: of France and Finland, France and Italy, Switzerland and Belgium, and Italy and the Philippines.

Police said 83 of the injured were still in hospitals. They didn't give further details or specify their ages.

The severity of burns made it difficult to identify some victims of the fire that broke out at about 1:30 a.m. on New Year's Day, requiring families to supply authorities with DNA samples.

Authorities announced on Sunday evening that they had completed the identification of the 40 people who died, the youngest of them aged 14.

On Monday, Italian authorities flew home the bodies of five victims from the airport in Sion, the regional capital.

Officials stood quietly as Swiss police pallbearers carried the coffins through a line of firefighters and soldiers to an Italian Air Force C-130 cargo plane. Mourners hugged before relatives boarded the aircraft.

Investigators have said they believe festive sparkling candles atop Champagne bottles ignited the fire when they came too close to the ceiling.

Swiss authorities have opened a criminal investigation into the bar managers. The two are suspected of involuntary homicide, involuntary bodily harm and involuntarily causing a fire, according to the Valais region's chief prosecutor.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 52 of 58

Arizona holds No. 1 spot over Michigan by single point in one of the closest AP Top 25 races ever

By DAVE SKRETTA AP Basketball Writer

Arizona held on to No. 1 by a single point over fast-closing Michigan in the AP Top 25 on Monday, making it one of the closest races for the top spot in the 78-year history of the men's college basketball poll.

The Wildcats received 32 of 61 first-place votes and had 1,494 points, while the Wolverines scooped up the other 29 first-place votes from the national media panel. The one-point difference kept the first poll of 2026 from becoming the second ever with a tie for No. 1; Oregon State and Virginia shared the top spot on on Jan. 26, 1981.

Arizona has been on top for the last five polls, but the Wolverines have been able to make up ground, thanks in part to becoming the first team in the poll era to win three consecutive games against ranked opponents by at least 30 points apiece. Michigan was 20 points behind Arizona in the last poll.

"All glory is fleeting, as you guys have heard me say," Michigan coach Dusty May said after the most recent blowout, 96-66 over then-No. 24 USC, which also kept his team among the six unbeatens left in Division I men's hoops.

The Wolverines have not been No. 1 since Jan. 28, 2013, and that stint lasted just one week.

The top six remained unchanged Monday from the final poll of 2025: Arizona and Michigan were followed by undefeated Iowa State, UConn, Purdue and Duke, while Houston jumped Gonzaga and BYU and Nebraska rounded out the top 10.

The Huskers, who are riding a nation-best 18-game winning streak dating to last season and are off to the best start in school history, are in the top 10 for the first time since climbing to No. 9 on Feb. 28, 1966. Their latest win was a 58-56 slugfest with then-No. 9 Michigan State.

"Happy for Fred Hoiberg. Not that many years ago, everybody was on his butt," Spartans coach Tom Izzo said afterward. "He did a hell of a job. Nebraska did a hell of a job. That was probably the best game — their biggest game — in 36 years. They responded."

Vanderbilt, another program with scant men's basketball success, remained right behind the Huskers at No. 11. That is the highest the unbeaten Commodores have been since they were No. 7 in the preseason poll for the 2011-12 season.

"SEC play comes at you fast, and now we know the difficulties of this league and what's ahead of us," Vanderbilt coach Mark Byington said after Saturday's win over South Carolina while looking ahead to Tuesday night's matchup with No. 13 Alabama.

Michigan State fell three spots to No. 12 following its loss to Nebraska, while the Crimson Tide were followed by Texas Tech and Arkansas in this week's poll. Illinois, North Carolina, Georgia, Iowa and Louisville rounded out the top 20, while Tennessee, Kansas, Virginia, SMU and UCF completed the initial top 25 of the new year.

The Knights, who opened Big 12 play by beating the Jayhawks, are ranked for the first time since March 4, 2019.

"We're not just playing the opponent in front of us. We're trying to play to our standards," UCF coach Johnny Dawkins said. "I just want them to go out there and just follow their hearts, play for each other, and I thought they did that."

