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## Friday, Jan. 9, 2026

- School Breakfast: Breakfast Boats.
- School Lunch: Chicken Fajitas, refried beans.
- Carnival of Silver Skates costume hand-out at Emmanuel Lutheran
- Girls Wrestling at Miller/Highmore-Harold Tourney, 4 p.m.
- Robotics Set-up in the GHS Gym, 6 p.m.



## Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026

- Mixed Doubles Bowling Tournament at the Jungle, 1 p.m.
- Groton Robotics Tourney, 8 a.m.
- Boys Wrestling at Jesse James (Garretson) Tournament, 9:30 a.m.
- Girls Wrestling at Mid-Dakota Monster (Lyman High School) Tournament, 10 a.m.
- Basketball at Lennox: (Gym: BC-1, GC-2:15, Main Gym: JVGBB-1, JVBBB-2:15, VGBB-3:30, VBBB-5:00)

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# 1440

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

## EU-Mercosur Trade Vote

European Union member states are set to vote today on the Mercosur trade agreement with South American countries. If it passes, the deal stands to create one of the world's biggest trade zones, covering roughly one-quarter of global gross domestic product.

Twenty-five years in the making, the deal would lift over 90% of the tariffs between the EU and five countries: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay. That includes eliminating tariffs on EU spirits and cars, and lowering EU tariffs on beef to 7.5%. European farmers have largely protested the latter, blocking roads into Paris yesterday, with demonstrations also cropping up recently in Germany and Belgium.

Member countries representing 65% of the bloc's population are needed for passage. France and Poland have come out against the agreement. Italy is expected to join Germany to vote in favor. If passed, the deal will be signed Monday, Jan. 12.

## Yemeni Separatist Flees

Saudi Arabia yesterday accused the United Arab Emirates of helping Yemeni separatist leader Aidarous al-Zubaidi flee to Abu Dhabi, escalating infighting between Yemen's anti-Houthi factions. The UAE has not commented as of this writing.

While Saudi Arabia and the UAE joined forces in 2015 to combat the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen's civil war, they've since aligned with different anti-Houthi groups. Al-Zubaidi leads the Southern Transitional Council, an Emirati-backed group pushing for an independent nation in southern Yemen. After seizing two southern governorates from Saudi-backed forces last month—including an oil-rich region bordering Saudi Arabia—the STC last week announced a constitution for a new southern nation. Riyadh responded with deadly airstrikes, helping Saudi-backed forces regain some control in recent days.

Yemen's internationally recognized executive body expelled al-Zubaidi Wednesday, charging him with treason for failing to attend crisis talks in Riyadh this week.

## White House Ballroom

The White House outlined updated plans for its East Wing renovation and new 89,000-square-foot ballroom at a National Capital Planning Commission meeting yesterday.

The two-story structure will include a 22,000-square-foot banquet hall, offices for the first lady, and a movie theater. Officials said demolishing the wing to build the \$400M ballroom would be cheaper than renovating it. The presentation followed a lawsuit accusing the administration of bypassing required federal reviews. A judge let construction continue under supervision, and the administration submitted applications to the NCPC and Commission of Fine Arts in December, the two panels that review construction on federal land. The privately funded project aims to expand space for state functions, enhance security, and replace costly temporary tents.

The White House has undergone several renovations in its over 200-year history, including Harry Truman's postwar rebuild and John F. Kennedy's restoration program. Formal presentations are expected in the coming weeks, with project completion targeted for 2028.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

No. 10 Miami beats No. 6 Ole Miss in Fiesta Bowl, securing spot in College Football Championship Jan. 19; No. 1 Indiana and No. 5 Oregon face off at 7:30 pm ET for entry into title game.

Taylor Swift leads iHeartRadio Music Award nominees with nine nods, followed by Bad Bunny, Sabrina Carpenter, and Alex Warren; ceremony airs March 26.

Disney casts "Titans" star Teagan Croft and "Zombies" star Milo Manheim as leads in live-action adaptation of 2010 animated fairy-tale film "Tangled".

## Science & Technology

NASA postpones spacewalk and considers bringing International Space Station crew back early due to medical issue with unidentified astronaut; condition is reportedly stable.

Google infuses Gmail with AI features, including a writing assistant that learns users' style over time and an advanced inbox search.

Engineers design pills with biodegradable radio frequency antennas; could allow healthcare providers to know if and when a patient takes their medication.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 +0.0%, Dow +0.6%, Nasdaq -0.4%) as investors rotate out of technology stocks and await latest jobs report today.

US trade deficit in October falls 39% month-over-month to roughly \$29B—the lowest level since 2009—as imports fell by 3.2% amid tariff decisions; data released yesterday was delayed due to last year's government shutdown.

General Motors to record \$7.1B hit in Q4 2025 following its restructuring in China and decision to pull back from EV efforts amid weakening demand.

## Politics & World Affairs

Senate votes 52-47 to advance resolution aiming to block President Donald Trump from deploying the military in Venezuela without congressional approval.

Minnesota officials say state investigators were barred from accessing evidence pertaining to ICE agent killing 37-year-old woman blocking a road earlier this week; FBI to lead the investigation.

Volcano guides at Italy's Mount Etna protest new safety restrictions amid uptick in volcanic activity.

## **SDPB Provides Comprehensive Live and On-Demand Coverage of 2026 Legislative Session**

Vermillion, S.D. — South Dakota Public Broadcasting (SDPB) will deliver extensive live, on-demand, and digital coverage of the 2026 South Dakota Legislative Session, ensuring South Dakotans have broad access to the key issues, debates, and decisions shaping the state.

One major change in SDPB's coverage is the transition of all legislative coverage to the SDPB website. All coverage can be found online at [SDPB.org/SDNetwork](https://sdpb.org/SDNetwork). The SDNet app and SD.net will sunset, and any web traffic will be redirected to the SDPB website. Those with specific bookmarks may have to reset those destinations in their browsers. Also, going forward, all open government coverage will be streamed and archived on SDPB's YouTube channel as well.

SDPB will provide live television, radio and digital coverage of major constitutional addresses, including the State of the State, the State of the Judiciary, and the State of the Tribes. SDPB will host live coverage of the State of the State, including reaction and analysis from legislative leaders on January 13 at 1:00 pm Central.

The day following State of the State, SDPB will air a one-hour special edition of In the Moment with Lori Walsh at noon Central, featuring political analysis and reaction from around the state. The State of the Judiciary Address will air at 10:35:00 am Central, and the State of the Tribes Address is scheduled for 1:00 pm Central on January 14.

"Providing clear, reliable access to the work of state government is central to SDPB's public service mission," said Julie Overgaard, Executive Director of SDPB. "Our legislative coverage gives South Dakotans the opportunity to hear directly from their elected leaders and understand how decisions made in Pierre affect their communities."

Throughout the session, SDPB provides Senate and House floor sessions, with all committee meetings streamed live on [SDPB.org/SDNetwork](https://sdpb.org/SDNetwork), and general sessions of the House and Senate are televised. The South Dakota House of Representatives airs on SDPB2 World Channel, and the South Dakota Senate is on SDPB3 Create Channel.

Weekly legislative leadership and governor's press conferences will be streamed live.

"This session coverage reflects a true team effort across television, radio, digital, and technical operations," said Twyla Olson, SDPB Director of Content. "From live floor coverage to daily reporting and analysis, our staff is committed to delivering accurate, timely information to audiences statewide."

SDPB News will offer daily legislative reporting across radio and online platforms. A daily news podcast will compile all legislative stories in one place, making it easy for listeners to stay informed.

In addition, Lori Walsh will host weekly Dakota Political Junkie conversations during Morning Edition as part of The Local Moment, with extended discussions available through the Political Junkie podcast and accompanying web content. SDPB News will also produce "In Their Own Words" segment each week for radio and online audiences.

Digital and social media audiences will receive daily posts and videos highlighting developments in Pierre, expanding access to legislative coverage beyond traditional broadcasts.

At the conclusion of the session, South Dakota Focus will present a special program examining the major issues debated during the legislative session, such as property taxes, emergency management, and other key topics affecting South Dakotans.

Through this comprehensive, multiplatform approach, SDPB continues its mission to provide trusted, accessible coverage of state government and public affairs.

## Missed Chances Cost Tigers in 38–34 Road Loss at Clark-Willow Lake



**Jerica Locke battles for the ball with Clark-Willow Lake's Shelby Begeman.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

CLARK, S.D. — A strong defensive effort and improved offensive movement weren't enough for the Groton Area Tigers Thursday night, as missed close-range opportunities proved costly in a 38–34 loss to the Clark-Willow Lake Cyclones.

Clark-Willow Lake jumped out early, scoring 18 first-quarter points to build an 18–10 lead despite a late three-pointer from Taryn Traphagan that gave Groton some momentum going into the second quarter. The Cyclones extended their advantage to 20–14 at halftime in a second quarter that featured just six total points.

"That's the best we've played offense all year," head coach Matt Locke said. "We were moving, getting good cuts, getting good looks — and we only scored 34 points. We missed too many point-blank layups."

Groton Area responded coming out of halftime, stringing together an eight-point run across the second and third quarters to tie the game at 20 with 5:38 remaining in the third. However, Clark-Willow Lake answered immediately with a nine-point run of its own to regain control at 29–20 before taking a 31–25 lead into the final period.

"We gave one away," Locke said. "I don't like giving them away. We talk all the time about being activated when you get to the gym — not giving up 18 in the first quarter and then waking up."

The Tigers continued to battle in the fourth quarter, cutting the deficit to just one point at 33–32, but the Cyclones held on by converting 5-of-8 free throws

down the stretch to seal the win. Groton went a perfect 3-of-3 from the line in the final frame but couldn't overcome its shooting struggles from the field.

"We still had plenty of opportunities late, even with foul trouble," Locke said. "The effort was there. They played hard. I love how they competed. I just wish we wouldn't get in our own way when it comes to putting the ball in the basket."

Traphagan led the Tigers with a double-double, finishing with 11 points and 10 rebounds before fouling out with 23 seconds remaining. Jayden Penning added nine points and five rebounds, while Rylee Dunker scored six points with three rebounds and a steal. Jerica Locke chipped in four points, seven rebounds, three assists, and a steal, and McKenna Tietz posted four points, five rebounds, and a steal. Kella Tracy grabbed five rebounds with an assist and a steal, and Talli Wright added a rebound.

As a team, Groton Area shot 12-of-42 (29%) on two-point attempts, 1-of-13 (7%) from three-point range, and 7-of-11 (64%) at the free-throw line. The Tigers finished with 36 rebounds, 11 turnovers, five steals, and 19 team fouls.

Clark-Willow Lake was led by Kamryn Nesheim with 12 points, followed by Brynn Rorick with 10. The Cyclones also shot 29% from the field and went 9-of-19 from the free-throw line.

In the junior varsity game, Clark-Willow Lake defeated Groton Area 34–23 after building an 11–5 first-

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**Taryn Traphagen had a double-double on the night with 11 points and 10 rebounds.**

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

quarter lead and a 23–10 halftime advantage. Tevan Hanson led the Tigers with 10 points, Kella Tracy added eight, Kinsley Rowen scored three, and Mckenna Krause and Ashlynn Warrington each finished with one.

Groton Area now sits at 5–3 on the season and will have little time to dwell on the loss, traveling Saturday to Lennox for a 3:30 p.m. contest as part of a girls-boys doubleheader.

“They’re good — top five,” Locke said of the upcoming opponent. “They’re long, athletic, they can shoot it, and they press. We’re going down there to play our game and play hard.”

**Both varsity games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Avantara - Groton, Agtegra, Bierman Farm Service, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Heartland Energy and The MeatHouse in Andover. Rich Bosma and Mike Imrie did the commentary, Jeslyn Kosel ran the camera and Paul Kosel did the stats and technology. The girls junior varsity game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM sponsored by grandparents. The boys JV game was sponsored by Ed and Connie Stauch.**

## Cyclones Pull Away Late to Defeat Tigers 56–39

CLARK, S.D. — The Groton Area boys basketball team stayed within striking distance for much of the night Thursday, but a series of second-half runs lifted the undefeated Clark-Willow Lake Cyclones to a 56–39 win over the Groton Area Tigers.

Groton Area came out sharp offensively, led by Ryder Johnson's hot first quarter. Johnson scored 13 of his game-high 19 points in the opening eight minutes, knocking down three three-pointers as the Tigers built an 18–15 lead. The first quarter featured four lead changes and four ties, with both teams trading momentum.

"We came out and had a great start," head coach Greg Kjellsen said. "But when you look at it, that also means we didn't score much after those 21 points."

Clark-Willow Lake answered with three three-pointers of its own in the opening quarter and continued to apply pressure defensively. The game was tied at 21 in the second quarter before the Cyclones put together a six-point run to seize control. Clark-Willow Lake carried a 30–26 advantage into halftime.

Kjellsen pointed to offensive impatience as a key factor as the game settled into a half-court pace.

"When we get into the half-court game, we get way too impatient," he said. "We don't let plays develop. We feel like we either have to shoot it right now or drive it right now, and that's not going to work against a team like this."

Groton Area kept the deficit to four early in the third quarter at 36–32, but once again Clark-Willow Lake responded with a six-point run, pushing the lead to 42–34 heading into the fourth. Another Cyclone surge early in the final period stretched the margin into double digits and effectively put the game away.

"That's been kind of a carbon copy of the games we've lost," Kjellsen said. "We're hanging right there, then we have two or three costly turnovers, force up a couple quick threes, and it goes from four or five to twelve or fourteen in a hurry."

The Cyclones dominated the glass, outrebounding Groton Area 34–25, an area Kjellsen noted became even more difficult when the Tigers mixed in zone defense.

"The zone helped us for a stretch, but it's hard to rebound out of it," Kjellsen said. "We're already struggling on the boards, and they started to figure it out and seal us backside."

Clark-Willow Lake was led by Sullivan Felberg, who finished with 19 points, seven rebounds, and three blocks, showcasing the inside-outside versatility that caused problems all night.

"He's so hard to guard because he can score both inside and outside," Kjellsen said. "He's just a load. When a kid can do both, it makes things really tough."

Groton Area shot 10-of-29 on two-point attempts (34 percent), 5-of-18 from three-point range (28 percent), and 4-of-11 at the free-throw line (36 percent). The Tigers were limited to just 13 second-half points.

"That's not going to beat anybody," Kjellsen said. "We were 6-for-25 in the second half, and you can't leave points at the free-throw line either."

Johnson led the Tigers with 19 points, four rebounds, and a steal. Karson Zak added 12 points, three rebounds, and three assists. Gage Sippel finished with five points and seven rebounds, while Keegen Tracy added three points, three rebounds, and four assists. Becker Bosma pulled down five rebounds, and Easton Weber recorded two rebounds and two steals.

Clark-Willow Lake shot 24-of-51 from the field (47 percent) and 3-of-4 at the free-throw line (75 percent), finishing with 10 assists and 13 team fouls.

Despite the final margin, Kjellsen felt the effort remained solid throughout a demanding stretch of the schedule.

"I told the boys I'm not disappointed in the effort," he said. "It's just the little things we've got to take care of. This wasn't a 17-point game in my opinion."

Groton Area falls to 5–2 on the season, while Clark-Willow Lake improves to 5–0. The Tigers will quickly turn the page with another tough test Saturday, traveling to Lennox for a doubleheader, with the boys game scheduled for a 5 p.m. tip.

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"Not going to get any easier," Kjellsen said. "But we're going to get better. We've put in some new wrinkles offensively, and we'll keep working on it."

## JV Tigers Earn Road Win

The Groton Area junior varsity team picked up the Tigers' lone win of the night with a 37-31 victory over Clark-Willow Lake.

After the Cyclones jumped out to a 4-0 lead, the first quarter featured four lead changes, with Clark-Willow Lake holding an 11-7 edge after one. Groton Area grabbed its first lead at 12-11 early in the second quarter and closed the half on a seven-point run to take a 24-16 advantage.

The Tigers extended the lead to 28-21 after three quarters and held on down the stretch for the six-point win.

Ethan Kroll led Groton Area with 10 points, followed by Asher Johnson with eight, Anthony Tracy with six, Jace Johnson with five, Ryder Schelle with four, and J.J. Mueller with four. Trig Felberg scored 21 points for Clark-Willow Lake in the JV contest.



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**Sat., Jan. 10, 2026**

Rich Bosma and  
Jeslyn Kosel

**Doubleheader at Lennox**

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

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## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **Johnson for Governor campaign proposes \$400 property tax credits for homeowners**

**Plan also includes two-year tax holiday for first-time homebuyers**

**BY: JOSHUA HAIAR**

Republican governor candidate Dusty Johnson wants to give first-time homebuyers two years without property taxes and also wants to provide \$400 annual property tax credits to all other homeowners in the state, he announced Thursday.

"Property taxes have become a problem for every South Dakota homeowner, and I feel duty-bound to provide relief to all of them," Johnson said in an interview with South Dakota Searchlight.

Johnson is serving the remainder of his term in the U.S. House while he seeks the Republican nomination for governor in June's primary election. His proposal comes as lawmakers prepare to debate a heap of other property tax ideas during the legislative session that begins Tuesday at the Capitol in Pierre.

Homeowners' property tax payments rose nearly 40% from 2020 to 2024, causing many to demand relief. Johnson would pay for his proposal with \$110 million in estimated annual revenue that will be available when the state sales tax rate goes back to 4.5%. Lawmakers reduced it to 4.2% in 2023 but scheduled the reduction to sunset after June 30, 2027.

"It's important that the relief is fiscally responsible," Johnson said. "There are a lot of plans out there. There are a lot of people promising the moon, but they can't actually make the math work."

Johnson said each homeowner would see the credit on their county property tax statement.

Johnson's campaign said there are about 260,000 homeowner-occupied parcels in South Dakota, making a \$400 credit for each come to about \$104 million. The campaign said there are about 1,500 first-time homeowners every year who pay an average of \$2,000 in property taxes, which comes to \$3 million annually, or \$6 million for the first two years.

Among the other property tax relief ideas that could be considered by lawmakers this winter are 19 proposed by a task force over the summer.

### **Hansen: Johnson tries to 'take credit for others' plans'**

State House Speaker Jon Hansen, of Dell Rapids, served on the task force and is seeking the Republican nomination for governor. He accused Johnson of stealing the sales tax idea from the task force.

One of the task force recommendations, from Sen. Randy Deibert, R-Spearfish, would capture the revenue from the scheduled sales tax increase and place it in a "local effort replacement fund" to replace a portion of property taxes paid to school districts. The recommendation does not specify a plan for \$400 credits or a two-year property tax holiday for first-time homebuyers.

Hansen also pointed to a social media post of his from Nov. 3 when he proposed the "preservation of \$105 million in sales tax relief dedicated to property tax cuts."

"Dusty Johnson can try to take credit for others' plans all day, but the reality is he didn't do the work to create this plan," Hansen said in a statement. "This proposal was adopted by the property tax task force this summer, which I created and helped lead. Over two months ago I announced this proposal as just one aspect of a larger plan to significantly reduce property taxes. A vote on this plan is already coming this legislative session."

Hansen has also endorsed taking money from a state housing infrastructure fund and state reserve funds to provide \$120 million of property tax relief to homeowners through \$500 credits; cutting state spending

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by 5% and using the \$123 million of savings for property tax cuts; and dedicating 25% of future state revenue growth to property tax relief.

Another Republican candidate for governor, Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden, said Johnson's plan "does nothing to actually confront the problems negatively impacting South Dakota."

"Shifting from one tax to another doesn't alleviate the burden on residents. It makes it worse," Doeden said. "The state should be seeking to lower the tax burden on South Dakota families, not create an increase."

Doeden has pledged to eliminate property taxes by utilizing savings from the creation of a state Department of Government Efficiency, by implementing "more fair and equitable" ways to generate revenue, and by growing the economy to widen the tax base.

## **Gov. Rhoden supports optional county sales tax**

Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden is serving the remainder of former Gov. Kristi Noem's term after she departed to serve in the Trump Cabinet. Rhoden is also running to keep his job, and has already signed one property tax relief proposal into law after legislators approved it in March.

The multifaceted law, which took effect in July, is intended to slow property tax increases. It places tighter limits on the growth of property assessments and local government budgets for five years, exempts some home improvements from affecting assessments, and makes more elderly and disabled people eligible for property tax assessment freezes by raising limits on their income and home values.

Rhoden has additionally proposed an optional half-percent sales tax for counties, which they could use to reduce the county portion of owner-occupied property taxes on homes. Counties are not currently allowed to levy sales taxes.

Rhoden said Thursday in a statement that "South Dakotans deserve a meaningful property tax cut, and my plan delivers it."

"A blanket statewide sales tax increase delivers less relief for the South Dakota communities who need it most," Rhoden said. "My plan empowers voters in each county to make their own decisions, and to deliver a bigger property tax cut for homeowners if they choose."

County commissioners could impose Rhoden's proposed county sales tax, and citizens could gather petition signatures to send the decision to local voters.

Johnson said Rhoden's plan "passes the buck" to county commissions. He also said it could transfer tax benefits from rural counties to urban counties, pointing to greater taxable sales in larger cities.

South Dakota Searchlight asked Johnson to square his property tax proposal with his earlier pledge to make schools the state's top budget priority. He said long-term school funding depends on economic growth, and lower homeownership costs would help achieve that goal.

Johnson said homeowners who already qualify for state relief programs, such as elderly and disabled people, would still get the \$400 credit.

*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.*

## US House backs extension of health insurance subsidies, but SD Rep. Johnson votes no

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House approved a bipartisan bill Thursday to resurrect the enhanced tax credits that expired at the end of last year for people who purchase their health insurance from the Affordable Care Act marketplace.