Rising and sliding

Iowa made the biggest move by climbing six spots to No. 19 following its win over UCLA on Saturday, while Georgia jumped five spots to No. 18. Kansas and North Carolina, which lost to SMU on Saturday, each fell five spots but remained in the poll.

In and out

No. 24 SMU is ranked for the first time since finishing No. 11 in the final poll of the 2016-17 season. The Mustangs and UCF joined the Top 25 at the expense of USC and Florida, which lost 76-74 to Missouri on Saturday night.

On the doorstep

Villanova was the first team outside the Top 25, five points back of UCF. Also on the rise are Utah State and Miami (Ohio), which at 15-0 is the only unbeaten still outside the poll.

Conference watch

The Big 12 led the way with seven ranked teams, including four in the top 10, while the Big Ten had six in the Top 25 and three in the top 10. The ACC and SEC had five ranked teams apiece, and the West Coast and Big East each had one.

Zelenskyy replaces Ukraine's security chief and hires a Canadian economic adviser

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — President Volodymyr Zelenskyy replaced the head of Ukraine's security service Monday, continuing a top-level reshuffle ahead of a trip to Paris where he hoped to finalize agreements with allies on how to ensure that Russia doesn't repeat its invasion if a peace agreement is signed.

Zelenskyy is trying to revamp his administration as the grinding war of attrition with Russia marks its fourth anniversary next month. He is keen to keep up the momentum of U.S.-led peace talks as well as sharpen Ukraine's focus on defense if those efforts collapse.

The Paris talks are expected to include the leaders of about 30 countries, dubbed the "coalition of the willing," which are ready to provide security guarantees to keep Ukraine safe in the future.

Key issues include whether countries are prepared to deploy troops inside or close to Ukraine and what the remit of any force overseeing a ceasefire might be. Russia has said it won't accept troops from NATO countries on Ukrainian soil.

Zelenskyy's changes at the top

Zelenskyy also announced the appointment of Canada's former Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland as Ukraine's economic development adviser, describing her as an expert on the issues with "significant experience in attracting investment and carrying out economic transformations."

Amid Ukraine's biggest top-level reshuffle in about six months, Lt. Gen. Vasyl Maliuk, the head of the Security Service, or SBU, announced his resignation on the agency's website.

Zelenskyy published a decree on the presidential website appointing Ievhen Khmara, former head of the "A" Special Operations Center of the Security Service, as the agency's acting head.

Under Maliuk, the SBU produced some stunning successes against Russia, including Operation Spiderweb, which Ukraine said damaged or destroyed 41 Russian military aircraft in coordinated strikes on four air bases.

On Friday, Zelenskyy appointed the head of Ukraine's military intelligence as his new chief of staff.

Announcing the appointment of Lt. Gen. Kyrylo Budanov, Zelenskyy said Ukraine needs to focus on security issues, developing its defense and security forces, and peace talks — areas that are overseen by the office of the president.

New adviser has been a staunch critic of Putin

Zelenskyy also is looking to strengthen the war-battered economy, including through projects in partnership with the U.S. and other countries. Freeland, who is of Ukrainian heritage and is a strong critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin, is a former journalist and Canadian lawmaker.

Besides being a former deputy prime minister, she also served as Canada's minister of international trade, foreign minister and finance minister, and helped negotiate trade agreements with both Europe and the U.S.

The Harvard University graduate has served as Canada's special representative for the reconstruction of Ukraine — a position outside the Cabinet — in addition to her responsibilities as a lawmaker.

Freeland and U.S. President Donald Trump have had a sometimes-fraught relationship that could work against Ukraine. In Trump's first term, Freeland played a key role in negotiating the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement, and occasionally frustrated Trump aides with her tactics.

During Trump's first meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney in the Oval Office, the president recalled his own antipathy for Freeland. "She was terrible, actually -- she was a terrible person," Trump said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 54 of 58

When Freeland left former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Cabinet, Trump said on social media that "her behavior was totally toxic."