The 230-196 vote sends the legislation to the Senate, where Republican leadership is unlikely to put it on the floor without considerable changes, which a bipartisan group of senators appears close to finalizing. Seventeen Republicans voted with every Democrat to pass the bill.

House GOP leaders didn't want to bring the bill up in their chamber, but a handful of their own members signed a discharge petition in December, forcing the vote amid rising health care costs.

Massachusetts Democratic Rep. Jim McGovern said during floor debate on Wednesday evening "it's about damn time" the chamber took up a bill to address the now-expired tax credits, arguing lawmakers have a "moral obligation to act" to help people afford health insurance.

"This Congress musters up the will to spend trillions of dollars on tax breaks for billionaires and to send the Pentagon billions of dollars more than they even asked for. And the administration came up with tens of billions of dollars to bail out Argentina, for God's sake," McGovern said. "But somehow helping moms and dads, grandparents and kids afford trips to the doctor is a step too far for this Republican leadership."

New York GOP Rep. Mike Lawler said he only backed the bill after Republican leaders declined to bring up a bipartisan two-year compromise bill he helped negotiate last year.

"I am voting in favor of this discharge and of this legislation to send it to the Senate so that the Senate will have the opportunity to put forth a reform package that can pass Congress and become law," Lawler said.

Republicans and Democrats, he said, agree that the country's health care system is in need of a serious overhaul. He called on his colleagues to find solutions to the bigger, more structural issues.

"Enough of the blame game on both sides," Lawler said. "Let's focus on actually delivering affordable health care for Americans."

### Prolonged fight over ACA tax credits

Democrats originally established the enhanced ACA marketplace tax credits during the coronavirus pandemic in an attempt to get more people health insurance coverage. They set the subsidies to expire at the end of 2025.

The debate over the sunset date simmered in the background for much of last year but surged to the forefront in October after Democrats shut down the government and repeatedly demanded GOP leaders negotiate an extension to the expiring enhanced tax credits.

The shutdown ended in mid-November after Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., agreed to give Democrats a vote on a health care bill of their choosing in December.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., ultimately decided to bring up a three-year extension of the enhanced tax credits without any changes, but it failed to get the 60 votes needed to advance.

A proposal from Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy and Idaho Sen. Mike Crapo, both Republicans, that would have provided funding through Health Savings Accounts for some ACA marketplace enrollees during 2026 and 2027 also failed to move toward final passage.

A House Republican health care bill passed that chamber last month, but doesn't have the bipartisan support to move through the Senate and become law.

### Senate problems

Thune said Tuesday any renewal of the enhanced ACA marketplace subsidies would need reforms to move through that chamber.

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The bill, he said, would need to set income limits on who qualifies for the enhanced tax credit and eliminate ACA health insurance plans that have \$0 premiums, a feature Republicans allege allowed insurance companies to enroll people without their knowledge to receive the subsidy.

"And then the second component would be some sort of a bridge to (Health Savings Accounts). An expansion of HSAs so that you're getting more money into the pockets of the American people, the patients, if you will, the consumers, as opposed to insurance companies," Thune said. "And then finally you've got to deal with the Hyde issue."

The Hyde Amendment has been a feature of government spending bills for decades, preventing federal dollars from going to abortions unless the pregnancy is the result of rape, or incest, or threatens the woman's life.

Republicans want the prohibition to apply to all ACA marketplace health insurance plans without any way for Americans to pay for the coverage themselves, the way they do now. Democrats have rejected the change as a non-starter that would restrict abortion access in blue states.

## 'Be a little flexible on Hyde,' says Trump

President Donald Trump waded into that debate this week, telling House Republicans during a policy retreat at the Kennedy Center they must be "flexible" about the Hyde Amendment in order to broker a health care deal that can reach his desk.

"You have to be a little flexible on Hyde. You know that. You've got to be a little flexible," Trump said. "You've got to work something. You've got to use ingenuity. You've got to work. We're all big fans of everything, but you've got to have flexibility."

Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America President Marjorie Dannenfelser rebuked Trump for the comment, writing in a statement that to "suggest Republicans should be 'flexible' is an abandonment of this decades-long commitment. If Republicans abandon Hyde, they are sure to lose this November."

States have a patchwork of laws addressing abortion coverage in ACA marketplace health insurance plans, with 25 prohibiting coverage with certain exceptions and 12 requiring abortion coverage, according to analysis from the nonpartisan health research organization KFF.

"In states that do not bar coverage of abortions on plans available through the Marketplace, insurers may offer a plan that covers abortions beyond the permissible Hyde amendment situations when the pregnancy is a result of rape, or incest or the pregnant person's life is endangered, but this coverage cannot be paid with federal dollars."

Any ACA marketplace health insurance plan that offers abortion coverage in circumstances outside those three exceptions must charge each enrollee \$1 for that coverage, according to KFF.

## Behind the scenes in the Senate

A bipartisan group of senators has been talking behind the scenes for months about how to extend the ACA marketplace subsidies with changes.

Ohio Republican Sen. Bernie Moreno said Thursday he expects the group, which has agreed on a "framework," to release a bill next week, though he cautioned that's just one small step.

"We have agreement that we think we have a skeleton of a deal. But it's all fun and games until you have it on paper in a bill form," Moreno said. "So we have to do that. And then we have to go sell the heck out of it to our conference. And again, look, this is politics. There's people on both sides that want this to fail. So we have to get past that massive mountain."

Moreno said the tentative plan is to revive the enhanced ACA marketplace tax credit for another two years with modifications.

The bill would also:

Extend open enrollment for this year until March 1.

Cap the enhanced subsidy for people making under 700% of the federal poverty level, or about \$109,550 in annual income for one person, according to the guidelines for 2025.

Require people eligible for the enhanced tax credit to pay at least \$5 per month or \$60 per year for their health insurance to ensure the enrollee knows about their coverage.

Fine insurance companies \$1,000 for “deliberately causing fraud, meaning signing someone up without their consent.”

ACA marketplace enrollees eligible for the enhanced tax credit would have a choice in 2027 to either keep the lower premium that stems from the health insurance company receiving the subsidy, or move to a Health Savings Account where they would receive the money from the government.

“The final piece, which I think is the biggest sweetener to the whole deal, is putting back in place cost-sharing reduction payments, which, according to (the Congressional Budget Office), reduce premiums for everybody in the exchange by 11% and save the federal government money,” Moreno said, later clarifying that would happen in 2027.

There is not yet a final proposal regarding how ACA marketplace plans handle abortion coverage in states where it’s allowed, he said.

The handshake agreement, Moreno said, is intended to give Congress time to overhaul the bigger issues facing the country’s health insurance and health care systems in a way that reduces costs.

## Gang of negotiators

Moreno said the core group of negotiators, which he nicknamed the EPTCOG gang on his text chain, includes six Democrats and five of his Republican Senate colleagues. There are 24 senators total in the “extended OG” gang.

Moreno believes one of his advantages in the negotiations is that he hasn’t been around the Senate that long, having just been elected in 2024. He said senators are also handling the details themselves, instead of deferring much of the work to staff.

“This has been principals only. We don’t even allow staff in meetings,” Moreno said. “And the idea is if we can’t work it out, there’s really no point in tasking this with staff.”

New Hampshire Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, one of the negotiators, said Wednesday she wasn’t aware of a deadline for the negotiators to release a bill. She also brushed aside the possibility of changes to how the ACA handles abortion coverage.

“There is no need to come to a compromise because it’s already been dealt with in the Affordable Care Act,” Shaheen said. “There is very specific language on how it is dealt with. And I think that applies to whatever happens with the Affordable Care Act.”

Shaheen said Thursday the House vote “provides momentum” for Senate negotiators.

*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.*

## Former driver’s licensing employee accused of targeting 50 victims in AI pornography case

**Aberdeen man accused of stealing license photos, creating fake images**

**BY: JOHN HULT**

An investigation of unlawful computer use and computer-generated pornography sharing by a former employee of the state Division of Motor Vehicles has turned up at least 50 victims, South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley announced Thursday.

Mark Rathbun, 68, of Aberdeen, was initially indicted in November for solicitation of rape, possession of child pornography and unauthorized use of computer systems. Those charges related to two victims, one of whom he’d been involved in a “domestic relationship” with, according to court documents.

At the time, Jackley said investigators following up on a tip about child pornography found driver’s license images on some of the 30 electronic devices in Rathbun’s home. Jackley’s office declined to outline

any connections there may be between the victims of driver's license data theft and computer-generated pornography, citing the ongoing investigation.

The investigation was likely to turn up more victims, Jackley said at a November press conference.

This week, Rathbun was named in an 85-count indictment that references 50 victims. One of the indictment's 26 counts of child porn possession relates to a video of an unnamed minor engaged in a sex act; the other 25 are tied to "computer-generated" pornographic images of real children, identified by initials. Some of the children's initials are tied to multiple images.

Eighteen counts involve the alleged dissemination or sale of computer-generated pornography, again involving imagery of real people identified by initials, some of whom were younger than 17.

The remaining 40 charges are for unlawful use of computer systems. The indictment lists 10 counts for accessing "confidential driver's license data or material pertaining to" victims without specifying exactly what information may have been taken. The rest relate to Rathbun's alleged copying or obtaining of driver's license image files.

Based on the initials listed in the indictment, two of the alleged victims of driver's license data theft were also depicted in computer-generated pornography. One victim whose photo was allegedly lifted from the driver's license system was depicted in 10 separate computer-generated images.

"We continue to review images found on his electronic devices and will reach out to potential victims for notification," Jackley said in his Thursday news release.

If convicted on all counts, Rathbun faces up to 395 years in prison.

Rathbun is one of numerous former state employees charged with crimes over the past two years. One former Department of Social Services employee named Lonna Carroll was sentenced to seven years in prison for the theft of \$1.8 million from the state across multiple years. Other former state employees have been accused or found guilty of forging food service inspections, falsifying child abuse reports, creating false vehicle titles and issuing themselves a medical marijuana card.

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

## Defiant Vance scolds reporters over descriptions of Minneapolis ICE shooting

**Noem says experienced officer 'followed his training'**

**BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA**

WASHINGTON — Vice President JD Vance said Thursday the Trump administration would stand by the federal immigration officer who shot and killed a woman in Minneapolis the day prior.

Vance defended the immigration officer's actions as "self-defense" and berated journalists for covering the story, including by reporting that on-the-scene videos contradicted claims from the Trump administration that 37-year-old Renee Nicole Good used her vehicle to harm the immigration officer who fired three shots into her windshield.

"I would appreciate everybody saying a prayer for that agent," Vance said. "I think the media prejudging and talking about this guy as if he's a murderer is one of the most disgraceful things I've ever seen from the American media."

The Minnesota Star Tribune identified the federal immigration officer as Jonathan Ross, who Vance said was hit by a vehicle during an immigration operation six months ago.

An analysis from The New York Times of videos from three different angles show Good turning her SUV away from Ross and that he was not in the path of her vehicle when he fired three shots at close range into her windshield.

"That ICE officer nearly had his life ended, dragged by a car six months ago, 33 stitches in his leg so

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you think maybe he's a little bit sensitive about somebody ramming him with an automobile," Vance said.

Vance also accused Good of impeding a law enforcement operation.

"I'm not happy that this woman was there at a protest violating the law by interfering with the law enforcement action," he said. "I think that we can all recognize that the best way to turn down the temperature is to tell people to take their concerns about immigration policy to the ballot box, stop assaulting and stop inciting violence against our law enforcement officers."

## **DHS operation to continue**

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem also defended the immigration agent during a Thursday press conference.

"This is an experienced officer who followed his training," she said.

The federal immigration operation in Minneapolis began last month but intensified this week after a right-wing influencer reported day care centers run by members of the Somali community as fraudulent.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said during the briefing that the aggressive immigration enforcement in Minnesota would continue.

"The Department of Homeland Security will continue to operate on the ground in Minnesota, not only to remove criminal illegal aliens, but also to continue conducting door-to-door investigations of the rampant fraud that has taken place in the state under the failed and corrupt leadership of Democrat Gov. Tim Walz," Leavitt said.

## **'Absolute immunity'**

The FBI has refused to allow the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension from the investigation to have access to evidence or other case materials in order to investigate the shooting.

When reporters in the White House briefing room pressed Vance on why the FBI is refusing to cooperate with local law enforcement officials, Vance said it was a federal issue.

"The idea that Tim Walz and a bunch of radicals in Minneapolis are going to go after and make this guy's life miserable because he was doing the job that he was asked to do is preposterous," Vance said. "The unprecedented thing is the idea that a local official can actually prosecute a federal official with absolute immunity."

A federal officer can be prosecuted by local and state authorities if a federal official violates state criminal laws.

Absolute immunity is applied to civil liability, and extended to certain positions such as the president, judges and legislatures acting in their official duty. Qualified immunity is usually applied to the conduct of law enforcement and grants them immunity from certain legal actions.

Congressional Democrats have decried the shooting and have called for a criminal investigation.

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

## **US House sustains Trump vetoes of water projects in Colorado, Florida**

**BY: JACOB FISCHLER**

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House voted Thursday to sustain two vetoes by President Donald Trump of noncontroversial measures supported by members of both parties.

Several Republicans voted with Democrats to override the vetoes, giving both measures majorities that were still short of the two-thirds necessary.

Just before New Year's, Trump vetoed two bills Congress passed without any recorded opposition in

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either chamber last year. They were the first vetoes of his second term.

One bill would reduce interest payments that Coloradans in the Arkansas River Valley must pay for the construction of a water pipeline to Pueblo communities. The override vote for that bill failed 248-177.

The other would require the Interior Department to protect structures within Florida's Osceola Camp from flooding. That vote failed 236-188.

Trump said both would be too costly for federal taxpayers.

## Colorado members call for override

The House sponsor of the Colorado bill, Colorado Republican Lauren Boebert, urged her colleagues in a Thursday floor speech to override the veto.

"Contrary to what the veto message states, my bill does not authorize any additional federal funding," Boebert said Thursday. "It simply modifies the repayment terms for small, rural communities in my district, so they are able to afford their 35% cost-share of the project that they are statutorily obligated to repay."

The bill extends Obama-era repayment terms for the local cost-share of a project the federal government approved in 1962.

The Dec. 29 White House veto message said the measure "would continue the failed policies of the past by forcing Federal taxpayers to bear even more of the massive costs of a local water project — a local water project that, as initially conceived, was supposed to be paid for by the localities using it."

## Members claim political retribution

Rep. Joe Neguse, a Colorado Democrat, endorsed Boebert's argument, but added stronger words opposing Trump's veto.

"This bill will cost taxpayers virtually nothing, as was referenced, and it makes good on a promise to the people of rural Colorado," he said. "We are here because ... the president has declared war on our state."

Neguse, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, a Florida Democrat, and House Natural Resources Committee ranking Democrat Jared Huffman of California all said the vetoes were part of political payback by the White House, though they did not offer additional context.

"No one voted against this bill," Wasserman Schultz said. "This bill is entirely non-controversial, and it is so narrowly focused that it makes absolutely no sense, other than the interest in vengeance that seems to have emanated in this result."

## Trump avoids another rebuke

The mid-afternoon vote was poised to be Congress' second rejection of Trump on Thursday, after five Senate Republicans joined Democrats to advance a measure to rein in the administration's military activity in Venezuela.

House Natural Resources Chairman Bruce Westerman, an Arkansas Republican, said he supported sustaining the veto because he trusted the administration.

"I respect the administration's views on this legislation and its commitment to fiscal responsibility," Westerman said of the Colorado bill. He made a similar statement about the Florida bill.

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

## Maybe, just maybe, there's not another shutdown looming at the end of January

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — Republicans and Democrats in Congress are cautiously optimistic they can enact the remaining government funding bills before their deadline at the end of the month, avoiding another shutdown.

The milestone would represent an accomplishment for the typically gridlocked Congress, though it comes months after lawmakers' original October deadline and the longest shutdown in history that reverberated throughout the country.

Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Susan Collins, R-Maine, said recently negotiators are making "progress" toward agreement on the unresolved bills, which include funding for the departments of Defense, Health and Human Services and Homeland Security.

Those three bills are the most complicated to resolve and this year will be no exception given President Donald Trump's actions on immigration, deportation and military intervention in Venezuela.

Washington Democratic Sen. Patty Murray, ranking member on the committee, was somewhat less optimistic than her colleague about the likelihood all of the bills become law. But she didn't rule it out.

"It's up to the Republican leadership," Murray said. "We're working hard to get our end of it done."

### House approves some spending

Congress approved three of the dozen annual spending bills in the package that ended the shutdown in November, providing funding for their own offices and operations; military construction projects; the Agriculture Department; and the Department of Veterans Affairs. The package provided stopgap spending for the remaining federal programs in the other nine bills.

The House voted 397-28 Thursday to approve the Energy-Water, Commerce-Justice-Science and Interior-Environment spending bills, sending them to the Senate, where Collins expects that chamber will take a procedural vote Monday.

Collins said the remaining six unresolved bills will likely move through Congress in two separate packages — one funding financial services, homeland security, the State Department and foreign operations as well as one funding defense, education, health care, housing and transportation programs.

If Congress finishes work on the full slate of bills, which will likely account for about \$1.8 trillion in spending, it would mark the end of the first annual appropriations process of Trump's second term in office.

### Minnesota ICE shooting jolts process

The biggest hurdle to completing work on all of the bills will be reaching consensus on funding for the Homeland Security Department, especially after an immigration agent shot and killed a woman in Minnesota.

Collins said a day after the Jan. 7 incident that members of both political parties in both chambers continue to work on the bill and praised subcommittee Chairwoman Katie Britt of Alabama for "doing a really good job."

Connecticut Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy, ranking member on the subcommittee, however, said there must be "constraints" on how immigration agents are operating.

Murphy said the sharp increase in hiring at Immigration and Customs Enforcement as well as Customs and Border Protection, spurred by billions in additional funding included in Republicans' big, beautiful bill, "likely resulted in people being out there on our streets who don't have the necessary training."

"Now I'm not saying that's part of the story yesterday, but we know that they are not applying the same standards and the same training that they have in the past," Murphy said. "There's a broader question about whether CBP is qualified to operate in the interior at all. From my understanding, CBP was part of that deployment yesterday that resulted in the murder of this young woman."

Murphy said he has a "handful of ideas" about how to address his and other Democrats' concerns about how the Trump administration has approached immigration enforcement, while acknowledging any final agreement will need Republican support to move through Congress.

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"I won't be asking for the moon. We're not going to fix all of these issues. And I'm not looking for comprehensive immigration reform at all," Murphy said. "But some targeted improvements in the way that ICE and CBP are operating, I think, are going to be necessary."

Murphy said he believes there is time to work out a bipartisan solution on that spending bill before the Jan. 30 shutdown deadline.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said during a press conference that the leaders on the Appropriations Committee and the subcommittee are having an "important and serious discussion" about the funding bill after the shooting.

Congress could pass a stopgap spending bill for programs within the Homeland Security Department, which includes the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to keep everything up and running for the rest of the fiscal year. The fall-back option can be used when consensus on a full-year bill isn't possible.

That type of funding bill, known as a continuing resolution, would keep DHS' funding mostly flat and avoid the need for it to shut down after the current funding law expires at the end of the month. It would leave in place the types of policies that DHS has been operating under all year.

## Negotiations continue

House Appropriations Committee ranking member Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., said Wednesday talks on the unsettled bills are "going well" and that she expects lawmakers to meet their Jan. 30 deadline.

House Appropriations Chairman Tom Cole, R-Okla., said his "goal" is to approve the leftover bills before the end of the month, avoiding the need for Congress to use another stopgap measure to keep the government up and running or face a shutdown.

While the groupings Collins outlined may seem random, Cole said appropriators spent a good bit of time contemplating how to package the remaining bills.

"There was a lot of thought given to how to work these things together and what would maximize support on each side," Cole said. "Obviously, those discussions were had not just amongst Republicans but our colleagues on the other side of the aisle and in the other chamber. So we think that's the best package to move forward."

Congress rarely approves the final versions of the government funding bills one-by-one and used to approve all 12 in one omnibus package, though Republican opposition to that has led to smaller "minibuses."

Cole said negotiations between Republicans and Democrats on final versions of the full-year spending bills are being undertaken by subcommittee leaders.

"If you can solve these problems at the subcommittee level, you've got the most knowledgeable people, the people that care the most on both sides of the aisle," Cole said. "The further up the food chain it goes — whether to my colleagues in the four corners (of the Appropriations Committee) or to leadership — the more political decisions come, and the less knowledgeable the people making the decision are about the topic."

Wisconsin Sen. Tammy Baldwin, the top Democrat on the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee, said that "great progress" had been made so far toward final agreement on that bill.

"I'm very hopeful and encouraged, given the work that's been done so far, that we can do that," Baldwin said.

Louisiana Republican Sen. John Kennedy cast doubt on his colleagues' ability to reach consensus on the last six bills, saying it will be "difficult" to work out final agreements in the time left.

"I wouldn't bet my house on it," Kennedy said. "And if I were betting your house, it would be just a maybe."

Kennedy said he isn't involved in the negotiations on those bills but expects negotiators are "fighting over something." Kennedy is chairman of the Energy-Water Appropriations Subcommittee, which already completed work on its bill.

*Ariana Figueroa contributed to this report.*

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

## US Senate advances war powers resolution rebuking Trump on Venezuela, but SD's senators vote no

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY AND JACOB FISCHLER

WASHINGTON — In a rare rebuke to President Donald Trump, Senate Republicans joined Democrats in advancing a war powers resolution to halt U.S. military action in Venezuela without congressional authorization.