One opposition lawmaker in Canada argued that Freeland could not be a member of the country's parliament and at the same time work as an adviser to a foreign government.

Ukraine seeks to counter size of Russian forces

In his New Year's address, Zelenskyy said a proposed U.S.-brokered peace deal was "90% ready" but warned that the remaining 10%, believed to include issues such as the future of disputed territory, would determine the outcome of the push for peace.

Moscow hasn't been forthcoming about details of the negotiations. Officials have, however, restated Russia's demands and insist there can be no ceasefire until a comprehensive settlement is agreed.

The fighting has not subsided along the roughly 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line that snakes along southern and eastern Ukraine.

Zelenskyy said he met with Budanov on Monday to look at ways to reduce Russia's edge in larger armed forces.

"Russia has one significant advantage in this war, namely the ability to put pressure on Ukraine with the scale of strikes, the scale of assaults," he said on social media. "We have and must respond with more active use of technology, faster development of new types of weapons, new tactics."

An overnight Russian drone strike at a private clinic in Kyiv's Obolon district killed a 30-year-old old patient and injured three others, the capital's prosecutor's office said Monday.

Energy workers and repair crews worked across the country after Russian drones damaged energy infrastructure, causing more power disruptions for civilians in the bitter winter, Zelenskyy said. Russia fired nine ballistic missiles and 165 long-range drones at Ukraine overnight, the air force said Monday.

Meanwhile, a Ukrainian drone sparked a fire at an industrial facility in Yelets, in Russia's western Lipetsk region, according to regional Gov. Igor Artamonov. There were no casualties, he said.

The Russian airports of Ivanovo, Nizhny Novgorod and Yaroslavl briefly suspended flights because of Ukrainian drone attacks, authorities said.

The Russian Defense Ministry reported downing another 50 Ukrainian drones later Monday over the Belgorod, Kursk and Lipetsk regions.

Kentucky, Vanderbilt into top 10 in women's AP Top 25 after 4 of top 10 teams fall; UConn, Texas 1-2

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

Kentucky and Vanderbilt made major jumps in The Associated Press women's basketball Top 25 on Monday after four of the top 10 teams lost last week, causing a shakeup in the poll.

This was the first week since the end of November that a new school had entered the top 10 this season.

The first four remained unchanged with UConn still No. 1, receiving 28 first-place votes and No. 2 Texas getting the other four. South Carolina and UCLA followed while Oklahoma moved up to fifth, the Sooners' highest ranking since they were fourth in the final poll of 2009.

Kentucky and Vanderbilt each rose five spots to sixth and seventh, respectively, after each knocking off then-No. 5 LSU in consecutive games. The Wildcats edged LSU 80-78 on a last-second shot.

Vanderbilt has not been in the top 10 since it was seventh on March 12, 2007. Vandy's 65-61 win over LSU on Sunday was its first against a top five team in 17 years.

The Tigers, one of seven unbeaten teams to lose over the last week, plummeted to 12th.

Maryland fell one spot to eighth after losing to Illinois, its first defeat of the season. Michigan dropped two places to ninth after a loss at Washington, which re-entered the Top 25 at No. 23.

Louisville moved up three spots to 10th. TCU dropped to 13th after losing its first game of the season to Utah in overtime.

There are only four undefeated teams left: UConn, Texas, Vanderbilt and No. 17 Texas Tech.

Unbeaten no more

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 55 of 58

Besides LSU, Maryland and TCU losing for the first time this season, No. 11 Iowa State, Arizona State, Alabama and Georgia also all suffered their first losses.

Falling Irish

Notre Dame saw its run of 85 consecutive appearances in the Top 25 end after the Irish (10-4) lost to Georgia Tech and Duke last week. It was the third-longest active streak, trailing only UConn (615) and South Carolina (257). Notre Dame had been in the poll every week since Nov. 29, 2021.

Milestone wins

Louisville's Jeff Walz and Miami's Tricia Cullop both earned their 500th career victories last week, doing so in back-to-back games against Virginia Tech.

Game of the week

No. 2 Texas at No. 12 LSU, Sunday. The Tigers will have a chance to rebound from the tough week with a game against the Longhorns. A victory would get LSU back in the SEC regular-season title race.

Oil stocks sharply higher after US action in Venezuela

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN AP Business Writer

Shares of major U.S. companies in the energy sector are sharply higher Monday after President Donald Trump announced plans to take control of Venezuela's oil industry, saying that it would be American companies helping to revitalize it following the capture of President Nicolás Maduro.

While the U.S. action is unlikely to have an immediate impact on crude prices given the current glut in the market, it could upend energy markets and have an impact on the geopolitical landscape.

The shale oil revolution made the U.S. the world's largest crude producer. Recent, massive oil finds off the coast of Guyana are largely controlled by ExxonMobil and Chevron. U.S. control of the Venezuelan energy industry, which sits on the world's largest oil reserves, could "reshape the balance of power in international energy markets," analysts with JP Morgan wrote Monday.

"The combined total could position the US as a leading holder of global oil reserves, potentially accounting for about 30% of the world's total if these figures are consolidated under US influence," JP Morgan wrote. "This would mark a notable shift in global energy dynamics."

Venezuela's oil industry is in disrepair after years of neglect and international sanctions. Yet some oil industry analysts believe that Venezuela could double or triple its current output of about 1.1 million barrels of oil a day and return the nation to historic production levels relatively quickly.

"With greater access to and influence over a substantial portion of global reserves, the US could potentially exert more control over oil market trends, helping to stabilize prices and keep them within historically lower ranges," according to JP Morgan. "This increased leverage would not only enhance US energy security but could also reshape the balance of power in international energy markets."

If or when that would happen, however, is more complex. Many energy analysts see a longer and more difficult road ahead.

"While the Trump administration has suggested large U.S. oil companies will go into Venezuela and spend billions to fix infrastructure, we believe political and other risks along with current relatively low oil prices could prevent this from happening anytime soon," wrote Neal Dingmann of William Blair. Material change to Venezuelan production will take a lot of time and millions of dollars of infrastructure improvement, he said.

And any investment in Venezuelan infrastructure right now would take place in a weakened global energy market. Crude prices in the U.S. are down 20% compared with last year. The price for a barrel of benchmark U.S. crude hasn't been above \$70 since June, and hasn't touched \$80 per barrel since the summer of 2024.

A barrel of oil cost more than \$130 in the leadup to the the U.S. housing crisis in 2008.

There's several factors that could impact Venezuelan production, including how quickly a government transition can take hold and how fast and willing multinational oil companies are to reenter the country, wrote John Freeman of Raymond James.

At the opening bell, shares in the energy sector moved broadly higher, particularly companies with large

refinery operations.

Venezuela produces the kind of heavy crude oil that's needed for diesel fuel, asphalt and other fuels for heavy equipment. Diesel is in short supply around the world because of the sanctions on oil from Venezuela and Russia and because America's lighter crude oil can't easily replace it.

Big refiners like Valero, Marathon Petroleum and Phillips 66 rose between 5% and 6% at the opening bell. Oilfield service companies, those that actually go into the field and do the drilling and upkeep, rose even more sharply. SLB and Halliburton rose between 7% and 8%.

Major oil exploratory companies including ExxonMobil, Chevron and ConocoPhillips rose between 2% and 4%.

US expands list of countries whose citizens must pay up to \$15,000 bonds to apply for visas

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration has added seven countries, including five in Africa, to the list of nations whose passport holders are required to post bonds of up to \$15,000 to apply to enter the United States.

Thirteen countries, all but two of them in Africa, are now on the list, which makes the process of obtaining a U.S. visa unaffordable for many.

The State Department last week quietly added Bhutan, Botswana, the Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Namibia and Turkmenistan to the list. Those designations took effect on Jan. 1, according to a notice posted on the travel.state.gov website.