Republican Sens. Todd Young of Indiana, Josh Hawley of Missouri, Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska split with their party to act as a check on the administration's use of military forces — as did Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, the measure's co-sponsor with Democratic Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia.

Trump in response slammed the vote on his own social media platform, writing that the Republicans who voted in favor "should never be elected to office again." The White House said in a statement he would likely veto the resolution if it reaches his desk.

The move marked a significant moment after Republicans on Capitol Hill have largely smoothed the path for Trump's agenda throughout the past year.

Sen. John Fetterman, D-Pa., also unexpectedly supported the measure, which advanced on a 52-47 vote. Sen. Steve Daines, a Montana Republican, did not vote.

The joint resolution directs the "removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities within or against Venezuela that have not been authorized by Congress."

Democratic Rep. Jim McGovern of Massachusetts and Republican Rep. Thomas Massie of Kentucky have introduced their own bipartisan war powers resolution in the House. A previous effort failed to advance in the House in December.

### Trump looks toward next vote

Trump in his social media post said the Republicans joined Democrats in trying to curb his authority as the chief executive.

"This Vote greatly hampers American Self Defense and National Security, impeding the President's Authority as Commander in Chief. In any event, and despite their 'stupidity,' the War Powers Act is Unconstitutional, totally violating Article II of the Constitution, as all Presidents, and their Departments of Justice, have determined before me. Nevertheless, a more important Senate Vote will be taking place next week on this very subject," he posted on Truth Social.

Thursday's vote advanced the legislation over a procedural hurdle to discharge the bill from committee. The bill still requires additional Senate debate and votes before it would head to the House.

The vote came days after U.S. special forces launched a surprise overnight attack on Venezuela's capital of Caracas on Saturday, capturing the country's president, Nicolás Maduro, and his wife, Cilia Flores. The couple appeared in federal court Monday on federal drug and conspiracy charges.

Venezuelan Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello claimed Wednesday that more than 100 were killed in the raid, according to numerous media outlets that posted a video of his statement. The Cuban government announced on Facebook Monday that 32 of its citizens were among the dead.

Seven U.S. troops were injured in the incursion, according to the Pentagon. Two are still recovering, while five have returned to duty, a Defense Department official said.

### GOP senators' explanations

Young issued a statement saying that while he supported the U.S. ouster of Maduro, any further military action must be approved by Congress.

"Today's Senate vote is about potential future military action, not completed successful operations. The President and members of his team have stated that the United States now 'runs' Venezuela. It is unclear if that means that an American military presence will be required to stabilize the country. I — along with

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what I believe to be the vast majority of Hoosiers — am not prepared to commit American troops to that mission. Although I remain open to persuasion, any future commitment of U.S. forces in Venezuela must be subject to debate and authorization in Congress,” Young said.

Collins similarly said she supported Maduro’s capture by U.S. special forces, but expressed concern about Trump’s vague comments regarding the U.S. role in the South American country going forward.

“The resolution I have supported today does not include any language related to the removal operation. Rather, it reaffirms Congress’s ability to authorize or limit any future sustained military activity in Venezuela, while preserving the President’s inherent Article II authority to defend the United States from an armed attack or imminent threat. I believe invoking the War Powers Act at this moment is necessary, given the President’s comments about the possibility of ‘boots on the ground’ and a sustained engagement ‘running’ Venezuela, with which I do not agree,” Collins said in a statement.

Hawley wrote on social media shortly after the vote: “With regard to Venezuela, my read of the Constitution is that if the President feels the need to put boots on the ground there in the future, Congress would need to vote on it. That’s why I voted yes on this morning’s Senate resolution.”

Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth delivered a classified update to members of Congress Wednesday on Capitol Hill on the ongoing U.S. military intervention in Venezuela. Democrats said they remained unsatisfied with the information shared during the meetings.

## White House defends actions

In a statement of administration policy released by the White House after Thursday’s Senate vote, officials defended the apprehension of Maduro as a “law enforcement operation” that was supported by military strikes.

The legislation “should be rejected, like the previously rejected Resolutions, as it once again fails to recognize the ongoing national security threats posed by the Maduro-led *Cártel de los Soles* and other violent drug-trafficking cartels. If S.J. Res. 98 were presented to the President, his advisors would recommend that he veto the joint resolution,” according to the statement.

Vice President JD Vance suggested during the White House press briefing Thursday that the measure would be unenforceable and that the vote would not curtail the administration’s actions.

“Every president, Democrat or Republican, believes the War Powers Act is fundamentally a fake and unconstitutional law,” he said. “It’s not going to change anything about how we conduct foreign policy over the next couple of weeks, the next couple of months and that will continue to be how we approach things ahead.”

A similar measure failed to gain enough Republican support in early November, in a 49-51 vote. Murkowski was the only other Republican to join Paul in approval.

Paul and Sen. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., first cosponsored the initial effort in October, which at the time failed, 48-51.

The U.S. launched a bombing campaign off the coast of Venezuela in September, striking small vessels in the Caribbean Sea that the administration alleges were operated by “narco-terrorists.” The death toll from the strikes reached over 100 in December.

Kaine forced Thursday’s procedural vote under the War Powers Resolution, a Vietnam War-era statute that gives Congress a check on the president’s use of the military abroad.

## Dems say vote will restrain Trump, despite veto

Kaine, Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer and California Democratic Sen. Adam Schiff told reporters following the vote that the result would allow debate over the matter to proceed in public, rather than only in the secure facilities where lawmakers have been briefed.

“We’re going to have a fulsome debate on this issue of the kind we haven’t been allowed to have for a very long time,” Kaine said.

The senators added that the more the public hears about the administration’s plans for Venezuela, in-

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cluding Trump's comments published Thursday in The New York Times that U.S. forces may occupy the country for "much longer" than a year, the less popular it would become.

"The more the American people hear about what's going on in Venezuela and the more they learn about it, the less they are going to like it, the more fiercely they're going to oppose it," Schumer said.

While Kaine acknowledged Trump would likely veto the measure, he said Trump also vetoed a similar bill Congress passed in 2020 to restrain military action in Iran but backed down from an aggressive posture against Iran.

"He vetoed it, we couldn't override it," he said. "But what we noticed is the president then backed off for the remainder of his first term because he heard the voices of the American public through the votes of Congress, saying, 'We do not want more war right now, Mr. President.' And I think that's one thing this president is very sensitive to."

The Democratic senators added that they believed the vote would restrain the administration from taking military action in Colombia, Greenland and Mexico, as administration officials have suggested.

## McConnell parts way with Kentucky colleague

Former Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, opposed the legislation and released a lengthy statement afterward. He said the president "was well within this authority in his decision to bring Nicolas Maduro to justice" and cited past military incursions without formal congressional approval by presidents from both parties.

McConnell continued later in the statement: "Successfully returning Venezuela to its role of stable, prosperous, democratic neighbor is a noble goal ... but an ambitious one. It doesn't come without risk. And it's worth making the clear case to the country."

Former Democratic Rep. Max Rose, now with VoteVets, issued a statement Thursday calling the vote "stunning."

"They stood up and said that Trump does not have the authority to use our military any which way he wants, and if he wants to go further, he'll have to come to Congress to allow Americans to have their say," said Rose, an Afghanistan war veteran and senior adviser to the political action committee that endorses veterans to run for office.

"It is sad that it has come to the point where a simple affirmation of the 'declare war' clause of the Constitution is news, but it is nonetheless a good day when Republicans join Democrats in telling Donald Trump that this is not 'his military' as much as he wants it to be his. It belongs to America," he continued.

*Ariana Figueroa contributed to this report.*

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

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

## Vigil for Renee Nicole Good becomes a call to action against ICE

**Killing reopens wounds from the Minneapolis police murder of George Floyd, which ignited widespread protests and riots in 2020**

**BY: MADISON MCVAN AND MAX NESTERAK**

Thousands of people on Wednesday evening filled Portland Avenue near 34th Street in south Minneapolis, where just hours earlier an ICE officer shot and killed 37-year-old Renee Nicole Good in her car.

Candles, flowers and whistles filled the patch of snow where Good's car crashed after she was shot.

Good's death has already become a rallying cry for the people working to disrupt President Donald Trump's mass deportation campaign, which entails heavily armed, masked federal officers roaming the streets of select cities, including Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Chicago, New Orleans and Memphis, Tennessee.

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"No Trump, no troops, Twin Cities ain't licking boots," the crowd chanted. Several speakers called for the prosecution of the agent who shot Good.

Carly Morford, of northeast Minneapolis, said she was moved to come to the vigil after seeing a video of the killing and was appalled the Trump administration labeled Good a "domestic terrorist."

"I'm not going to sit by while my fellow Minnesotans are shot and killed," Morford said. "And so even though I'm just one person and it's not going to do anything, a bunch of people coming out is."

The killing has also reopened wounds from the 2020 Minneapolis police murder of George Floyd less than a mile away, which ignited widespread protests and riots in the city at the time, and a national reckoning over racism and police violence.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said in a press conference Wednesday that Good "weaponized her vehicle" and "attempted to run a law enforcement officer over."

Video provided to the Reformer shows an officer positioning himself in front of the vehicle and firing three shots through the windshield as Good attempted to turn the car away from the officer.

"For them to sit there and lie, and try to paint a false narrative about Renee, is exactly what they have done for police abuse victims year after year after year," said attorney and civil rights activist Nekima Levy Armstrong.

Dani Replogle handed out fliers with information on joining an ICE watch group called Defend 612, which coordinates patrols of city neighborhoods and conducts trainings on observing enforcement actions.

She said she's been patrolling the Powderhorn Park area where she lives for about a month and a half. She saw a raid during which a person was handcuffed and people showed up to record and provide advice.

"That person didn't end up being abducted that day," Replogle said. "It was really moving."

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

*Madison McVan is a Reporter for America corps member who covers economic mobility for Minnesota Reformer. She previously covered agriculture for Investigate Midwest after graduating from the University of Missouri in 2020 with degrees in Journalism and Latin American studies.*

*Max Nesterak is the deputy editor of the Reformer and reports on labor and housing. Previously, he was an associate producer for Minnesota Public Radio after a stint at NPR. He also co-founded the Behavioral Scientist and was a Fulbright Scholar to Berlin, Germany.*

## State facilitates \$200 million in bonds for Monument Health amid Sanford's expansion into Rapid City

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR

A South Dakota board has approved the issuance of up to \$200 million in bonds for Rapid City-based Monument Health to support expansions and upgrades, as its rival Sanford Health builds a new hospital in Rapid City.

The South Dakota Health and Educational Facilities Authority voted in December to authorize the bond package for Monument.

The authority is governed by a seven-member board appointed by the governor. The state created the authority in 1972 to issue tax-exempt bonds that help nonprofit hospitals and public universities borrow money at lower cost. Investors buy the bonds and earn interest as the borrower pays back the debt. The aim is to give South Dakota residents greater access to education and health care.

The tax-exempt status means the investors don't have to pay taxes on the interest their bonds earn. That makes the bonds more attractive, in this instance helping Monument borrow the money at a lower interest rate.

Dustin Christopherson, assistant director of the authority, explained to South Dakota Searchlight in June

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that the board's bond approvals do not involve public tax dollars, and the state has no financial responsibility for repaying the debt. The authority does not lend the state's credit to borrowers. Instead, it acts as a conduit, allowing hospitals and universities to access the lower, tax-exempt interest rates.

Monument Health plans to use the bond proceeds for acquiring, constructing, renovating, expanding and equipping various health care facilities in the Black Hills region, according to a public notice of the bonding package.

That includes up to \$100 million for renovations, expansions and equipment at Monument Health's Rapid City Hospital, where Monument plans to renovate and expand obstetrics, pediatrics, cardiovascular and clinical spaces.

Up to \$75 million is listed for the Monument Health Spearfish Hospital and clinic, including the construction of additional space for perioperative services, expansion of the existing emergency services and inpatient services space, and expansion of existing medical offices to include additional physician clinic space.

Other bigger items include up to \$30 million for a new emergency hospital at 1911 E. Mall Drive in Rapid City, and up to \$30 million for the Orthopedic & Specialty Hospital in Rapid City, including the construction and renovation of inpatient and outpatient spaces within the existing hospital and clinic facilities.

The public notice for the bonding package lists \$275 million worth of projects, but the total amount of bonding cannot exceed \$200 million.

"That provides the borrower with flexibility to finance more or less of a particular project but still limits the total amount of the borrowing," Christopherson said in an emailed statement.

The authority approved a \$1 billion bonding package in June for numerous Sanford Health projects in South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Wyoming. In November, Sanford Health announced that it had received a \$300 million gift from its namesake philanthropist, Denny Sanford, to support the construction of a 168-bed medical center in Rapid City.

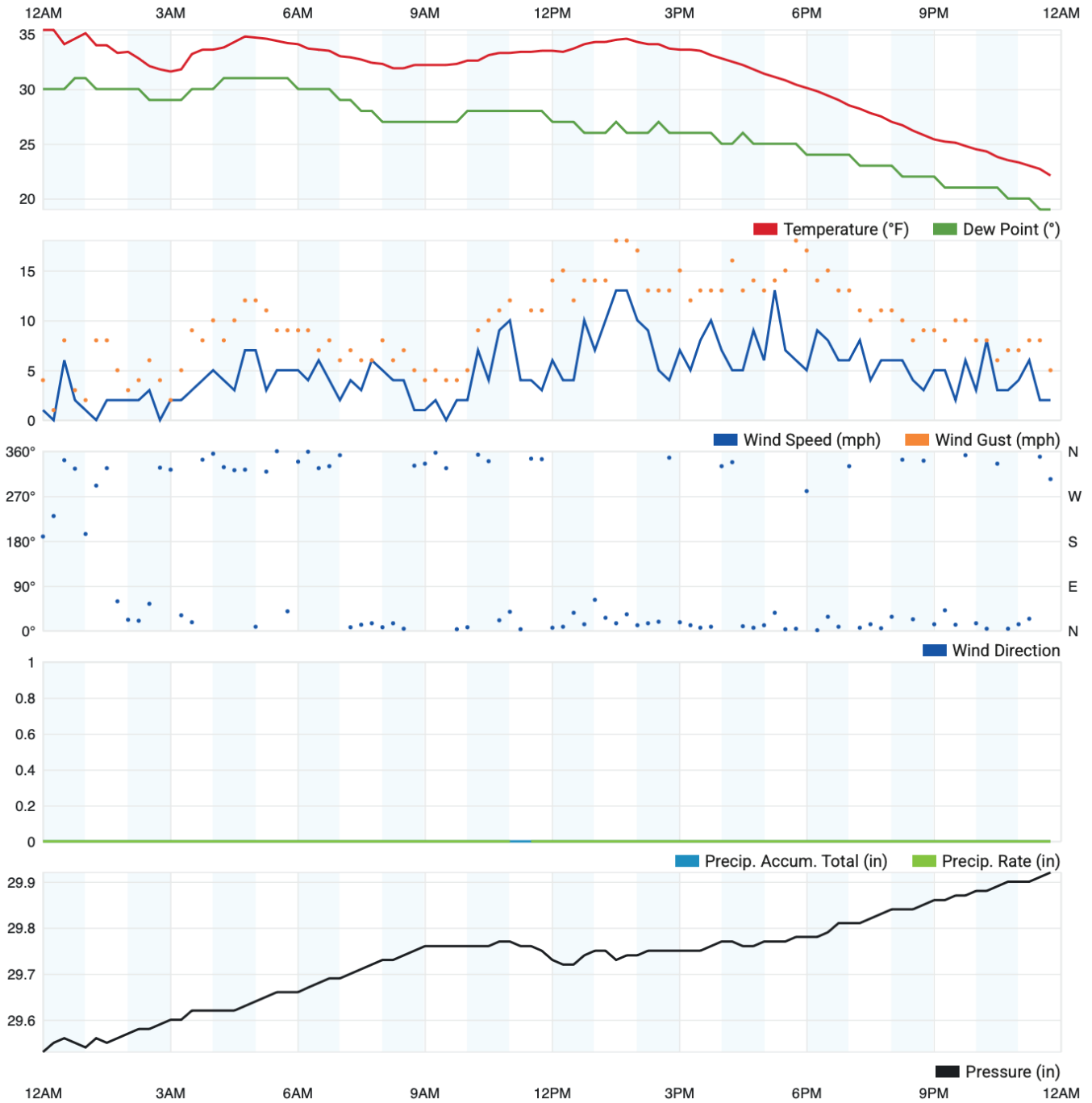
*Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist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

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

January 8, 2026



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Today

Tonight

Saturday

Saturday Night

Sunday



High: 35 °F

Low: 13 °F

High: 19 °F

Low: 6 °F

High: 35 °F

Chance  
Flurries

Partly Cloudy

Sunny

Mostly Clear

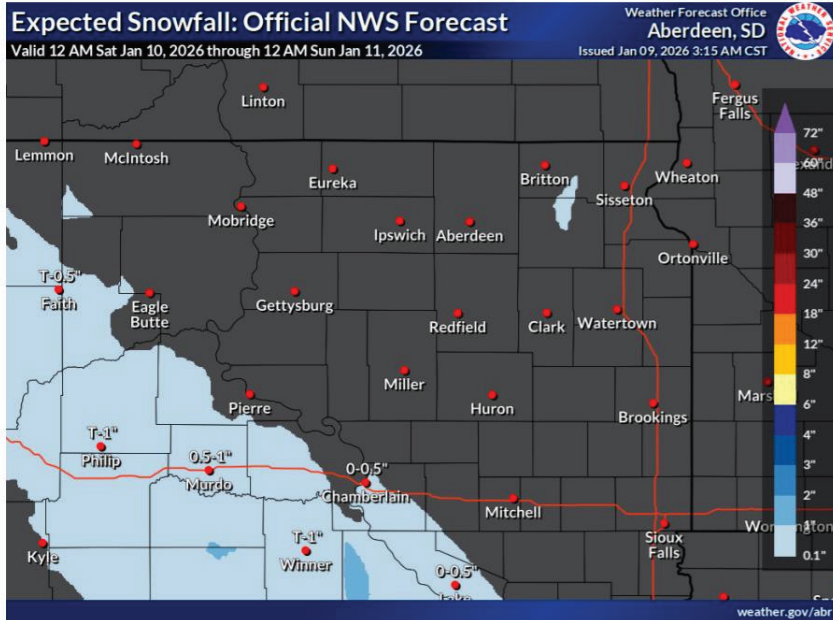
Mostly Sunny



## Snow Potential Saturday

January 9, 2026  
3:35 AM CST

Up to an inch of snowfall possible along I-90!



- Light snow is expected across portions of western and southern South Dakota from late tonight through Saturday evening.
- Northwest winds 10 to 20 mph with gusts up to 30 mph could cause mainly ground level drifting snow in spots.
- Additional chances for precipitation are forecast next week late Monday night through Tuesday night, and then again starting Thursday.
  - Each chance for precipitation will also have its own potential for strong northwest wind gusts in excess of 40 mph.



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

There is a 35-65% chance of snow from late tonight through early Saturday evening mainly across central and south central South Dakota. The probability of 1 or more inches of snow is currently 10-35%. In the 7-day forecast, Saturday will be the coldest with highs in the teens and 20s. However, above average temperatures are forecast to return, starting on Sunday.

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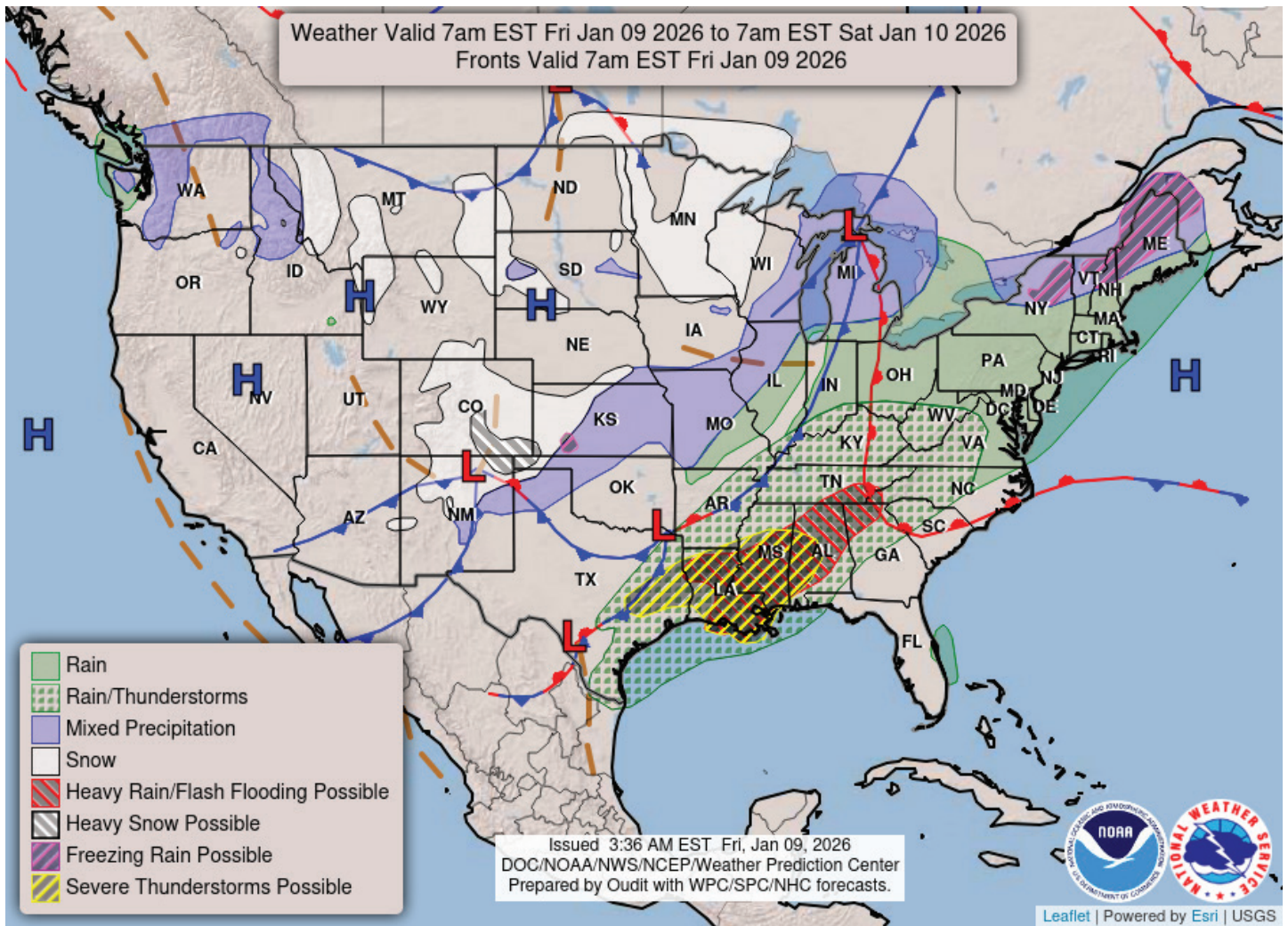
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 36 °F at 1:04 AM**  
**Low Temp: 23 °F at 11:27 PM**  
**Wind: 19 mph at 4:36 PM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

## Today's Info

Record High: 53 in 2012  
Record Low: -31 in 2010  
Average High: 23  
Average Low: 2  
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.19  
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00  
Average Precip to date: 0.19  
Precip Year to Date: 0.00  
Sunset Tonight: 5:07 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:10 am



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## Today in Weather History

January 9, 1982: Winds of 20 to 40 mph accompanied by 1 to 3 inches of snow created ground blizzard conditions and extreme wind chills from the 9th through mid-afternoon on the 12th. There were two deaths from the exposure attributed to the storm, including a 69-year old Scotland woman and a woman from Veblen in Marshall County. Both tried to walk after their vehicles stalled. Near zero visibilities and snowdrifts to 5 feet high forced closures of numerous highways. Also, minor power outages were reported.

January 9, 1997: A powerful Alberta Clipper and a deep Arctic High brought widespread and prolonged blizzard conditions, heavy drifting snow, and dangerous wind chills of 40 to 80 below to central and north-east South Dakota and west-central Minnesota. North winds were from 30 to 50 mph gusting to 60 mph. The clipper dropped from 2 to 7 inches of snowfall on top of an already solid 2 to the 5-foot snowpack. As with previous storms, most roads again became blocked by huge snowdrifts. As a result of the blockage and the blizzard conditions, both Interstates 29 and 90 closed along with all state highways leaving hundreds of people stranded to wait out the storm. This winter has been the worst for road closings. Many people became stuck in snowdrifts or went off the road because of low visibility and had to be rescued. One dramatic rescue near Webster, involving tens of rescue workers, occurred after a woman was stranded in her vehicle for nearly 40 hours. A couple with a one-year-old was rescued after spending a night in their car, and they were unharmed. A Wakpala woman died from carbon monoxide poisoning in her stalled pickup on Highway 1806 near Wakpala. Emergency personnel had a tough time responding to emergencies. Some emergencies took up to several hours to go short distances. A rural Leola man died when emergency workers could not get to him in time. In McLaughlin, seven people had to be taken by air ambulance because there was no way out.

All area schools were closed on the 9th and 10th, with most schools at this point in the winter season missing over 7 days. A state record was set when Faulkton School had closed for its 13th day. Mail was delayed, and area airports had flight delays or were closed. Many businesses were also closed and were suffering from economic losses due to this storm and previous storms because customers could not get to them. Many grocery stores ran low or out of bread, milk, and other food necessities. There were some power outages across the area, but they were not widespread. The power was out at Isabel, Timber Lake, and Firesteel for as much as 8 hours. The power outage in Isabel resulted in extensive water pipe breaks at the Isabel School. Willow Lake was without power for over 2 days. Some homes across the area were also without heat for several days in the bitter cold. The majority of ranchers were unable to access feed for cattle, sheep, and hogs. As a result of the extreme conditions and lack of food, over fifty thousand livestock died. Also, many livestock suffered frostbite and were significantly weakened. There was also a lot of wildlife and pheasants killed. As a result, the Emergency Feed Grain Donation Program was activated for the ranchers. One rancher said that he had been ranching in this area for 34 years and had never lost cattle before. Also, some dairy farmers had to dump their milk because trucks could not get them in time.

Some people were trapped in their homes for up to several days as snowdrifts buried their homes and blocked the roads, with some people having to crawl out their windows. In Wilmot, a 12-foot drift covered the community home, where residents had to turn the lights on during the day. As a result of snow removal budget depletions and other storm damages, President Clinton declared all of the counties a disaster area. Snowplows from Iowa, Nebraska, and plows and workforce from the South Dakota National Guard helped break through hundreds of roads. The snowdrifts in some places were packed so hard and were measured at 300 pounds per square inch. Some longtime residents said this had been the worst winter they had seen in their lifetimes. The total damage estimate for this January blizzard and the previous January winter storm is 50 million dollars. This includes the added snow removal costs, livestock losses, building damages, and other economic losses.

1880: A rapidly deepening low-pressure system produced powerful winds along the Pacific Northwest coast. While wind measurements were limited, there were widespread reports of wind damage.

2006: With cold air sweeping in from the Himalayas, New Delhi reports frost for the first time in 70 years with a low temperature of 0.2°C (32.3°F). The cold prompted officials to order all schools to close for three days.

## How to Walk With God

**Through the cross of Christ, God invited us into relationship with Him.**

Genesis 5:21-24: 21 Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah.

22 Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters.

23 So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years.

24 Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Enoch had such a close walk with the Lord that Scripture says, "God took him" (Gen. 5:24). This means that Enoch did not die but was taken directly into the presence of the Lord. As we seek to follow God with passion like Enoch's, here are some steps that will help us grow:

**Reconciliation.** This term essentially means "God moving toward us." Through the cross of Christ, God has already made His move in our direction. (See 2 Corinthians 5:18.) When we place our faith in the Savior, we immediately take part in that reconciliation.

**Trusting God.** Our heavenly Father wants us to know He is concerned with our spiritual growth and, through Jesus, has provided the way for us to walk closely with Him.

**Agreement.** To appreciate the relationship God wants to have with us, we must agree with what His Word teaches.

**Fellowship.** Just as our human relationships fall apart without regular contact, our intimacy with the Father is harder to experience if we do not spend time with Him.

Walking with God requires careful attention to the details of our Christian life. When we set our course for God, He will always be there to direct our path (Proverbs 16:9).

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

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.06.26

9 39 47 58 68 24

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$199,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 12 Mins 20 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.07.26

3 18 25 45 50 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$12,370,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 27 Mins 20 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.08.26

5 12 13 39 48 13

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 42 Mins 20 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.07.26

3 16 20 32 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$180,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 42 Mins 20 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.07.26

28 41 50 61 68 5

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 11 Mins 20 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.07.26

15 28 57 58 63 23

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$124,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 11 Mins 20 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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

### GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Bennett County 75, Hot Springs 18  
Brandon Valley 69, Brookings 27  
Britton-Hecla 29, Redfield 28  
Canistota 42, Garretson 32  
Chamberlain 54, Crow Creek Tribal School 34  
Chester 64, Beresford 49  
Clark-Willow Lake 38, Groton 34  
Colman-Egan 60, Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 26  
Corsica/Stickney 45, Platte-Geddes 19  
Crawford, Neb. 46, Edgemont 21  
DeSmet 70, Arlington 43  
Dell Rapids 61, Canton 53  
Dell Rapids St Mary's 73, Estelline-Hendricks 26  
Deubrook 50, Iroquois-Lake Preston 25  
Ethan 58, Avon 41  
Florence-Henry 49, Wilmot 24  
Freeman 56, Emery 51  
Hamlin 83, Tiospa Zina 11  
Hanson 37, Viborg-Hurley 24  
Harding County 80, McIntosh High School 17  
Harrisburg 55, T F Riggs High School 28  
Herreid-Selby 43, Faulkton 35  
Lemmon High School 55, New England, N.D. 28  
Lennox 43, Huron 28  
Lyman 66, Gregory 24  
Mahpíya Lúta Red Cloud 75, Custer 19  
McLaughlin 47, Stanley County 46  
Mobridge-Pollock 49, Miller 43  
North Central 50, Wakpala 16  
Northwestern 48, Hitchcock-Tulare 43  
Parkston 55, Parker/Marion 20  
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket 57, Howard 24  
Spearfish 53, Hill City 35  
Tri-Valley 49, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 31  
Vermillion 60, Baltic 29  
Wagner 68, Bon Homme 25  
Warner 41, Ipswich 29  
Waverly-South Shore 45, Aberdeen Christian 36  
Webster 52, Deuel 29  
Wessington Springs 53, Sunshine Bible Academy 18  
Winner 48, Todd County 31  
Wolsey-Wessington 52, James Valley Christian School 17

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

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## BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Beresford 60, Chester 6  
Brandon Valley 62, Brookings 36  
Britton-Hecla 62, Redfield 36  
Burke 48, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 47  
Clark-Willow Lake 56, Groton 39  
Crawford, Neb. 50, Edgemont 23  
Dell Rapids 74, Canton 50  
Deubrook 70, Iroquois-Lake Preston 65  
Estelline-Hendricks 56, Dell Rapids St Mary's 54, OT  
Ethan 58, Avon 39  
Florence-Henry 54, Wilmot 37  
Freeman 59, Emery 57  
Garretson 69, Canistota 37  
Hamlin 80, Tiospa Zina 22  
Jones County 54, Philip 47  
Leola-Frederick High School 60, Aberdeen Roncalli 49  
Lyman 63, Gregory 50  
Milbank 45, Great Plains Lutheran 32  
Mobridge-Pollock 74, Miller 48  
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 61, Tri-Valley 43  
North Central 50, Wakpala 37  
Parker/Marion 65, Parkston 60  
Pine Ridge 90, St. Francis Indian 46  
Platte-Geddes 50, Corsica/Stickney 43  
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket 54, Howard 44  
Sioux Falls Christian 66, Unity Christian, Iowa 56  
Spearfish 72, Hill City 54  
Stanley County 63, McLaughlin 27  
Sully Buttes 79, Highmore-Harrold 37  
Timber Lake 58, Faith 42  
Tripp-Delmont-Armour 60, Mitchell Christian 43  
Vermillion 71, Baltic 42  
Viborg-Hurley 62, Hanson 38  
Wagner 62, Bon Homme 54  
Warner 58, Ipswich 48, OT  
Webster 52, Deuel 44  
Wessington Springs 64, Sunshine Bible Academy 26  
Wolsey-Wessington 54, James Valley Christian School 41

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

## Wilkinson, Saylor and Jackson combine for 54 as South Dakota State defeats Denver 87-79

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Damon Wilkinson, Joe Saylor and Jaden Jackson combined for 54 points to lead South Dakota State to defeat Denver 87-79 on Thursday.

Wilkinson had 19 points on 8-of-11 shooting to go with nine rebounds for the Jackrabbits (9-9, 2-1 Summit League). Joe Saylor scored 18 points, shooting 7 for 17 (1 for 4 from 3-point range) and 3 of 3 from the free-throw line. Jaden Jackson shot 4 for 11 (1 for 3 from 3-point range) and 8 of 8 from the free-throw

line to finish with 17 points.

The Pioneers (8-10, 1-2) were led by Carson Johnson, who recorded 27 points on 10-of-22 shooting along with two steals. Denver also got 20 points and eight rebounds from Jeremiah Burke. Logan Kinsey had 12 points and six rebounds. Zane Nelson scored 10.

The Pioneers led 35-33 at the end of the first half, using a 9-2 run to overcome a 6-0 run from the Jackrabbits to start the game. They led by as much as seven in the second half before a 13-2 run from the Jackrabbits.

## North Carolina may lose \$50M in federal funds over flawed immigrant trucker licenses

By JOSH FUNK AP Transportation Writer

North Carolina could lose nearly \$50 million in federal funding if the state doesn't revoke commercial driver's licenses from immigrants who aren't qualified to hold them after an audit uncovered problems, the U.S. Transportation Department said Thursday.

North Carolina is the ninth state to be targeted since Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy launched the nationwide review last year to make sure only qualified drivers hold licenses to drive semitrailer trucks or buses.

The issue started to generate headlines after a truck driver who was not authorized to be in the U.S. made an illegal U-turn and caused a crash in Florida that killed three people in August.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration reviewed 50 commercial driver's licenses that North Carolina had issued to immigrants in its audit and found problems with more than half of them. That's what prompted the threat to withhold funding if the state doesn't clean up its licensing program. Records show that 924 of these kind of licenses remain unexpired in North Carolina.

"North Carolina's failure to follow the rules isn't just shameful — it's dangerous," Duffy said.

North Carolina DMV spokesman Marty Homan said the state is working to address the concerns and remains "committed to upholding safety and integrity in our licensing processes."

Duffy has pulled nearly \$200 million from California over concerns about that state's licensing practices and its decision to delay the revocations of more than 17,000 invalid licenses. Duffy also said that California isn't enforcing English proficiency requirements for truckers.

He also previously threatened to withhold millions of dollars in federal funding from Pennsylvania, Minnesota, New York, Texas, South Dakota, Colorado, and Washington after audits found significant problems under the existing rules, including commercial licenses being valid long after an immigrant truck driver's work permit expired.

Separately, Tennessee announced Thursday that it launched its own review of commercial driver's licenses and will be notifying about 8,800 of the state's 150,000 commercial driver's license holders that they need to provide proof of citizenship or a valid visa if they want to keep their licenses.

Russell Shoup, who is assistant commissioner of Tennessee's Driver Services Division, said the state is working to make sure all the licenses the state has issued meet current state and federal standards.

The federal crackdown on commercial driver's licensing has been praised by trucking groups. The industry said that too often unqualified drivers who shouldn't have licenses or can't speak English have been allowed to get behind the wheel of an 80,000-pound (about 39,916 kilograms) truck. They have also applauded the Transportation Department's moves to go after questionable commercial driver's license schools.

But immigrant groups say that some drivers are now being unfairly targeted. The spotlight has been on Sikh truckers because the driver in the Florida crash and the driver in another fatal crash in California in October are both Sikhs. So the Sikh Coalition, a national group defending the civil rights of Sikhs, and the San Francisco-based Asian Law Caucus filed a class-action lawsuit against California over that state's plan to revoke thousands of licenses.

Immigrants account for about 20% of all truck drivers, but these non-domiciled licenses immigrants can receive only represent about 5% of all commercial driver's licenses or about 200,000 drivers. The Trans-

portation Department also proposed new restrictions that would severely limit which noncitizens could get a license, but a court put the new rules on hold.

## Iran's supreme leader says protesters are 'ruining their own streets' to please Trump

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's supreme leader signaled Friday that security forces would crack down on protesters after they screamed from windows and marched through the streets overnight, directly challenging U.S. President Donald Trump's pledge to support those peacefully demonstrating.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dismissed Trump as having hands "stained with the blood of Iranians" as supporters shouted "Death to America!" in footage aired by Iranian state television. State media later repeatedly referred to demonstrators as "terrorists," setting the stage for a violent crackdown like those that have followed other nationwide protests in recent years.

Protesters are "ruining their own streets ... in order to please the president of the United States," Khamenei said to a crowd at his compound in Tehran. "Because he said that he would come to their aid. He should pay attention to the state of his own country instead."

There was no immediate response from Washington, though Trump has repeated his pledge to strike Iran if protesters are killed, a threat that's taken on greater significance after the U.S. military raid that seized Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro.

Despite Iran's theocracy cutting off the nation from the internet and international telephone calls, short online videos shared by activists purported to show protesters chanting against Iran's government around bonfires as debris littered the streets in the capital, Tehran, and other areas into Friday morning. Iranian state media alleged "terrorist agents" of the U.S. and Israel set fires and sparked violence. It also said there were "casualties," without elaborating.

The full scope of the demonstrations couldn't be immediately determined due to the communications blackout, though it represented yet another escalation in protests that began over Iran's ailing economy and that has morphed into the most significant challenge to the government in several years. The protests have intensified steadily since beginning Dec. 28.

The protests also represented the first test of whether the Iranian public could be swayed by Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, whose fatally ill father fled Iran just before the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution. Pahlavi, who called for the protests Thursday night, similarly has called for demonstrations at 8 p.m. Friday.

Demonstrations have included cries in support of the shah, something that could bring a death sentence in the past but now underlines the anger fueling the protests that began over Iran's ailing economy.

So far, violence around the demonstrations has killed at least 42 people while more than 2,270 others have been detained, said the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency.

"What turned the tide of the protests was former Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi's calls for Iranians to take to the streets at 8 p.m. on Thursday and Friday," said Holly Dagues, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "Per social media posts, it became clear that Iranians had delivered and were taking the call seriously to protest in order to oust the Islamic Republic."

"This is exactly why the internet was shut down: to prevent the world from seeing the protests. Unfortunately, it also likely provided cover for security forces to kill protesters."

Thursday night protests preceded internet shutdown

When the clock struck 8 p.m. Thursday, neighborhoods across Tehran erupted in chanting, witnesses said. The chants included "Death to the dictator!" and "Death to the Islamic Republic!" Others praised the shah, shouting: "This is the last battle! Pahlavi will return!" Thousands could be seen on the streets before all communication to Iran cut out.

"Iranians demanded their freedom tonight. In response, the regime in Iran has cut all lines of communication," Pahlavi said. "It has shut down the internet. It has cut landlines. It may even attempt to jam satellite signals."

He went on to call for European leaders to join U.S. President Donald Trump in promising to “hold the regime to account.”

“I call on them to use all technical, financial, and diplomatic resources available to restore communication to the Iranian people so that their voice and their will can be heard and seen,” he added. “Do not let the voices of my courageous compatriots be silenced.”

Pahlavi had said he would offer further plans depending on the response to his call. His support of and from Israel has drawn criticism in the past — particularly after the 12-day war Israel waged on Iran in June. Demonstrators have shouted in support of the shah in some demonstrations, but it isn’t clear whether that’s support for Pahlavi himself or a desire to return to a time before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The internet cut also appears to have taken Iran’s state-run and semiofficial news agencies offline as well. The state TV acknowledgment at 8 a.m. Friday represented the first official word about the demonstrations.

State TV claimed the protests saw violence that caused casualties but did not elaborate. It also said the protests saw “people’s private cars, motorcycles, public places such as the metro, fire trucks and buses set on fire.”

Trump renews threat over protester deaths

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

It remains unclear why Iranian officials have yet to crack down harder on the demonstrators. Trump warned last week that if Tehran “violently kills peaceful protesters,” America “will come to their rescue.”

In an interview with talk show host Hugh Hewitt aired Thursday, Trump reiterated his pledge.

Iran has “been told very strongly, even more strongly than I’m speaking to you right now, that if they do that, they’re going to have to pay hell,” Trump said.

Trump demurred when asked if he’d meet with Pahlavi.

“I’m not sure that it would be appropriate at this point to do that as president,” Trump said. “I think that we should let everybody go out there, and we see who emerges.”

Speaking in an interview with Sean Hannity aired Thursday night on Fox News, Trump went as far as to suggest 86-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei may be looking to leave Iran.

“He’s looking to go someplace,” Trump said. “It’s getting very bad.”

## Israeli strikes kill at least 13 across Gaza, as Trump is expected to announce Board of Peace

By WAFSA SHURAFU Associated Press

DEIR AL BALAH (AP) — Israeli strikes across Gaza have killed at least 13 people, according to health officials, as U.S. President Donald Trump was expected to announce his Board of Peace to oversee the fragile ceasefire.

Health officials and family members said at least one child was among the dead in northern Gaza following several strikes there as well as east of Gaza City. All 13 people were killed on Thursday.

Israel’s army said Friday that it struck Hamas infrastructure and fighters in southern and northern Gaza in response to a failed projectile launched by militants from the Gaza City area.

The phased ceasefire between Israel and Hamas remains in its initial stage as efforts continue to recover the remains of the final Israeli hostage in Gaza.

Officials say that Trump is expected to announce next week his appointments to his Board of Peace, which he has said he will head, marking an important step forward for his Middle East peace plan. The process has moved slowly since a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas took effect nearly three months ago.

The U.S. official and another official spoke on condition of anonymity pending a formal announcement.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that Bulgarian diplomat Nickolay Mladenov would be the board’s “designated” director-general. Mladenov is a former Bulgarian defense and foreign

minister who served as the U.N. envoy to Iraq before being appointed as the U.N. Mideast peace envoy from 2015-2020. During that time, he had good working relations with Israel and frequently worked to ease Israel-Hamas tensions.

Under Trump's plan, the board would supervise a new technocratic Palestinian government, the disarmament of Hamas, the deployment of an international security force, additional pullbacks of Israeli troops and reconstruction. The U.S. has reported little progress on any of these fronts so far.

On Thursday, Egyptian and European Union leaders met in Cairo and urged the deployment of the international stabilization force. EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said that Hamas still refused to disarm and called the situation "extremely severe."

Israel and Hamas have accused each other of violating the ceasefire, which took effect on Oct. 10. Continued Israeli strikes in Gaza have killed more than 400 Palestinians, according to local health officials.

The Israeli military says any actions since the ceasefire began have been in response to violations of the agreement.