It's the latest effort by the Trump administration to tighten requirements for entry to the U.S., including requiring citizens from all countries that require visas to sit for in-person interviews and disclose years of social media histories as well as detailed accounts of their and their families' previous travel and living arrangements.

U.S. officials have defended the bonds, which can range from \$5,000 up to \$15,000, maintaining they are effective in ensuring that citizens of targeted countries do not overstay their visas.

Payment of the bond does not guarantee a visa will be granted, but the amount will be refunded if the visa is denied or when a visa holder demonstrates they have complied with the terms of visa.

The new countries covered by the requirement join Mauritania, Sao Tome and Principe, Tanzania, Gambia, Malawi and Zambia, which were all placed on the list in August and October of last year.

A Paris court finds 10 people guilty of cyberbullying France's first lady Brigitte Macron

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A Paris court found Monday 10 people guilty of cyberbullying France's first lady, Brigitte Macron, by spreading false online claims about her gender and sexuality, including allegations that she was born a male.

One defendant was sentenced to six months in prison, while eight were handed suspended sentences between four and eight months. All 10 were ordered to attend cyberbullying awareness training.

The court pointed to "particularly degrading, insulting, and malicious" comments referring to false claims suggesting that Brigitte Macron was transgender and a pedophile.

"Repeated publications have had cumulative harmful effects," the court said.

The defendants, eight men and two women ranging in age from 41 to 65, were accused of having posted numerous comments falsely claiming that the wife of President Emmanuel Macron was born male and likening their 24-year age gap to pedophilia. Some of the posts were viewed tens of thousands of times.

Brigitte Macron didn't attend the two-day trial in October. Speaking on TF1 national television Sunday, she said that she launched legal proceedings to "set an example" in the fight against harassment.

Her lawyer, Jean Ennouchi, said Monday that "what is important is that there are immediate cyberbullying awareness trainings, and for some of the defendants, a ban on using their social media accounts."

Her daughter, Tiphaine Auzière, testified about what she described as the "deterioration" of her mother's life since the online harassment intensified. "She cannot ignore the horrible things said about her," Auzière told the court. She said the impact has extended to the entire family, including Macron's grandchildren.

One of the defendants, a property asset manager, received a six-month prison sentence. Under French law, the sentence may be served at home, possibly while wearing an ankle monitor or following other requirements set by a judge.

Defendant Delphine Jegousse, 51, who is known as Amandine Roy and describes herself as a medium and an author, is considered to have played a major role in spreading the rumor after she released a four-hour video on her YouTube channel in 2021. She was given a six-month prison sentence.

The X account of Aurélien Poirson-Atlas, 41, known as Zoé Sagan on social media, was suspended in 2024 after his name was cited in several judicial investigations. Poirson-Atlas was given an eight-month prison sentence, along with another defendant, a gallery owner.

The one defendant not given a prison sentence was a teacher, who apologized during the trial. He will have to attend the cyberbullying awareness training.

Several will see their online access suspended for six months on the social media where they made their posts.

All 10 were also sentenced to jointly pay 10,000 euros (\$11,675) in compensation to Brigitte Macron for moral damage.

The sentences were proportional to the seriousness of the comments, the court stressed.

French judicial authorities didn't disclose the names of the defendants, but some made their names public by speaking out.

During the trial, several defendants told the court that their comments were intended as humor or satire, and said they didn't understand why they were being prosecuted.

The case follows years of conspiracy theories falsely alleging that Brigitte Macron was born under the name Jean-Michel Trogneux, which is actually the name of her brother. The Macrons have also filed a defamation suit in the United States against conservative influencer Candace Owens.

The Macrons, who have been married since 2007, first met at the high school where he was a student and she was a teacher. The 72-year-old Brigitte Macron is 24 years her husband's senior, and she was then called Brigitte Auzière, a married mother of three.

Emmanuel Macron, 48, has been France's president since 2017.