Relatives and health officials say an 11-year-old girl who dreamed of becoming a doctor, a teenage girl and two boys in a tent camp were among those killed on Thursday. At least a dozen others were injured, hospital officials said.

## Russia says it used new Oreshnik ballistic missile in major attack on Ukraine

By SAMYA KULLABand ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia bombarded Ukraine with hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles in a large-scale overnight attack, officials said Friday, killing at least four people. For only the second time, it used a new ballistic missile that it says flies at 10 times the speed of sound and is unstoppable.

The intense barrage and the launching of the nuclear-capable Oreshnik missile came days after Ukraine and its allies reported major progress toward agreeing on how to defend the country from further Moscow aggression if a peace deal is struck to end Russia's almost 4-year-old invasion.

Months of U.S.-led peace efforts have failed to stop the fighting, however. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says he has made significant progress on the terms of a possible peace settlement in talks with Washington envoys. But Moscow has given no public signal it is willing to budge from its demands.

The attack comes amid a new chill in relations between Moscow and Washington after Russia condemned the U.S. seizure of an oil tanker in the North Atlantic. It also comes as U.S. President Donald Trump has signaled he is on board with a hard-hitting sanctions package meant to economically cripple Moscow.

Ukrainian officials said four people were killed and at least 22 wounded in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, during the overnight attack as apartment buildings were struck.

Those killed included an emergency medical aid worker, according to Kyiv City Military Administration head Tymur Tkachenko. Five rescue workers sustained injuries while responding to the ongoing attacks, Ukraine's security service said.

The attack damaged the Qatari Embassy in Kyiv, Zelenskyy said Friday. He noted that Qatar has played a key role in mediating the exchange of prisoners of war.

He called for a "clear response" from the international community, particularly from the United States, which he said Russia takes seriously.

Moscow says attack was retaliation

Russia's Defense Ministry said the attack was a retaliation to what Moscow said was a Ukrainian drone strike on Russian President Vladimir Putin's residence last month. Both Ukraine and U.S. President Donald Trump have rejected the Russian claim of the attack on Putin's residence.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has previously said that the Oreshnik streaks to its target at Mach 10, "like a meteorite," and has claimed it is immune to any missile defense system. Several of them used in a conventional strike could be as devastating as a nuclear attack, according to Putin, who has warned the West that Russia could use the Oreshnik next against allies of Kyiv that allow it to strike inside Russia with

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their longer-range missiles.

Ukrainian intelligence says the missile has six warheads, each carrying six submunitions.

Russia didn't say where Oreshnik hit, but Russian media and military bloggers said it targeted a huge underground natural gas storage facility in Ukraine's western Lviv region. Foreign military aid for Ukraine is believed to pass through that region, which borders Poland.

Russia first used the Oreshnik missile on the Ukrainian city of Dnipro in November 2024. Analysts say it affords Russia a new element of psychological warfare, unnerving Ukrainians and scaring Western countries that supply weaponry to Ukraine.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said Ukraine would be initiating international action in response to the use of the missile, including an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council and a meeting of the Ukraine-NATO Council.

"Such a strike close to EU and NATO border is a grave threat to the security on the European continent and a test for the transatlantic community. We demand strong responses to Russia's reckless actions," he said in a post on X.

Lviv Mayor Andrii Sadovyi said that Russia struck critical infrastructure with a ballistic missile, but didn't give details. He said the missile traveled at a speed of 13,000 kilometers (more than 8,000 miles) per hour — which would be around Mach 10 — and that the specific type of rocket was being investigated.

Attacks hit Kyiv apartment blocks

In Kyiv, several districts were hit in the attack, said Kyiv City Military Administration head Tymur Tkachenko. In the Desnyanskyi district a drone crashed onto the roof of a multi-story building. At another address in the same district the first two floors of a residential building were damaged.

In Dnipro district, parts of a drone damaged a multistory building and a fire broke out.

Dmytro Karpenko's windows were shattered in the attack on Kyiv. When he saw that his neighbor's house was on fire, he rushed out to help him.

"What Russia is doing, of course, shows that they do not want peace. But people really want peace, people are suffering, people are dying," the 45-year old said.

Running water and electricity were disrupted in parts of the capital as a result of the attack, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

The attack took place just hours after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy alerted the nation about Russia's intentions for a large-scale offensive. He said that Russia aimed to take advantage of the frigid weather in the capital that has made roads and streets perilously icy.

## More diplomatic and economic tensions surface between China, Japan as a bumpy week ends

By TED ANTHONY and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — A week in which longtime tensions between neighbors China and Japan ratcheted up economically and politically drew to a close with no sign of improvements Friday as the Chinese ambassador in Tokyo rebuffed his host nation and the Japanese reported delayed shipments to suppliers in China because of the spat.

The two developments capped a week where China made clear its displeasure with Japan by instituting new export controls, condemning what it called Tokyo's renewed militarism and cozying up to another regional neighbor, South Korea, during its leader's visit to Beijing.

On Friday, the Chinese Communist Party's flagship newspaper, People's Daily, kept the jabs coming.

"New militarism will lead Japan back into the abyss," it said in an editorial. "History serves as a stark warning, yet the Japanese right wing is repeating its old tricks."

It was the latest in several days of pointed Chinese criticism toward Japan after its prime minister, Sanae Takaichi, suggested in November that she wouldn't rule out intervening if China used military force against the island of Taiwan. China views self-governed Taiwan as its sovereign territory and has said it would take it by force if needed. It staged large-scale military exercises nearby late last month.

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China keeps its export controls

On Thursday night, the Chinese embassy in Japan said it had rejected a petition from Japan's Foreign Ministry to retract the new export controls on "dual-use items" that the Japanese military might be able to use in weaponry. The ambassador, Wu Jianguo, insisted that China's move was "entirely legitimate, reasonable and lawful" — and vital to national security.

Also Friday, Japanese officials said they are closely watching if Japanese exports of agricultural, fisheries and other goods are appropriately handled by China without delays. The Japanese news agency Kyodo reported that outgoing shipments of sake and processed food from Japan to China were being held up because of the diplomatic tensions, widening the ripples of the dispute.

Officials at the government-affiliated Japan External Trade Organization told The Associated Press that the shipments had been delayed in customs on the China side starting in late November. Kyodo, quoting trade industry sources, said they believed sake may have been targeted as "a symbol of Japan."

Japan's chief cabinet secretary, Minoru Kihara, said he was aware of reports that some of the Japanese exports to China have been held up. He wouldn't comment on individual commercial transactions.

"It is important that agricultural, fisheries and other exports from Japan are smoothly carried out," Kihara said. "We will closely watch the situation and take appropriate measures." He didn't say what those might be.

Some subtlety in the jobs

Japan and China have a fraught history haunted by the Japanese colonization of Taiwan in 1895. The nations have fought two wars, and the imperial government in Tokyo brutally occupied parts of China in the first half of the 20th century. The countries maintain diplomatic relations and work closely together on many fronts but occasionally use government apparatus to condemn each other when disputes arise.

China's choice of wording in the People's Daily editorial and other rhetoric was noteworthy. It avoided casting a broad brush on the Japanese people and specifically targeted the country's right wing, which Takaichi belongs to. A report Thursday about Japan's nuclear ambitions repeatedly mentioned the right wing, and the People's Daily editorial beseeched the "peace-loving Japanese people" to be "highly vigilant" toward their government.

"Japan's future lies not in the dangerous fantasies painted by the right wing, but in the thorough reckoning with its history of aggression," People's Daily said.

Rare earths as a pressure point

Kihara, the government spokesman, said Chinese export controls of rare earths already in place have caused "serious impact on global supply chains." "We believe that international trade of rare earths should be carried out smoothly," Kihara said.

Industry and Trade Minister Ryosei Akazawa did not confirm whether China's dual-use goods ban included new action on rare earths. Akazawa said the impact on Japanese industries is already significant because about 70% of rare earths, used in a wide range of products such as electronic parts and autos, are imported from China.

"Rare earths are extremely important minerals, and the export controls have already affected our country tremendously," Akazawa said. He wouldn't comment on whether Japan would consider retaliating.

Lauding South Korea

China also pointedly expressed positive feelings about South Korea during the visit this week of its president, Lee Jae Myung, who met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. After the signing of millions in new export contracts, Lee heralded "a new chapter in the development of Korea-China relations."

As he visited, Chinese state media — which recently warned that travel to Japan by Chinese citizens might be dangerous — provided splashy coverage and said outgoing Chinese traveler to South Korea during New Year's had surpassed those to Japan.

Relations between Beijing and Tokyo showed at least one tiny positive sign Friday. At a Foreign Ministry briefing in Beijing, spokesperson Mao Ning was informed that a one-time Japanese ambassador to China had died. She expressed the country's condolences.

## Anger and outrage spills onto Minneapolis streets after ICE officer's fatal shooting of Renee Good

By REBECCA SANTANA, TIM SULLIVAN and GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — As anger and outrage spilled out onto Minneapolis' streets Thursday over the fatal shooting of a woman the day before by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer, a new shooting by federal officers in Oregon left two people wounded and elicited more scrutiny of enforcement operations across the U.S.

Hundreds of people protesting the shooting of Renee Good marched in freezing rain at night down one of Minneapolis' major thoroughfares, chanting "ICE out now" and holding signs saying, "killer ice off our streets." Protesters earlier vented their outrage outside a federal facility that is serving as a hub for the administration's latest immigration crackdown on a major city.

The shooting in Portland, Oregon, took place outside a hospital in the afternoon. A man and woman were shot inside a vehicle, and their conditions were not immediately known. The FBI and the Oregon Department of Justice were investigating. Mayor Keith Wilson and the city council called on ICE to end all operations in the city until a full investigation is completed.

Just as it did following the Minneapolis shooting, the Department of Homeland Security defended the actions of the officers in Portland, saying the incident occurred after a Venezuelan man with alleged gang ties and who was involved in a recent shooting tried to "weaponize" his vehicle to hit the officers. It was not yet clear if witness video corroborates that account.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, President Donald Trump and others in his administration have repeatedly characterized the Minneapolis shooting as an act of self-defense and cast Good as a villain, suggesting she used her vehicle as a weapon to attack the officer who shot her.

Vice President JD Vance said the shooting was justified and Good, a 37-year-old mother of three, was a "victim of left-wing ideology."

"I can believe that her death is a tragedy while also recognizing that it is a tragedy of her own making," Vance said, noting that the officer who killed her was injured while making an arrest last June.

But state and local officials and protesters rejected that characterization, with Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey saying video recordings show the self-defense argument is "garbage."

An immigration crackdown quickly turns deadly

The shooting happened on the second day of the Trump administration's immigration crackdown on the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, which Homeland Security said is the biggest immigration enforcement operation ever. More than 2,000 officers are taking part, and Noem said they have made more than 1,500 arrests.

It provoked an immediate response in the city where police killed George Floyd in 2020, with hundreds of people turning up to the scene to vent their outrage at the ICE officers and the school district canceling classes for the rest of the week as a precaution.

Good's death — at least the fifth tied to immigration sweeps since Trump took office — has resonated far beyond Minneapolis, as protests took place or were expected this week in many large U.S. cities.

"We should be horrified," protester Shanta Hejmadi said. "We should be saddened that our government is waging war on our citizens."

Protesters blocked the street where Good was shot with makeshift barricades constructed out of garbage cans, Christmas trees and canopies. People gave out coffee and water, while fires burned in metal drums to keep visitors warm.

Who will investigate?

The Minnesota agency that investigates officer-involved shootings said Thursday that it was informed that the FBI and U.S. Justice Department would not work with the it, effectively ending any role for the state to determine if crimes were committed. Noem said the state has no jurisdiction.

"Without complete access to the evidence, witnesses and information collected, we cannot meet the

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investigative standards that Minnesota law and the public demands," said Drew Evans, head of the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

Gov. Tim Walz demanded that the state be allowed to take part, repeatedly emphasizing that it would be "very difficult for Minnesotans" to accept that an investigation excluding the state could be fair.

Noem, he said, was "judge, jury and basically executioner" during her public comments.

Frey, the mayor, told The Associated Press: "We want to make sure that there is a check on this administration to ensure that this investigation is done for justice, not for the sake of a cover-up."

Deadly encounter seen from multiple angles

Several bystanders captured video of Good's killing, which happened in a neighborhood south of downtown.

The recordings show an officer approaching an SUV stopped across the middle of the road, demanding the driver open the door and grabbing the handle. The Honda Pilot begins to pull forward, and a different ICE officer standing in front of it pulls his weapon and immediately fires at least two shots at close range, jumping back as the vehicle moves toward him.

It is not clear from the videos if the vehicle makes contact with the officer, and there is no indication of whether the woman had interactions with agents earlier. After the shooting the SUV speeds into two cars parked on a curb before crashing to a stop.

Officer identified in records

The federal agent who fatally shot Good is an Iraq War veteran who has served for almost two decades in the Border Patrol and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, according to records obtained by The Associated Press.

Noem has not publicly named him, but a Homeland Security spokesperson said her description of his injuries last summer refers to an incident in Bloomington, Minnesota, in which court documents identify him as Jonathan Ross.

Ross got his arm stuck in the window of a vehicle of a driver who was fleeing arrest on an immigration violation. He was dragged roughly 100 yards (90 meters) before he was knocked free, records show.

He fired his Taser, but the prongs did not incapacitate the driver, according to prosecutors. Ross was transported to a hospital.

A jury found the driver guilty of assaulting a federal officer with a dangerous weapon.

Attempts to reach Ross, 43, at phone numbers and email addresses associated with him were not successful.

DHS assistant secretary Tricia McLaughlin also did not confirm his identity but said the officer involved in the shooting was selected for ICE's special response team, which includes a 30-hour tryout and additional training.

## Luigi Mangione heads to court as he fights to block death penalty, murder charge and key evidence

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Luigi Mangione is due in federal court Friday for a pivotal hearing in his fight to bar the government from seeking the death penalty against him in the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson.

Mangione's lawyers contend that authorities prejudiced his case by turning his December 2024 arrest into a "Marvel movie" spectacle and by publicly declaring their desire to see him executed even before he was formally indicted.

If that doesn't work, they argue, the charge that has enabled the government to seek the death penalty — murder by firearm — should be thrown out because it is legally flawed.

Federal prosecutors say Mangione's lawyers are wrong, countering that the murder charge is legally sufficient and that "pretrial publicity, even when intense" is hardly a constitutional crisis. Any concerns about public perceptions can be alleviated by carefully questioning prospective jurors about their knowledge of

the case, prosecutors wrote in a court filing.

Mangione has pleaded not guilty to federal and state murder charges, which carry the possibility of life in prison.

Friday's hearing, Mangione's first trip to Manhattan federal court since his April 25 arraignment, is also expected to cover the defense's bid to exclude certain evidence. U.S. District Judge Margaret Garnett has said she also plans to set a trial date.

A cause célèbre for people upset with the health insurance industry, Mangione's court appearances have drawn dozens of supporters, some of whom wear green clothing or carry signs expressing solidarity with him.

Mangione's lawyers have asked the judge to bar the government from using certain items found in a backpack during his arrest, arguing that the search was illegal because police had not yet obtained a warrant.

Those items include a gun that police said matched the one used to kill Thompson and a notebook in which he purportedly described his intent to "wack" a health insurance executive.

One big question is whether Garnett will need to hold a separate hearing on the evidence issue like one last month that took three weeks in Mangione's parallel state murder case.

Mangione's lawyers want one. Prosecutors don't. They contend police were justified in searching the backpack to make sure there were no dangerous items and that the gun, notebook and other evidence would have eventually been found anyway.

Thompson, 50, was killed Dec. 4, 2024, as he walked to a Manhattan hotel for UnitedHealth Group's annual investor conference. Surveillance video showed a masked gunman shooting him from behind. Police say "delay," "deny" and "depose" were written on the ammunition, mimicking a phrase used to describe how insurers avoid paying claims.

Mangione, 27, the Ivy League-educated scion of a wealthy Maryland family, was arrested five days later at a McDonald's in Altoona, Pennsylvania, about 230 miles (about 370 kilometers) west of Manhattan.

He's already had success paring down his state case. In September, a judge threw out state terrorism charges against him.

U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi announced last year that she was directing federal prosecutors to seek the death penalty, declaring that capital punishment was warranted for a "premeditated, cold-blooded assassination that shocked America."

Mangione's lawyers argue that Bondi's announcement, which she followed with Instagram posts and a TV appearance, showed the decision was "based on politics, not merit." Her remarks tainted the grand jury process that resulted in his indictment a few weeks later, they said.

Bondi's statements and other official actions, including a choreographed perp walk in which armed officers led Mangione from a Manhattan pier, "have violated Mr. Mangione's constitutional and statutory rights and have fatally prejudiced this death penalty case," his lawyers said.

On Wednesday, federal prosecutors pushed back on what they said were the defense's "meritless" and "misleading" claims that Bondi's decision was tainted by her past work as a lobbyist for a firm whose clients include UnitedHealthcare's parent company.

## **Minnesota shooting videos challenge administration narrative, policing experts question tactics**

By CLAIRE GALOFARO Associated Press

The federal officer steps in front of the Honda SUV, parked nearly perpendicular across a one-way residential street in Minneapolis, with snow piled up on the curb.

Within seconds, he would shoot and kill the driver, Renee Good, a 37-year-old mother of three.

Federal officials said the officer acted in self-defense, that the driver of the Honda was engaging in "an act of domestic terrorism" when she pulled forward toward him and that he was lucky to escape alive.

Policing experts say some of the choices the officer made in that moment defy practices nearly every law enforcement agency have followed for decades.

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'A dangerous decision to make'

Videos filmed by bystanders from several angles show the Honda stopped on Portland Avenue just before the shooting. It's straddling multiple lanes, but not entirely blocking traffic: the driver-side window is open, the driver waving their left arm as if to signal cars to go around. One large SUV drives around the front of the Honda and down the street. Multiple unmarked federal vehicles are idling on the road nearby.

Some bystanders heckle officers: "Go home to Texas," one woman shouts from the sidewalk. "Why won't you let your faces be seen?" shouts another. Some blow whistles to alert neighbors immigration agents are in the area, others honk.

A gray four-door Titan truck comes to a stop facing the driver's side of the Honda. Two officers climb out and approach the Honda. Both officers wear what appear to be wool hats and black masks covering their noses and mouths.

A woman can be heard saying "go around."

One officer says, "Get out of the car. Out of the car. Get out of the f---ing car."

The Honda's reverse lights come on, and it begins to roll slowly backward as one of the officers grabs the driver-side door handle and tries to pull it twice, then puts his arm into the open driver's window.

A third officer, who had been out of the way on the passenger side of the car then walks around the Honda's hood, stands just in front of the driver and appears to be holding his phone up like he's filming.

"Why would he do that? Why would he put himself in a more dangerous position than he was already in?" asked Geoffrey P. Alpert, an expert on policing at the University of South Carolina, who called it "absurd" for an officer to use his body to try to block a 4,000-pound SUV.

Darrel W. Stephens, former chief of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, also pointed to this moment as the baffling first step in a series of questionable actions that most police departments have discouraged for years. As a police chief, he prohibited officers from standing in front of cars in the early 1990s.

"I can't explain why he would stand there and place himself in front of the car," Stephens said. "That's a dangerous decision to make."

'A 4,000 pound unguided missile'

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem described the incident as an "act of domestic terrorism" carried out against ICE officers by a woman who "attempted to run them over and rammed them with her vehicle. An officer of ours acted quickly and defensively, shot, to protect himself and the people around him."

President Donald Trump said in a post on Truth Social that the ICE officer shot the driver in self-defense. Trump said based on that video "it is hard to believe he is alive." He said the driver "viciously ran over the ICE officer."

But it's unclear in the videos if the car makes contact with the officer.

The Honda starts to drive forward, its tires turning to the right as the officer stands in front.

"Why doesn't he step out of the way? Why doesn't he move?" asked Alpert.

The officer unholsters his gun. Within a second he shoots into the windshield and then lurches backward away from the car as it turns away from him.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem has not publicly identified the officer who shot Good. But she spoke of an incident last June in which the same officer was dragged by a fleeing vehicle. Court records from that case identify the officer as Jonathan Ross.

Most police departments long ago prohibited officers from shooting at moving vehicles except for very limited circumstances where there's no other option to save lives, experts say.

"And the reason is a good one," said Sharon Fairley, a law professor and criminal justice expert at the University of Chicago. "If the officer is successful at shooting the driver, then you have a motor vehicle, a two-ton vehicle that's not being directed, and it creates a huge public safety risk."

The officer shoots a second time. By then, he's at the side of the car, an arm's length from the driver-side window. A third shot immediately follows.

None of the other officers draw their weapons.

The officer who fired the shots watches the car careen down the road and re-holsters his gun. The

street is quiet for a moment.

Three seconds later, the Honda crashes into a parked car with such force its tires fly off the street, the pile of cars lurches forward several feet and snow billows.

"Thank goodness no one was in the car she hit on the side of the road," Alpert said, "and fortunately there were no kids playing out there and no one else got hurt."

Alpert described the car at that point as "a 4,000 pound unguided missile." People don't hit the brakes when they've been shot, Alpert said.

There were pedestrians on the street. One video shows a woman walking a poodle.

Drops of blood stain the snow

A pedestrian in a flannel shirt runs toward the crash.

The officer who fired the shots walks slowly in that direction. Most of the federal agents remain with the unmarked vehicles.

Drops of blood stain the snow.

None of the agents immediately go to the Honda to render aid; a minute after the crash the pedestrian in the flannel shirt is seen in the video leaning alone into the open driver's side door. A medic runs toward the crash site.

Bystanders begin screaming.

"Criminals!" shouts a woman. "What did you do?"

A man billows "murderers!" over and over.

Officers order everyone to get back.

One bystander trains her camera on the officer who fired the shots as he walks away from the crash and toward his colleagues at the parked federal vehicles, telling them to call 911. He does not appear injured.

"You," she screams, "shame, shame."

He climbs into an SUV as the bystander shouts, "don't let the murderer leave!"

The SUV drives away.

Fairley, the University of Chicago professor, said the investigation into what happened here will have to examine whether the officer acted reasonably, both in firing his gun and in the moments leading up to it. It can weigh questions like whether the agent put himself in danger by stepping in front of the car, and if along the way there were other choices the officers might have made to avoid a death.

"The question is going to come down to is was the officer reasonable in their belief that the driver presented an imminent threat of death or bodily harm to himself or to someone else," she said. "That's really the legal question that has to be answered."

The car's license plate, for example, was visible throughout the ordeal.

One alternative, Fairley said, was to have just let her leave, and go arrest her later.

## **Internet and phones cut in Iran as protesters heed exiled prince's call for mass demonstration**

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's government cut off the country from the internet and international telephone calls Thursday night as a nighttime demonstration called by the country's exiled crown prince drew a mass of protesters to shout from their windows and storm the streets.

The protest that went on into Friday morning represented the first test of whether the Iranian public could be swayed by Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, whose fatally ill father fled Iran just before the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution. Demonstrations have included cries in support of the shah, something that could bring a death sentence in the past but now underlines the anger fueling the protests that began over Iran's ailing economy.

The demonstrations that have popped up in cities and rural towns across Iran continued Thursday. More markets and bazaars shut down in support of the protesters. So far, violence around the demonstrations

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has killed at least 42 people while more than 2,270 others have been detained, said the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency.

The growth of the protests increases the pressure on Iran's civilian government and its Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. CloudFlare, an internet firm, and the advocacy group NetBlocks reported the internet outage, both attributing it to Iranian government interference. Attempts to dial landlines and mobile phones from Dubai to Iran could not be connected. Such outages have in the past been followed by intense government crackdowns.

Iranian state television's 24-hour news channel did not acknowledge the internet outage that cut the nation over 85 million people off from the world, highlighting instead food subsidies in their 7 a.m. Friday broadcast.

Meanwhile, the protests themselves have remained broadly leaderless. It remains unclear how Pahlavi's call will affect the demonstrations moving forward.

"The lack of a viable alternative has undermined past protests in Iran," wrote Nate Swanson of the Washington-based Atlantic Council, who studies Iran.

"There may be a thousand Iranian dissident activists who, given a chance, could emerge as respected statesmen, as labor leader Lech Wałęsa did in Poland at the end of the Cold War. But so far, the Iranian security apparatus has arrested, persecuted and exiled all of the country's potential transformational leaders."

Thursday's demonstration rallies at home and in street

Pahlavi had called for demonstrations at 8 p.m. local (1630 GMT) on Thursday and Friday. When the clock struck, neighborhoods across Tehran erupted in chanting, witnesses said. The chants included "Death to the dictator!" and "Death to the Islamic Republic!" Others praised the shah, shouting: "This is the last battle! Pahlavi will return!" Thousands could be seen on the streets before all communication to Iran cut out.

"Iranians demanded their freedom tonight. In response, the regime in Iran has cut all lines of communication," Pahlavi said. "It has shut down the Internet. It has cut landlines. It may even attempt to jam satellite signals."

He went on to call for European leaders to join U.S. President Donald Trump in promising to "hold the regime to account."

"I call on them to use all technical, financial, and diplomatic resources available to restore communication to the Iranian people so that their voice and their will can be heard and seen," he added. "Do not let the voices of my courageous compatriots be silenced."

Pahlavi had said he would offer further plans depending on the response to his call. His support of and from Israel has drawn criticism in the past — particularly after the 12-day war Israel waged on Iran in June. Demonstrators have shouted in support of the shah in some demonstrations, but it isn't clear whether that's support for Pahlavi himself or a desire to return to a time before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iranian officials appeared to be taking the planned protests seriously. The hard-line Kayhan newspaper published a video online claiming security forces would use drones to identify those taking part.

Iranian officials have not acknowledged the scale of the overall protests, which raged across many locations Thursday even before the 8 p.m. demonstration. However, there has been reporting regarding security officials being hurt or killed.

The judiciary's Mizan news agency report a police colonel suffered fatal stab wounds in a town outside of Tehran, while the semiofficial Fars news agency said gunmen killed two security force members and wounded 30 others in a shooting in the city of Lordegan in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province.

A deputy governor in Iran's Khorasan Razavi province told Iranian state television that an attack at a police station killed five people Wednesday night in Chenaran, some 700 kilometers (430 miles) northeast of Tehran. Late Thursday, the Revolutionary Guard said two members of its forces were killed in Kermanshah.

Iran weighs Trump threat

Iran has faced rounds of nationwide protests in recent years. As sanctions tightened and Iran struggled after the 12-day war, its rial currency collapsed in December, reaching 1.4 million to \$1. Protests began

soon after, with demonstrators chanting against Iran's theocracy.

It remains unclear why Iranian officials have yet to crack down harder on the demonstrators. Trump warned last week that if Tehran "violently kills peaceful protesters," America "will come to their rescue."

Speaking to talk show host Hugh Hewitt, Trump reiterated his pledge.

Iran has "been told very strongly, even more strongly than I'm speaking to you right now, that if they do that, they're going to have to pay hell," Trump said.

Trump demurred when asked if he'd meet with Pahlavi.

"I'm not sure that it would be appropriate at this point to do that as president," Trump said. "I think that we should let everybody go out there, and we see who emerges."

Meanwhile, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi remains imprisoned by authorities after her arrest in December.

"Since Dec. 28, 2025, the people of Iran have taken to the streets, just as they did in 2009, 2019," her son Ali Rahmani said. "Each time, the same demands came up: an end to the Islamic Republic, an end to this patriarchal, dictatorial and religious regime, the end of the clerics, the end of the mullahs' regime."

## **Israel says Bulgarian diplomat Nickolay Mladenov to direct Trump's Board of Peace for Gaza**

By JOSEF FEDERMAN and WAFAA SHURAFU Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — A former U.N. Mideast envoy has been chosen to direct U.S. President Donald Trump's Board of Peace to oversee the ceasefire in Gaza, Israel's prime minister said Thursday, as at least eight more deaths from Israeli strikes were reported there.

The appointment of Bulgarian diplomat Nickolay Mladenov marks an important step forward for Trump's Mideast peace plan, which has moved slowly since delivering an October ceasefire ending more than two years of fighting between Israel and Hamas.

Benjamin Netanyahu made the announcement after meeting Mladenov in Jerusalem, identifying him as the "designated" director-general for the board, which is meant to oversee the implementation of the second and far more complicated phase of the cease-fire.

A senior U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity because the appointment has not been officially announced, confirmed Mladenov is the Trump administration's choice to be the board's day-to-day administrator on the ground.

Trump has said he will head the board. Other appointments are expected next week, according to Israeli and American officials, who both spoke on condition of anonymity pending a formal announcement.

Under Trump's plan, the board is supposed to supervise a new technocratic Palestinian government, the disarmament of Hamas, the deployment of an international security force, additional pullbacks of Israeli troops and reconstruction. The U.S. has reported little progress on any of these fronts so far.

Mladenov is a former Bulgarian defense and foreign minister who served as the U.N. envoy to Iraq before being appointed as the U.N. Mideast peace envoy from 2015-2020. During that time, he had good working relations with Israel and frequently worked to ease tensions between Israel and Hamas.

The first phase of the ceasefire halted the fighting and saw an exchange of hostages held by Hamas in exchange for hundreds of Palestinians held by Israel. The deal has largely held, though it has been marred by mutual accusations of violations. Hamas still has not returned the remains of one hostage — an Israeli policeman killed in the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war. Continued Israeli strikes in Gaza, meanwhile, have killed over 400 Palestinians, according to local health officials.

Israel says the strikes have been in response to violations of the deal, but Palestinian health officials say scores of civilians have been among the dead.

Israeli gunfire blamed for at least 8 deaths Thursday

Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip on Thursday killed at least eight people, according to Palestinian hospital officials and family members. Hamas called the deaths a "blatant violation of the ceasefire."

The victims included an 11-year-old girl who dreamed of becoming a doctor, a teenage girl and two boys

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killed in a tent camp and a man whose daughter wept over his body outside a hospital.

"Talk to me, dad!" she cried outside Nasser Hospital, where the body of Abdullah al-Kassas had been taken after a strike in eastern Khan Younis.

At least a dozen others were injured, hospital officials said.

Israel's military said it was not aware of any strike-related casualties in northern Gaza's Jabaliya area, where 11-year-old Hamsa Housou was killed, and did not immediately comment on the others reported Thursday.

Her uncle, Khamis Housou, told The Associated Press that the family had returned home on Oct. 11, a day after the ceasefire went into effect. He said their Falluja neighborhood has been subjected to daily shooting by Israeli troops despite being on the western side of the yellow ceasefire line.

He heard screams early Thursday as Israeli troops combed the area where shells and shrapnel hit. His niece, who he said had dreams of becoming a doctor, was pronounced dead at Shifa Hospital.

"They say that there is a ceasefire and that the war on Gaza has stopped. Is this only through the media, while every day there are explosions and fire belts?" he asked. "Shooting does not stop. Where is the ceasefire?"

The Israeli military has previously said that any actions since the ceasefire began have been in response to violations of the agreement.

' Hamas refuses to disarm '

On Thursday, Egyptian and European Union leaders meeting in Cairo urged the deployment of an international stabilization force in the Gaza Strip to oversee the October ceasefire.

"The situation is extremely severe. Still, Hamas refuses to disarm. It blocks progress to the next stage of the peace plan at the same time Israel is also restricting the international NGOs that are putting humanitarian aid access at serious risk," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said.

"There's no justification for the humanitarian situation in Gaza to have deteriorated to the current level," she said.

The phased ceasefire agreement remains in its initial stage as efforts continue to recover the remains of the final hostage in Gaza. Israel's Hostages and Missing Families Forum said on Wednesday that it had been notified that teams had recommenced searching for Ran Gvili. The 24-year-old police officer was abducted on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas-led militants abducted 251 people and killed around 1,200, mostly civilians, in the attack that triggered the war.

UN aid group to open office in Turkey

The head of the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees warned Thursday that Israeli pressure on the organization risks creating a "huge vacuum" in services.

Philippe Lazzarini, commissioner general of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, or UNRWA, told reporters in Ankara that no other body has the capacity or "community trust" to provide health, education, and social services there.

"If the agency cannot or has to stop to operate in Gaza or in the West Bank, this will create a huge vacuum," he said.

Lazzarini was in Turkey for talks with officials on improving humanitarian access in Gaza.

In June, Turkey and UNRWA signed an agreement for the agency to open an office in Ankara. Lazzarini said the office, which is expected to open "within weeks," would initially serve as a liaison and advocacy hub, but could later take on additional functions.

## **The deadly shooting outside a Utah church grew out of a dispute between funeral goers, police say**

By JACQUES BILLEAUD and HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A complicated crime scene and uncooperative witnesses hindered Salt Lake City police efforts to investigate a fatal shooting outside a house of worship belonging to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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The shooting in a church parking lot Wednesday night left two people dead and six injured, including five who remained hospitalized with police protection Thursday. Investigators said the shooting erupted from a dispute between people who knew each other and were attending a funeral.

No arrests had been made as of early Thursday evening. Authorities say they do not know whether the shooting was gang-related and that they are having trouble getting witnesses to cooperate.

Police do not believe the shooting was random or motivated by animus against The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, known widely as the Mormon church.

"Our houses of worship are sacred, whatever the affiliation," Salt Lake City Police Chief Brian Redd said Thursday. "We should all protect those spaces. We should all respect those spaces."

All the shooting victims were adults. Vaea Tulikihifo, 46, and Sione Vatuvei, 38, were identified as the two people killed.

The red brick church in northwest Salt Lake City mostly serves Tongan congregants and holds regular worship services in their native tongue, according to its website.

Latter-day Saint missionaries first arrived in Tonga in the early 1890s, according to the church's website. At first, they had little success and the mission closed in 1897. But a decade later, missionaries opened a school in Neiafu, Tonga's second-largest town, and began preaching across the islands. Dozens of other schools were started by missionaries and seven remain open. The church's membership in Tonga has grown to 68,000 and 175 congregations.

"Since the 19th century, the church has had a really, really prominent place in Tongan society. Depending on who you ask, somewhere between one-third and two-thirds of everybody who lives in Tonga are members of the LDS church," said Matthew Bowman, a Claremont Graduate University professor specializing in U.S. religious history.

Today, more than a quarter of the Tongan population in the U.S. resides in Utah, where the church is headquartered. The state's Tongan population is about 23,000 and is mostly concentrated in Salt Lake County, according to census data.

On Wednesday night, residents from a housing complex next to the church flooded outside to help victims and console dozens of people who had been attending a funeral for a man identified by family on social media as Asi Sekona. Several family members could not immediately be reached for comment.

Brennan McIntire said he and his wife, Kenna, heard several loud gunshots from their apartment next to the church parking lot while watching TV. He jumped off the couch and ran outside in flip-flops to see what happened.

"As soon as I came over, I see someone on the ground," he said. "People are attending to him and crying and arguing."

Kenna McIntire came outside soon after and was rattled at the sight of first responders lifting an unconscious woman into an ambulance while people huddled around and sobbed.

The couple said they hear gunshots in their neighborhood almost daily, but never right outside their door. "It was really heartbreaking to hear and see," Kenna McIntire said.

About 100 law enforcement vehicles were at the scene in the aftermath, and helicopters flew overhead. Police said they were reviewing license plate readers and surveillance videos from nearby businesses in their search for suspects.

The church was cooperating with law enforcement and said it was grateful for first responders' quick efforts.

"We extend prayers for all who have been impacted by this tragedy and express deep concern that any sacred space intended for worship should be subjected to violence of any kind," church spokesperson Sam Penrod said.

Latter-day Saints have been on heightened alert since four people were killed when a former Marine opened fire in one of their churches in Michigan in September and set it ablaze. The FBI found that he was motivated by "anti-religious beliefs" against the church.

## **NASA, in a rare move, cuts space station mission short after an astronaut's medical issue**

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — In a rare move, NASA is cutting a mission aboard the International Space Station short after an astronaut had a medical issue.

The space agency said Thursday the U.S.-Japanese-Russian crew of four will return to Earth in the coming days, earlier than planned.

NASA canceled its first spacewalk of the year because of the health issue. The space agency did not identify the astronaut or the medical issue, citing patient privacy. The crew member is now stable.

NASA officials stressed that it was not an onboard emergency, but are "erring on the side of caution for the crew member," said Dr. James Polk, NASA's chief health and medical officer.

Polk said this was the NASA's first medical evacuation from the space station although astronauts have been treated aboard for things like toothaches and ear pain.

The crew of four returning home arrived at the orbiting lab via SpaceX in August for a stay of at least six months. The crew included NASA's Zena Cardman and Mike Fincke along with Japan's Kimiya Yui and Russia's Oleg Platonov.

Fincke and Cardman were supposed to carry out the spacewalk to make preparations for a future rollout of solar panels to provide additional power for the space station.

It was Fincke's fourth visit to the space station and Yui's second time, according to NASA. This was the first spaceflight for Cardman and Platonov.

"I'm proud of the swift effort across the agency thus far to ensure the safety of our astronauts," NASA administrator Jared Isaacman said.

Three other astronauts are currently living and working aboard the space station including NASA's Chris Williams and Russia's Sergei Mikaev and Sergei Kud-Sverchkov, who launched in November aboard a Soyuz rocket for an eight-month stay. They're due to return home in the summer.

NASA has tapped SpaceX to eventually bring the space station out of orbit by late 2030 or early 2031. Plans called for a safe reentry over ocean.

## **House passes bill to extend health care subsidies in defiance of GOP leaders**

By LISA MASCARO and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a remarkable rebuke of Republican leadership, the House passed legislation Thursday that would extend expired health care subsidies for those who get coverage through the Affordable Care Act as 17 renegade GOP lawmakers joined every Democrat in support.

The tally, 230-196, signified growing political concern over Americans' health care costs. Forcing the issue to a vote came about after a handful of Republicans signed on to a so-called "discharge petition" to unlock debate, bypassing objections from House Speaker Mike Johnson. The bill now goes to the Senate, where pressure is building for a bipartisan compromise.

Together, the rare political coalitions are rushing to resolve the standoff over the enhanced tax credits that were put in place during the COVID-19 crisis but expired late last year after no agreement was reached during the government shutdown.

"The affordability crisis is not a 'hoax,' it is very real — despite what Donald Trump has had to say," said House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, invoking the president's remarks.

"Democrats made clear before the government was shut down that we were in this affordability fight until we win this affordability fight," he said. "Today we have an opportunity to take a meaningful step forward."

Ahead of voting, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that the bill, which would provide a three-year extension of the subsidy, would increase the nation's deficit by about \$80.6 billion over the decade. At the same time, it would increase the number of people with health insurance by 100,000

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this year, 3 million in 2027, 4 million in 2028 and 1.1 million in 2029, the CBO said.

Growing support for extending ACA subsidies

Johnson, R-La., worked for months to prevent this situation. His office argued Thursday that the federal health care funding from the COVID-19 era is rife with fraud and urged a no vote.

On the floor, Republicans also argued that the lawmakers should be focused on lowering health insurance costs for the broader population, not just those enrolled in ACA plans.

"Only 7% of the population relies on Obamacare marketplace plans. This chamber should be about helping 100% of Americans," said Rep. Jason Smith, the Republican chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee.

While the momentum from the vote shows the growing support for the tax breaks that have helped some 22 million Americans have access to health insurance, the Senate would be under no requirement to take up the House bill and has already rejected it once before.

Instead, a small group of senators from both parties has been working on an alternative plan that could find support in both chambers and become law. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said that for any plan to find support in his chamber, it will need to have income limits to ensure that the financial aid is focused on those who most need the help. He and other Republicans also want to ensure that beneficiaries would have to at least pay a nominal amount for their coverage.

Finally, Thune said there would need to be some expansion of health savings accounts, which allow people to save money and withdraw it tax-free as long as the money is spent on qualified medical expenses.

GOP Sen. Bernie Moreno of Ohio, a leader in the group of about a dozen senators, said they hope to deliver a framework next week. He and others met with House colleagues on options.

Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., who is part of the negotiations, said there is agreement on addressing fraud in health care.

"We recognize that we have millions of people in this country who are going to lose — are losing, have lost — their health insurance because they can't afford the premiums," Shaheen said. "And so we're trying to see if we can't get to some agreement that's going to help, and the sooner we can do that, the better."

Trump has pushed Republicans to send money directly to Americans for health savings accounts so they can bypass the federal government and handle insurance on their own. Democrats largely reject this idea as insufficient for covering the high costs of health care.

Republicans go around their leaders

The action by Republicans to force a vote has been an affront to Johnson and his leadership team, who essentially lost control of what comes to the House floor as the Republican lawmakers joined Democrats for the workaround.

After last year's government shutdown failed to resolve the issue, Johnson had discussed allowing more politically vulnerable GOP lawmakers a chance to vote on another health care bill that would temporarily extend the subsidies while also adding changes.

But after days of discussions, Johnson and the GOP leadership sided with the more conservative wing, which has assailed the subsidies as propping up ACA, which they consider a failed government program. He offered a modest proposal of health care reforms that was approved, but has stalled.

It was then that rank-and-file lawmakers took matters into their own hands, as many of their constituents faced soaring health insurance premiums beginning this month.

Republican Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick, Robert Bresnahan and Ryan Mackenzie, all from Pennsylvania, and Mike Lawler of New York, signed the Democrats' petition, pushing it to the magic number of 218 needed to force a House vote. All four represent key swing districts whose races will help determine which party takes charge of the House next year.

Jeffries said in a celebratory press conference afterward that Thune should bring the Democratic bill to the Senate floor for an immediate vote.

Trump encourages GOP to take on health care issue

What started as a long shot effort by Democrats to offer a discharge petition has become a political vindication of the Democrats' government shutdown strategy as they fought to preserve the health care

funds.

Democrats are making clear that the higher health insurance costs many Americans are facing will be a political centerpiece of their efforts to retake the majority in the House and Senate in the fall elections.

Trump, during a lengthy speech this week to House GOP lawmakers, encouraged his party to take control of the health care debate — an issue that has stymied Republicans since he tried, and failed, to repeal Obamacare during his first term.

## Fatal ICE shooting sparks jurisdiction clash between state and federal authorities

By CLAUDIA LAUER The Associated Press

A day after a federal immigration officer fatally shot a woman in Minneapolis, the case escalated sharply Thursday when federal authorities blocked state investigators from accessing evidence and declared that Minnesota has no jurisdiction to investigate the killing.

Legal experts said the dispute highlights a central question raised repeatedly as federal agents are deployed into cities for immigration enforcement: whether a federal officer carrying out a federally authorized operation can be criminally investigated or charged under state law.

The FBI told Minnesota law enforcement officials they would not be allowed to participate in the investigation or review key evidence in the shooting, which killed 37-year-old Renee Good on Wednesday. Local prosecutors said they were evaluating their legal options as federal authorities asserted control over the case.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz urged federal officials to reconsider, saying early public statements by Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and other federal leaders defending the agent risked undermining confidence in the investigation's fairness.

Experts say there's narrow precedent for state charges. And sometimes attempts at those charges have been cut short by claims of immunity under the Constitution's Supremacy Clause, which protects federal workers performing federally sanctioned, job-related duties. But that immunity isn't a blanket protection for all conduct, legal experts said.