Bluefin tuna sells for record \$3.2 million at year-opening auction at Tokyo fish market

Associated Press undefined

TOKYO (AP) — A massive 243-kilogram (535-pound) bluefin tuna sold for a record 510 million yen (\$3.2 million) at the first auction of 2026 at Tokyo's Toyosu fish market.

The top bidder for the prized tuna at the predawn auction on Monday was Kiyomura Corp., whose owner Kiyoshi Kimura runs the popular Sushi Zanmai chain. Kimura, who has won the annual auction many times in the past, broke the previous record of 334 million yen (\$2.1 million) he set in 2019.

Kimura later told reporters he was hoping to pay a bit less for it, but "the price shot up before you knew it."

The auction started when the bell rang, and the floor was filled with torpedo-shaped fish with their tails cut off so bidders could examine meat details such as color, texture and fattiness while walking around the rows of tuna.

The pricey fish was caught off the coast of Oma in northern Japan, a region widely regarded for producing some of the country's finest tuna, and costs 2.1 million yen (\$13,360) per kilogram (\$6,060 per pound).

"It's in part for good luck," Kimura said. "But when I see a good looking tuna, I cannot resist ... I haven't

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, January 06, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 216 ~ 58 of 58

sampled it yet, but it's got to be delicious."

Hundreds of tuna are sold daily at the early morning auction, but prices are significantly higher than usual for the Oma tuna, especially at the celebratory New Year auction.

Due to the popularity of tuna for sushi and sashimi, Pacific bluefin tuna was previously a threatened species due to climate change and overfishing, but its stock is recovering following conservation efforts.

Today in History: January 6, Trump supporters storm Capitol to stop certification of Biden victory

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, Jan. 6, the sixth day of 2026. There are 359 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Jan. 6, 2021, supporters of President Donald Trump, fueled by his false claims of a stolen election, assaulted police and stormed into the U.S. Capitol to interrupt the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's victory, forcing lawmakers into hiding. A Trump supporter, Ashli Babbitt, was shot and killed by police as she tried to breach a barricaded doorway inside the Capitol. Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, injured while confronting the rioters, suffered a stroke the next day and died from natural causes. Congress reconvened hours later to finish certifying Biden's victory. In January 2025 — on the first day of his second term — Trump granted blanket clemency to more than 1,500 people convicted or awaiting trial or sentencing for Jan. 6 offenses.

Also on this date:

In 1919, former President Theodore Roosevelt died in Oyster Bay, New York, at age 60.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his State of the Union address, outlined a goal of "Four Freedoms" — human rights worthy of defending universally: freedom of speech and expression, the freedom to worship God in one's own way, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

In 1974, year-round daylight saving time began in the United States on a trial basis as a fuel-saving measure in response to the OPEC oil embargo. The country, however, returned to standard time in October, effectively ending the experiment.

In 1982, truck driver William G. Bonin was convicted in Los Angeles of 10 of the "Freeway Killer" slayings of young men and boys. (Bonin was later convicted of four other killings; he was executed in 1996.)

In 1994, figure skater Nancy Kerrigan was clubbed on the leg by an assailant at Detroit's Cobo Arena; four men, including the ex-husband of Kerrigan's rival, Tonya Harding, went to prison for their roles in the attack. (Harding pleaded guilty to conspiracy to hinder prosecution but denied any advance knowledge about the assault.)

In 2005, former Ku Klux Klan leader Edgar Ray Killen was indicted on murder charges 41 years after three civil rights workers were killed in Mississippi. (Killen was later convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to 60 years in prison; he died in prison in 2018.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor-comedian Rowan Atkinson, who played Mr. Bean, is 71. Golf Hall of Famer Nancy Lopez is 69. TV chef Nigella Lawson is 66. Football Hall of Famer Howie Long is 66. Football Hall of Famer Charles Haley is 62. Actor Norman Reedus is 57. TV personality Julie Chen Moonves is 56. Actor Eddie Redmayne is 44. Actor-comedian Kate McKinnon is 42. Businessman Eric Trump is 42. Entrepreneur and yoga instructor Hilaria Baldwin is 42.