What is the standard for immunity?

If charges are brought, the federal agent is likely to argue he is immune from state prosecution under the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

"The legal standard basically is that a federal officer is immune from state prosecution if their actions were authorized by federal law and necessary and proper to fulfilling their duties," said Robert Yablon, a professor at the University of Wisconsin Law School.

Yablon, who is the faculty co-director of the school's State Democracy Research Initiative, said state prosecutors would have to consider both state and federal laws to overcome the hurdles of immunity. They would first need to show a violation of state statutes to bring charges, but also that the use of force was unconstitutionally excessive under federal law.

"If the actions violated the Fourth Amendment, you can't say those actions were exercised under federal law," he said, referring to the constitutional protection against unreasonable searches and seizures by the government.

Hurdles to state charges

The whole endeavor is made more complicated if there is not cooperation between federal and state authorities to investigate the shooting.

Walz said federal authorities rescinded a cooperation agreement with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, and he urged them to reverse course, warning that Minnesotans were losing confidence in the investigation's independence. Noem confirmed the decision, saying: "They have not been cut out; they don't have any jurisdiction in this investigation."

State officials have been vocal about finding a way to continue their own parallel investigation.

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Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison said during an interview on CNN that the move by federal authorities to not allow state participation does not mean state officials can't conduct their own investigation.

But local officials in Hennepin County said they'd be in the dark if the FBI chose not to share their findings. Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty said in a statement that her office is "exploring all options to ensure a state level investigation can continue."

"If the FBI is the sole investigative agency, the state will not receive the investigative findings, and our community may never learn about its contents," she said.

Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche defended federal agents' use of force, saying Thursday that officers often must make split-second decisions in dangerous and chaotic situations. In a statement posted on social media, Blanche said the law does not require officers "to gamble with their lives in the face of a serious threat of harm," and added that standard protocols ensure evidence is collected and preserved following officer-involved shootings.

In many cases involving use-of-force, investigators examine how the specific officer was trained, if they followed their training or if they acted against standard protocol in the situation. It's unclear if state investigators will be granted access to training records and standards or even interviews with other federal agents at the scene Wednesday, if they continue a separate investigation.

During the prosecution of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in the killing of George Floyd, prosecutors called one of the department's training officers to testify that Chauvin acted against department training.

## Precedents and other legal issues

Samantha Trepel, the Rule of Law program director at States United Democracy Center and a former prosecutor with the Justice Department's civil rights division, wrote a guest article for Just Security Wednesday in the wake of the fatal shooting. The piece focused on the Department of Justice silence in the face of violent tactics being used in immigration enforcement efforts.

Trepel, who participated in the prosecution of officers involved in Floyd's death, told AP Thursday that the current DOJ lacks the independence of previous administrations.

"In previous administrations, DOJ conducted independent and thorough investigations of alleged federal officers' excessive force. Even though the feds were investigating feds, they had a track record of doing this work credibly," Trepel said. "This included bringing in expert investigators and civil rights prosecutors from Washington who didn't have close relationships and community ties with the individuals they were investigating."

Trepel said in a standard federal investigation of alleged unlawful lethal force, the FBI and DOJ would conduct a thorough investigation interviewing witnesses, collecting video, reviewing policies and training, before determining whether an agent committed a prosecutable federal crime.

"I hope it's happening now, but we have little visibility," she said. "The administration can conduct immigration enforcement humanely and without these brutal tactics and chaos. They can arrest people who have broken the law and keep the public safe without sacrificing who we are as Americans."

## Questions about medical aid after the shooting

In other high-profile fatal police shootings, officers have faced administrative discipline for failing to provide or promptly secure medical aid after using force.

Video circulating from Wednesday's shooting shows a man approaching officers and identifying himself as a physician, asking whether he could check Good's pulse and provide aid. An agent tells him to step back, says emergency medics are on the way, and warns him that he could be arrested if he does not comply.

Witness video later showed medics unable to reach the scene in their vehicle, and people carrying Good away. Authorities have not said whether actions taken after the shooting, including efforts to provide medical assistance, will be reviewed as part of the federal investigation.

In other cases, including the 2023 death of Tyre Nichols in Memphis, Tennessee, failures to render medical aid were cited among the reasons officers were fired and later charged.

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## 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."

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>

Who's presenting at the Golden Globes?

The presenters announced Thursday feature a mix of Hollywood A-listers like George Clooney, Julia Roberts and Queen Latifah, along with rising stars like the leads from "Heated Rivalry," Connor Storrle and Hudson Williams.

Additional presenters include: Amanda Seyfried, Ana de Armas, Ayo Edebiri, Charli xcx, Chris Pine, Colman Domingo, Dakota Fanning, Dave Franco, Diane Lane, Hailee Steinfeld, Jason Bateman, Jennifer Garner, Joe Keery, Judd Apatow, Justin Hartley, Kathryn Hahn, Keegan-Michael Key, Kevin Bacon, Kevin Hart, Kyra Sedgwick, Lalisa Manobal (Lisa from Blackpink), Luke Grimes, Macaulay Culkin, Marlon Wayans, Melissa McCarthy, Mila Kunis, Miley Cyrus, Minnie Driver, Orlando Bloom, Pamela Anderson, Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Regina Hall, Sean Hayes, Snoop Dogg, Wanda Sykes, Will Arnett and Zoë Kravitz.

What are the Golden Globes?

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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.

## Senate pushes back on Trump's military threats against Venezuela with war powers vote

By STEPHEN GROVES and JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate advanced a resolution Thursday that would limit President Donald Trump's ability to conduct further attacks against Venezuela, sounding a note of disapproval for his expanding ambitions in the Western Hemisphere.

Democrats and five Republicans voted to advance the war powers resolution on a 52-47 vote and ensure a vote next week on final passage. It has virtually no chance of becoming law because Trump would have to sign it if it were to pass the Republican-controlled House. Still, it was a significant gesture that showed unease among some Republicans after the U.S. military seized Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro in a surprise nighttime raid over the weekend.

Trump's administration is now seeking to control Venezuela's oil resources and its government, but the war powers resolution would require congressional approval for any further attacks on the South American country.

"To me, this is all about going forward," said Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley, one of the five Republican votes. "If the president should determine, 'You know what? I need to put troops on the ground of Venezuela,' I think that would require Congress to weigh in."

The other Republicans who backed the resolution were Sens. Rand Paul of Kentucky, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Susan Collins of Maine and Todd Young of Indiana.

Trump reacted to their votes by saying on social media that they "should never be elected to office again" and that the vote "greatly hampers American Self Defense and National Security."

Democrats had failed to pass several such resolutions in the months that Trump escalated his campaign against Venezuela. But lawmakers argued now that Trump has captured Maduro and set his sights to other conquests such as Greenland, the vote presents Congress with an opportunity.

"This wasn't just a procedural vote. It's a clear rejection of the idea that one person can unilaterally send

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American sons and daughters into harm's way without Congress, without debate," said Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York.

Lawmakers' response to the Venezuela operation

Republican leaders have said they had no advance notification of the raid early morning Saturday to seize Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, but mostly expressed satisfaction this week as top administration officials provided classified briefings on the operation.

Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., who forced the vote on the resolution, said he believes many Republicans were caught off guard by the outcome. He said that Trump's recent comments to The New York Times suggesting U.S. oversight in Venezuela could last for years — combined with details revealed in the classified briefings — prompted some lawmakers to conclude that "this is too big to let a president do it without Congress."

The administration has used an evolving set of legal justifications for the monthslong campaign in Central and South America, from destroying alleged drug boats under authorizations for the global fight against terrorism to seizing Maduro in what was ostensibly a law enforcement operation to put him on trial in the United States.

Republican leaders have backed Trump.

"I think the president has demonstrated at least already a very strong commitment to peace through strength, especially in this hemisphere," said Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D. "I think Venezuela got that message loudly and clearly."

A vote on a similar resolution in November narrowly failed to gain the majority needed. Paul and Murkowski were the only Republicans voting in favor then.

Young in a statement said he supported the operation to capture Maduro, but was concerned by Trump's statements that his administration now "runs" Venezuela.

"It is unclear if that means that an American military presence will be required to stabilize the country," Young said, adding that he believed most of his constituents were not prepared to send U.S. troops to that mission.

House Democrats were introducing a similar resolution Thursday.

The rarely enforced War Powers Act

Trump criticized the Senate vote as "impeding the President's Authority as Commander in Chief" under the Constitution.

Presidents of both parties have long argued the War Powers Act infringes on their authority. Passed in 1973 in the aftermath of the Vietnam War — and over the veto of Republican President Richard Nixon — it has never succeeded in directly forcing a president to halt military action.

Congress declares war while the president serves as commander in chief, according to the Constitution. But lawmakers have not formally declared war since World War II, granting presidents broad latitude to act unilaterally. The law requires presidents to notify Congress within 48 hours of deploying forces and to end military action within 60 to 90 days absent authorization — limits that presidents of both parties have routinely stretched.

Democrats argue those limits are being pushed further than ever. Some Republicans have gone further still, contending congressional approval is unnecessary altogether.

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, a close Trump ally who traveled with the president aboard Air Force One on Sunday, said he would be comfortable with Trump taking over other countries without congressional approval, including Greenland.

"The commander in chief is the commander in chief. They can use military force," Graham said.

Greenland may further test the limits

Graham's comments come as the administration weighs not only its next steps in Venezuela, but also Greenland. The White House has said the "military is always an option" when it comes to a potential American takeover of the world's largest island.

Republicans have cited Greenland's strategic value, but most have balked at the idea of using the military

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to take the country. Some favor a potential deal to purchase the country, while others have acknowledged that is an unlikely option when Denmark and Greenland have rejected Trump's overtures.

Democrats want to get out in front of any military action and are already preparing to respond. Arizona Sen. Ruben Gallego said he expected soon to introduce a resolution "to block Trump from invading Greenland."

Greenland belongs to a NATO ally, Denmark, which has prompted a much different response from Republican senators than the situation in Venezuela.

On Thursday, Sen. Roger Wicker, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, met with the Danish ambassador to the United States, Jesper Møller Sørensen. Also in the meeting were the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, New Hampshire Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, and the head of Greenland's representation to the U.S. and Canada, Jacob Isbosethsen.

"There's no willingness on their part to negotiate for the purchase or the change in title to their land which they've had for so long," Wicker, R-Miss., said afterward. "That's their prerogative and their right."

Wicker added that he hoped an agreement could be reached that would strengthen the U.S. relationship with Denmark.

"Greenland is not for sale," Isbosethsen told reporters.

## White House says it wasn't economical to save East Wing during ballroom construction

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House said Thursday that it was not feasible to save the East Wing because of structural issues, past decay and other major concerns as officials shared details of President Donald Trump's planned ballroom at a public meeting of the commission charged with approving it.

Josh Fisher, director of the White House Office of Administration, said an unstable colonnade, water leakage, mold contamination and other problems made it more economical to tear down the East Wing to make room for the \$400 million ballroom than to renovate it.

"Because of this and other factors, the cost analysis proved that demolition and reconstruction provided the lowest total cost ownership and most effective long-term strategy," Fisher told members of the National Capital Planning Commission.

It was the most comprehensive explanation to date for the dramatic demolition of the East Wing, which caused a public stir when it began in October with little advance notice.

The commission's chairman, Will Scharf, who is also a top White House official, said he thought the project would ultimately be approved.

The project's architect, Shalom Baranes, joined Fisher to provide a high-level view of the proposal to the commission. Baranes showed the panel renderings of the ballroom and views of the White House complex from the north and south with the addition.

Baranes said the design could include adding a second story to the West Wing colonnade to help make the White House more uniform with the new ballroom on the east side. But such a step would also dramatically alter the iconic space outside the Oval Office.

Fisher and Baranes said the project includes more than just a ballroom, and will also streamline visitor access to the White House and make unspecified improvements to Lafayette Park across the street.

Some of the 12 commissioners raised concerns, most vocally Democrat Phil Mendelson, who asked several questions about the ballroom's size and location and whether those might change going forward. Baranes said "anything's possible," but added that the plans had been thoroughly studied.

Mendelson, who is also chairman of the D.C. Council, asked if the planned ceiling height of 38 to 40 feet (11.5 to 12 meters) could still be lowered before the final structure is finished and received assurances that the number wasn't fully set. "It still seems to me it's overwhelming the existing building," Mendelson said.

Baranes said the idea would be to build the ballroom's height to ensure it matches the rest of the White House. "The heights will match exactly," he said.

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Scharf listened to those and other questions Mendelson raised. Upon completion, however, the ballroom is expected to be larger than the rest of the existing White House.

Mendelson also asked why the project hadn't been presented in its entirety to the commission before the East Wing was demolished. Fisher said some aspects of the ballroom construction were of a "top secret nature" and needed to be dealt with.

Scharf repeated his past assertions that the planning commission doesn't usually have jurisdiction over site work and demolition on any project, including at the White House.

After the meeting, he expressed confidence that the project will receive the go-ahead.

"I certainly, based on the presentation today, I fully expect that the commission will ... approve this project," Scharf told reporters. "I think you just saw a very positive response to these preliminary drawings." He acknowledged Mendelson's concerns and suggested they would be addressed.

Only commissioners were allowed to ask questions and offer feedback at the meeting. A more formal review, including public testimony and votes, is expected after the White House submits a more detailed proposal. The panel's next meeting is Feb. 5.

Before the meeting adjourned, Scharf argued that the White House needed a larger, more elegant space for major functions. He recalled visiting Windsor Castle last year with Trump and said, that when the president likely hosts King Charles III of Great Britain, "more likely than not, he will be hosted in a tent on the South Lawn with porta-potties."

Scharf also said after the meeting that the commission is interested in more than whether the ballroom is a good idea. He said their concerns extend to how it affects the White House visitor experience and how the building fits in with others in the area and across the city.

### Plans only recently offered

The White House in December submitted its ballroom plans to the commission, which is one of two federal panels that review construction on federal land — usually before ground is broken. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has sued to halt construction of the ballroom, accusing the Trump administration of violating federal laws by proceeding before submitting the project for the independent reviews, congressional approval and public comment.

Carol Quillen, president and CEO of the Trust, said in a statement afterward that the White House presentation was a "good and necessary first step." She urged the administration to comply with all legally required review and approval processes before starting construction.

A summary on the commission's website said the purpose of the "East Wing Modernization Project" is to "establish a permanent, secure event space within the White House grounds" that provides increased capacity for official state functions, eliminates reliance on temporary tents and support facilities, and "protects the historic integrity and cultural landscape of the White House and its grounds."

A comprehensive design plan for the White House prepared in 2000 identified the "need for expanded event space to address growing visitor demand and provide a venue suitable for significant events," the summary said. It added that successive administrations had "recognized this need as an ongoing priority."

### Ballroom's size and scope has grown

Trump, a Republican serving his second term, has been talking about building a White House ballroom for years. Last July, the White House announced a 90,000-square-foot (8,400-square-meter) space would be built on the east side of the complex to accommodate 650 seated guests at a then-estimated cost of \$200 million. Trump has said it will be paid for with private donations, including from him.

He later upped the ballroom's capacity to 999 people and, by October, had demolished the East Wing. In December, he updated the price tag to \$400 million — double the original estimate.

The White House had announced few other details about the project but has said it would be completed before Trump's term ends in January 2029.

## Some dogs can expand their vocabulary by eavesdropping on their owners

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Dogs are great at learning action commands like “sit” and “stay.” They’re less good at remembering the names of things, like what their squeaky or stuffed toys are called.

Only an elite group of gifted word-learner dogs can retain the names of hundreds of toys. Scientists know of about 50 such pooches, but they aren’t yet sure what’s behind their wordy skills.

Now, new research is pushing the limits of what the dogs can do.

Scientists already knew that these extraordinary pups could learn the names of their stuffed pizza and doughnut toys from playtime with their owners. In the latest study, they discovered that the pups can also understand new names by eavesdropping.

Ten gifted dogs — including a Border collie named Basket and a Labrador named Augie — watched their owners hold a new toy and talk to another person about it. Then the pups were told to go to another room and retrieve that specific toy from a pile of many others.

Seven out of the 10 dogs successfully learned the names of their new toy stingrays and armadillos from passively listening to their owners.

“This is the first time that we see a specific group of dogs that are able to learn labels from overhearing interactions,” said study author Shany Dror with Eötvös Loránd University in Hungary and the University of Veterinary Medicine in Austria.

The pups even succeeded when the owners put the toy in an opaque box and then spoke to another person about it, creating a disconnect between seeing the object and hearing its name.

Only a few other animals, like parrots and apes, have demonstrated a knack for this kind of eavesdropping. It’s also essential to human development: Children under age 2 can pick up new words from listening, including ones their parents may not have intended.

However, these special dogs are fully grown, so the brain mechanisms enabling them to eavesdrop are likely different from those of humans, Dror said.

The new work shows how “animals have a lot more going on cognitively than maybe you think they do,” said animal cognition expert Heidi Lyn with the University of South Alabama. She had no role in the study, which was published Thursday in the journal *Science*.

Not all dogs pick things up like this, so it’s unlikely your furry friend is learning names while snacking on leftovers under the dinner table.

Dror hopes to keep studying the gifted pooches and figuring out what cues they’re picking up on. They’re some of her most enthusiastic — and messy — research subjects.

“We do have dogs coming to the lab sometimes, which is really nice,” she said, “but then often someone pees on the couch. So that does happen.”

## 2-time Olympic champion Chloe Kim injures shoulder, ‘trying to stay optimistic’ for Italy

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

American snowboarding star Chloe Kim said Thursday that she took “the silliest fall” in training and dislocated her shoulder, threatening her chance to win a third straight gold medal at next month’s Winter Olympics in Italy.

Kim posted video of the accident in Laax, Switzerland, earlier this week as she practiced for a key Olympic tune-up there next weekend. She tumbled to the snow and went skittering across the halfpipe.

She did not say which shoulder she hurt and that she was “trying to stay optimistic” about competing at the Olympics but “I don’t have much clarity now.” The 25-year-old said she has an MRI scheduled for Friday that will reveal the extent of the damage.

“The positive thing is, I have range, I’m not in that much pain, I just don’t want it to keep popping out,

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which has happened," she said. "I'm just trying to stay really optimistic. I feel really good about where my snowboarding is at right now, so I know the minute I get cleared and I'm good to go, I should be fine."

Kim's absence would deprive the Winter Games of one of its biggest names and one of its best storylines. She is trying to become the first action-sports athlete to win three straight gold medals. Shaun White took three halfpipe golds, but they were spread out over five games.

Kim was the breakout star of the 2018 Olympics, a bubbly teenager taking gold in her parents' home country of South Korea. Four years ago in China, she won again, with that victory punctuated by her messages about the ups and downs of success and fame.

Through it all, nobody has come close to beating her.

Two years ago at the Winter X Games, Kim became the first woman to pull off a 1260-degree spin in competition. Before that, she was the first woman to land a double-cork 1080 — two flips and one spin — and the first to land back-to-back 1080s.

She was working on adding to that repertoire for the Milan Cortina Games and, if healthy, would be the heavy favorite to win again. This injury throws all that in question. The Olympic qualifying round in women's halfpipe is Feb. 11.

The Laax Open is scheduled for next weekend, and even if Kim were to get a clean bill of health, there is a chance she would head into the Olympics without having competed in the final of a contest this season.

Kim qualified for the U.S. team by winning a contest last year and has kept a light schedule in '25-26. She fell during warmups for the final in Copper Mountain, Colorado, last month and pulled out after hurting her shoulder then, as well. That injury was not believed serious.

Regarding her latest shoulder injury, she said: "It should be fine. I'm just hoping that it doesn't take too long, but I'm going to be chilling for the next little while."

## Most of Wall Street drifts as defense companies rally

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Modest moves for Wall Street overall masked some big swings underneath the surface on Thursday, including for makers of weapons and other military equipment after President Donald Trump said he wants to increase spending on them sharply.

The S&P 500 barely budged and inched up by less than 0.1%, coming off its first loss in four days. It remains near its all-time high set earlier this week. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 270 points, or 0.6%, and the Nasdaq composite fell 0.4%.

The majority of stocks climbed as yields ticked higher in the bond market following mixed reports on the U.S. economy.

The number of U.S. workers applying for unemployment benefits rose last week, a potential indicator of increasing layoffs, but by no more than economists expected. Other reports said U.S. workers improved their productivity by more in the summer than economists expected, while the U.S. trade deficit unexpectedly shrank in October.

On Wall Street, defense-industry companies rallied after Trump said he wants to increase U.S. military spending to \$1.5 trillion in 2027 from \$901 billion in order to build the "Dream Military."

L3Harris Technologies jumped 5.2%, Lockheed Martin climbed 4.3% and Northrop Grumman added 2.4%. They bounced back from losses the prior day, when Trump complained defense contractors were making military equipment too slowly.

RTX came under particular criticism by Trump, and its stock lagged behind rivals. It inched up 0.8% after Trump said that it was the "slowest in increasing their volume."

Trump signed an executive order Wednesday calling on the Pentagon to ensure future contracts with contractors contain a provision prohibiting their ability to buy back their own stock during a period of underperformance on U.S. government contracts.

Another winner on Wall Street was Constellation Brands, which climbed 5.3% after the beer and wine company reported a better profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

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They helped work against drops for several technology stocks that held back the overall market. Nvidia was the heaviest weight on the S&P 500 after dropping 2.2% and giving back some of its big gain of nearly 40% last year.

All told, the S&P 500 added 0.53 to 6,921.46 points. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 270.03 to 49,266.11, and the Nasdaq composite fell 104.26 to 23,480.02.

Elsewhere, oil prices jumped to continue their zigzags since Trump ousted the leader of Venezuela last weekend.

A barrel of benchmark U.S. crude climbed 3.2% to \$57.76. Brent crude, the international standard, rose 3.4% to settle at \$61.99 per barrel.

Venezuela is potentially sitting on more oil than any other country in the world, and any increase in production could push further downward on prices, which have already fallen on expectations for plentiful supplies. But billions of dollars of investment are likely necessary to get Venezuela's aging infrastructure in good-enough shape to ramp up production sharply.

It's not just Venezuela where the U.S. military could see action, as Trump talks about "troubled and dangerous times." The president in recent days has also called for taking over the Danish territory of Greenland for national security reasons and has suggested he's open to carrying out military operations in Colombia.

In stock markets abroad, indexes moved modestly in Europe following a weak finish in Asia.

Japan's Nikkei 225 dropped 1.6% for one of the world's bigger moves, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 1.2%.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.18% from 4.15% late Wednesday.

## Denmark, Greenland envoys met with White House officials over Trump's call for a 'takeover'

By AAMER MADHANI and CLAUDIA CIOBANU Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Denmark and Greenland's envoys to Washington have begun a vigorous effort to urge U.S. lawmakers as well as key Trump administration officials to step back from President Donald Trump's call for a takeover of the strategic Arctic island.

Denmark's ambassador, Jesper Møller Sørensen, and Jacob Isbosethsen, Greenland's chief representative to Washington, met on Thursday with White House National Security Council officials to discuss a renewed push by Trump to acquire Greenland, perhaps by military force, according to Danish government officials who were not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The White House did not respond to a request for comment about the meeting.

The envoys have also held a series of meetings this week with American lawmakers as they look to enlist help in persuading Trump to back off his threat.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio is expected to meet next week with Danish officials.

Trump, in a New York Times interview published Thursday, said he has to possess the entirety of Greenland instead of just exercising a long-standing treaty that gives the United States wide latitude to use Greenland for military posts.

"I think that ownership gives you a thing that you can't do with, you're talking about a lease or a treaty. Ownership gives you things and elements that you can't get from just signing a document," Trump told the newspaper.

The U.S. is party to a 1951 treaty that gives it broad rights to set up military bases there with the consent of Denmark and Greenland.

Meanwhile, Trump's vice president, JD Vance, told reporters that European leaders should "take the president of the United States seriously" as he framed the issue as one of defense.

"What we're asking our European friends to do is take the security of that landmass more seriously, because if they're not, the United States is going to have to do something about it," Vance said.

But the administration is starting to hear pushback from lawmakers, including some Republicans, about Trump's designs on the territory.

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In a floor speech Thursday, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, warned that the rhetoric from some in the Trump administration is "profoundly troubling."

"We've got a lot ahead of us in 2026," Murkowski said. "Greenland - or taking Greenland, or buying Greenland - should not be on that list. It should not be an obsession at the highest levels of this administration."

Danish officials are hopeful about the upcoming talks with Rubio in Washington.

"This is the dialogue that is needed, as requested by the government together with the Greenlandic government," Danish Defense Minister Troels Lund Poulsen told Danish broadcaster DR.

The island of Greenland, 80% of which lies above the Arctic Circle, is home to about 56,000 mostly Inuit people.

Vance criticizes Denmark

Vance said on Wednesday that Denmark "obviously" had not done a proper job in securing Greenland and that Trump "is willing to go as far as he has to" to defend American interests in the Arctic.

In an interview with Fox News, Vance repeated Trump's claim that Greenland is crucial to both the U.S. and the world's national security because "the entire missile defense infrastructure is partially dependent on Greenland."

He said the fact that Denmark has been a faithful military ally of the U.S. during World War II and the more recent "war on terrorism" did not necessarily mean they were doing enough to secure Greenland today.

"Just because you did something smart 25 years ago doesn't mean you can't do something dumb now," Vance said, adding that Trump "is saying very clearly, 'you are not doing a good job with respect to Greenland.'"

Right to self-determination

Earlier, Rubio told a select group of U.S. lawmakers that it was the Republican administration's intention to eventually purchase Greenland, as opposed to using military force.

"Many Greenlanders feel that the remarks made are disrespectful," Aaja Chemnitz, one of the two Greenlandic politicians in the Danish parliament, told The Associated Press. "Many also experience that these conversations are being discussed over their heads. We have a firm saying in Greenland, 'Nothing about Greenland, without Greenland.'"

She said most Greenlanders "wish for more self-determination, including independence" but also want to "strengthen cooperation with our partners" in security and business development as long as it is based on "mutual respect and recognition of our right to self-determination."

Chemnitz denied a claim by Trump that Greenland is "covered with Russian and Chinese ships all over the place."

Greenland is "a long-standing ally and partner to the U.S. and we have a shared interest in stability, security, and responsible cooperation in the Arctic," she said. "There is an agreement with the U.S. that gives them access to have bases in Greenland if needed."

France's President Emmanuel Macron has denounced the "law of the strongest" that is making people "wonder if Greenland will be invaded."

In a speech to French ambassadors at the Elysee presidential palace on Thursday, Macron said: "It's the greatest disorder, the law of the strongest, and everyday people wonder whether Greenland will be invaded, whether Canada will be under the threat of becoming the 51st state (of the United States) or whether Taiwan is to be further circled."

He pointed to an "increasingly dysfunctional" world where great powers, including the U.S and China, have "a real temptation to divide the world amongst themselves."

The United States is "gradually turning away from some of its allies and freeing itself from the international rules," Macron said.

Surveillance operations for the US

The leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the U.K. joined Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen on Tuesday in defending Greenland's sovereignty in the wake of Trump's comments about Greenland, which is part of the NATO military alliance.

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After Vance's visit to Greenland last year, Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen published a video detailing the 1951 defense agreement between Denmark and the U.S.. Since 1945, the American military presence in Greenland has decreased from thousands of soldiers over 17 bases and installations on the island, Rasmussen said, to the remote Pituffik Space Base in the northwest with some 200 soldiers today. The base supports missile warning, missile defense and space surveillance operations for the U.S. and NATO.

The 1951 agreement "offers ample opportunity for the United States to have a much stronger military presence in Greenland," Rasmussen said. "If that is what you wish, then let us discuss it."

'Military defense of Greenland'

Last year, Denmark's parliament approved a bill to allow U.S. military bases on Danish soil. 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.

Denmark is also moving to strengthen its military presence around Greenland and in the wider North Atlantic.

Last year, the government announced a 14.6 billion-kroner (\$2.3 billion) agreement with parties including the governments of Greenland and the Faroe Islands, another self-governing territory of Denmark, to "improve capabilities for surveillance and maintaining sovereignty in the region."

## 'Worst in Show' CES products include AI refrigerators, AI companions and AI doorbells

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

The promise of artificial intelligence was front and center at this year's CES gadget show. But spicing up a simple machine like a refrigerator with unnecessary AI was also a surefire way to win the "Worst in Show."

The annual contest that no tech company wants to win announced its decisions Thursday. Among those getting the notorious "anti-awards" for invasive, wasteful or fragile products were an eye-tracking AI "soulmate" companion for combating loneliness, a musical lollipop and new AI features for Amazon's widely used doorbell cameras.

Shouting at a 'bespoke AI' fridge that also hawks grocery products

Samsung's "Bespoke AI Family Hub" refrigerator received the overall "Worst in Show" recognition from the group of consumer and privacy advocates who judged the contest.

Samsung invites users to speak to the refrigerator and command it to open or close the door, but a demonstration at the sprawling Las Vegas technology expo showed it didn't always detect what people were saying if there was too much ambient noise. That was just part of the complications and reliability concerns Samsung added to an appliance that's supposed to have one important job: keeping food cold, said Gay Gordon-Byrne of the Digital Right to Repair Coalition in a recorded video ceremony announcing the anti-awards.

"Everything is an order of magnitude more difficult," she said of the fridge that also uses computer vision to track when food items are running low and can advertise replacements.

Samsung said in response that "a trade show floor is naturally very different from a consumer's home environment. Our Bespoke AI experiences are designed to simplify decisions around the home, making life more convenient and enjoyable."

The South Korean tech giant also said "security and privacy are foundational" to the AI experiences in the fridge.

Who decides what's 'Worst in Show'?

The judges have no affiliation with CES or the trade group that runs the show.

They say they make the choices based on how uniquely bad a product is, what impact it could have if widely adopted and if it was significantly worse than previous versions of similar technology. The judges represent groups including Consumer Reports, the Electronic Frontier Foundation and right-to-repair advocates iFixit.

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"We definitely intend some shame," said iFixit's director of sustainability, Elizabeth Chamberlain, in an interview. "We do hope that manufacturers see this as a poke, as an impetus to do better next time. But our goal isn't to really shame any particular manufacturer as such. We're hoping that they'll make changes as a result of it. We're pointing to trends that we see in the industry as a whole. And a lot of the things that we're calling out, we picked an individual product, but we could have picked a whole category."

Amazon's doorbells once again ring privacy alarms

An array of new features for Amazon's Ring doorbell camera system won the "Worst in Show" for privacy for "doubling down on privacy invasion and supporting the misconception that more surveillance always makes us safer," said Cindy Cohn, executive director of the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

Among the new Ring features is an "AI Unusual Event Alert" that is supposed to detect unexpected people or happenings like the arrival of a "pack of coyotes."

"That includes facial recognition," Cohn said of the new Ring features. "It includes mobile surveillance towers that can be deployed at parking lots and other places, and it includes an app store that's going to let people develop even sketchier apps for the doorbell than the ones that Amazon already provides."

Amazon didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Deskbound AI 'soulmate' companion is always watching your eyes

Winning the "People's Choice" of worst products was an AI companion called Ami, made by Chinese company Lepro, which mostly sells lamps and lighting technology. Ami appears as a female avatar on a curved screen that is marketed as "your always-on 3D soulmate," designed for remote workers looking for private and "empathetic" interactions during long days at the home office. It tracks eye movements and other emotional signals, like tone of voice.

The group says it is calling out Lepro "for having the audacity to suggest that an AI video surveillance device on a desk could be anyone's soulmate." Advocates acknowledged the device comes with a physical camera shutter but said they were unsettled by its "always-on" marketing.

Lepro didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Tech lollipop gets dinged for environmental waste

Lollipop Star attracted attention early at CES as a candy that plays music while you eat it. Its creators say it uses bone induction technology to enable people to hear songs — like tracks from Ice Spice and Akon — through the lollipop as they bite it using their back teeth. But the sticks can't be recharged or reused after the candy is gone, leaving consumer advocate Nathan Proctor to give it a "Worst in Show" for the environment.

"We need to stop making so many disposable electronics, which are full of toxic chemicals, require critical minerals to produce and can burn down waste facilities," said Proctor, who directs the Public Interest Research Group's right-to-repair campaign.

A spokesperson for Lollipop Star maker Lava Brand didn't immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

A treadmill powered by an AI chatbot fitness coach raises security concerns

"Worst in Show" for security went to Merach's internet-connected treadmill that boasts of having the industry's first AI coach powered by a large language model that can converse with the user but also proactively adjust the speed and incline based on heart rate changes.

All that collection of biometric data and behavioral inferences raised concerns for security advocates, but so did the fine print of a privacy policy that stated: "We cannot guarantee the security of your personal information."

China-based Merach didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Talking coffee makers and making e-bikes hard to fix

German tech company Bosch received two "Worst in Show" awards, one for adding subscriptions and enhanced voice assistance from Amazon's Alexa to coffee-making with a "Personal AI Barista" espresso machine and another for a purported anti-theft and battery lock feature on an e-bike app.

Cory Doctorow, author of the book "Enshittification: Why Everything Suddenly Got Worse and What to

Do About It" and himself a "Worst in Show" judge, criticized Bosch's "parts pairing" to digitally connect an e-bike with its parts, like motors and batteries, in a way that flags a part if it appeared on a database of stolen products.

Even if Bosch doesn't seek to prosecute its own customers for routine repairs, Doctorow said it could always change its deal with them later, in line with his theory of the decay of online platforms as companies exploit the customers they earlier won over.

Bosch countered that the "Worst in Show" commentators were misleadingly suggesting the company is forcing consumers to utilize features that are optional and, in the case of the espresso machine, already popular.

Bosch said in a statement Thursday "that earning and keeping trust with our consumers, especially in the areas of privacy and cybersecurity, is at the core of our company's values. Both Bosch Home Appliances and Bosch eBike Systems protect their consumers against unauthorized tampering or control through a comprehensive security concept, using encryption and authentication."

## Harvey Weinstein weighs plea on rape charge but insists he 'never assaulted anyone'

By JENNIFER PELTZ and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Harvey Weinstein is weighing a potential guilty plea to resolve a rape charge and avoid going to trial for a third time in New York, his lawyer and a judge said Thursday, even as the disgraced movie mogul insisted he "never assaulted anyone."

For now, at least, Weinstein is on course for a retrial as soon as March in the landmark #MeToo-era case. The judge asked defense lawyers to tell prosecutors within two weeks whether Weinstein is planning a guilty plea.

Prosecutors haven't offered Weinstein any breaks. But he could plead guilty to the crime as charged, a low-level felony. Defense attorney Arthur Aidala said the 73-year-old Weinstein might do so if assured that any prison time for the rape charge would run concurrently with a sentence he's awaiting on a separate, higher-level sexual assault conviction, which Manhattan Judge Curtis Farber declined to overturn Thursday.

After asking Farber to hear him out, a pallid but emphatic Weinstein said his "spirit was breaking" after nearly six years behind bars, presently at New York City's Rikers Island jail.

"I live in constant anxiety, unable to sleep, haunted by the thought that I will die" in the infamous jail, said Weinstein. He has myriad health problems and is brought to court in a wheelchair.

"I know I was unfaithful, I know I acted wrongly, but I never assaulted anyone," he added.

The Oscar-winning producer and his lawyers argued that the verdict last June was tainted by infighting and bullying among jurors. The defense contends the tensions amounted to threats that poisoned the process, and that Farber didn't look into them enough.

"You witnessed the trial and saw how forces beyond my control stripped me of my most basic right to be judged fairly," Weinstein told the judge Thursday, imploring him at least to hold a hearing on the jury tensions.

Farber responded: "You had a fair trial."

"Whatever took place the jury room was the normal course of deliberations. Deliberations become heated. Sometimes jurors don't behave in a manner that we would hope, but it didn't rise to the level of anything improper," the judge added.

Outside court, Aidala said Weinstein was "not strongly considering" a guilty plea but was thinking about it for his children's sake.

The hearing was the latest convoluted turn in the ex-Hollywood honcho's path through the criminal justice system. His case has spanned seven years, trials in two states, a reversal in one and last year's retrial, which came to a messy end. Weinstein was convicted of forcing oral sex on one woman, acquitted of forcibly performing oral sex on another, and the jury didn't decide on the rape charge, which involved

a third woman.

The sexual assault conviction carries the potential for up to 25 years in prison. The rape charge is punishable by up to four years — less than Weinstein already has served.

Weinstein has denied all the charges.

They were one outgrowth of a stack of sexual harassment and sex assault allegations against him that emerged publicly in 2017 and ensuing years, fueling the #MeToo movement against sexual misconduct. Early on, Weinstein apologized for “the way I’ve behaved with colleagues in the past,” while also denying that he ever had nonconsensual sex.

At trial, Weinstein’s lawyers argued that the women willingly accepted his advances in hopes of getting work in various capacities in show business, then falsely accused him to net settlement funds and attention.

Weinstein, who is being held in New York, also is appealing a rape conviction in Los Angeles.

## What to know about the rules for officers firing at a moving vehicle

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A federal immigration operation in Minneapolis turned deadly this week when a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer shot and killed 37-year-old Renee Good during a confrontation involving her vehicle.

Cellphone video captured the shooting, which federal officials claimed was an act of self-defense but that the city’s mayor described as “reckless” and unnecessary. Video shows an ICE officer approaching Good’s SUV stopped in the road as the vehicle begins to move forward. Another ICE officer standing in front of it draws his gun and fires at close range as he jumps out of the way.

Here’s what to know about regulations on using deadly force in these situations:

When can officers fire at a moving vehicle?

There is no universal training standard for law enforcement. But most police departments and federal guidance bar shooting at a moving vehicle unless the driver poses an imminent threat of deadly force beyond the car itself.

Why are shootings at vehicles restricted?

Experts say firing at a moving car is one of the riskiest forms of lethal force, increasing the chance of stray gunfire or a loss of vehicle control that can endanger bystanders.

Are officers expected to move out of the way?

Yes. Justice Department policy says deadly force is allowed only when no reasonable alternative exists, including stepping out of the vehicle’s path.

Can officers use deadly force just to stop or arrest someone?

No. Policies generally state officers cannot use deadly force solely to arrest someone or to disable a fleeing vehicle if the person does not pose an immediate threat.

Do federal immigration agents follow different rules?

Not fundamentally. ICE and other federal officers operate under similar Justice Department guidance limiting gunfire at vehicles, although federal agents have added legal protections when acting within their official duties.

What is ICE’s policy?

The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees ICE, allows deadly force only when an officer reasonably believes someone poses an imminent threat of death or serious injury.

Who investigates these shootings?

Federal agencies conduct internal reviews, and state and local authorities may also pursue criminal investigations. Federal agents are not immune from prosecution if they act outside their authority. The FBI is leading the investigation into the Minneapolis shooting.

## Dolphins fire Mike McDaniel, increasing the total number of NFL coaching openings to 8

By The Associated Press undefined

The NFL has eight coaching openings after Mike McDaniel was fired by the Miami Dolphins on Thursday. The league had three dismissals on Black Monday, one on Sunday night and one on Tuesday night. Two coaches were fired during the season.

Here's the rundown:

Dolphins, Mike McDaniel

The Dolphins went 35-33 in four seasons under McDaniel, reaching the playoffs in his first two seasons but losing in the first round each time. Miami missed the postseason in 2024 after being eliminated by the Jets in the regular-season finale. This year, their postseason hopes ended with a loss to Pittsburgh in Week 15, ensuring that their 25-year playoff-win drought — the longest streak in the NFL — would continue.

Ravens, John Harbaugh

After 18 seasons as Baltimore's coach, Ravens owner Steve Bisciotti relieved Harbaugh of his duties after his team was one of the NFL's most disappointing teams. Harbaugh went 193-124 including the postseason. He led the 2012 Ravens to a Super Bowl title and reached the AFC championship game on three other occasions.

Cardinals, Jonathan Gannon

Arizona came into the season with high hopes of contending in the NFC West but finished with just three wins for one of the worst records in franchise history. The 37-20 loss to the Los Angeles Rams on Sunday was the team's ninth straight and 14th in 15 games. Gannon finished 15-36 in three seasons.

Raiders, Pete Carroll

Carroll, the NFL's oldest coach at 74, did not come close to enjoying the success he did while winning one of two Super Bowls over 14 years with Seattle and two national titles in nine years at Southern California. The Raiders were 3-14 in Carroll's only season and had a 10-game losing streak before they posted a 14-12 victory over Kansas City on Sunday.

Browns, Kevin Stefanski

Two straight wins to end the regular season couldn't save Stefanski, who was 5-12 this season and 46-58 over six years. He led the Browns to the playoffs in 2020 and 2023 and was AP coach of the year both seasons. But he could never lock down a franchise quarterback, going through 13 starters, including seven the past two seasons.

Falcons, Raheem Morris

The Falcons were 8-9 two straight years under Morris and finished this season with four wins in a row and in a three-way tie for first in the NFC South. The streak came after the team had been eliminated from playoff contention. Morris had been the Falcons' interim coach for the final 11 games in 2020 after Dan Quinn was fired and he returned last year after having been the Rams' defensive coordinator.

Giants, Brian Daboll

Daboll was fired Nov. 10 after the Giants lost eight of their first 10 games. An upset of defending Super Bowl champion Philadelphia was followed by four straight losses, including one to Denver in which the Giants blew an 18-point lead with six minutes to play. Daboll led the Giants to the playoffs in his first season but went 11-33 after that and finished 20-40-1.

Titans, Brian Callahan

Callahan was the first coach fired, on Oct. 14, after the Titans lost five of their first six games. Callahan was 4-19, including a 10-game losing streak. He handed off play-calling duties after a 0-3 start in a sign of things to come. Of the 241 NFL coaches who have coached at least 20 games or more since the 1970 merger, Callahan ranks 237th with a .174 winning percentage.

## Russian drone strikes cause major blackouts in two regions of Ukraine

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian drone strikes temporarily knocked out power to the entire southern Zaporizhzhia region of Ukraine and left more than 600,000 households in the central Dnipropetrovsk region without electricity, officials said Thursday.

The bombardment occurred against the backdrop of U.S.-led diplomatic efforts to stop the fighting, nearly four years after Russia invaded its neighbor.

Ukraine and its Western allies have been working to establish a framework for a peace settlement, but Moscow has given no public sign it is willing to compromise.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy chided Russia for aiming at public services in the nighttime attack.

"There is no military rationale for such strikes on energy facilities and infrastructure that leave people without electricity and heating in winter conditions," Zelenskyy said on social media.

Russia has repeatedly targeted Ukraine's power grid since it invaded, denying civilians heat and running water in a strategy Ukrainian officials call "weaponizing winter."

The Zaporizhzhia region, which before the war had a population of around 1.5 million, was left without power for four hours for the first time since the invasion.

Emergency crews repaired the grid in Zaporizhzhia but in Dnipropetrovsk there was still no power for hundreds of thousands of people on Thursday afternoon, private energy company DTEK said.

"It is important that our partners around the world respond to Russia's abuse of people," Zelenskyy said. He has urged countries to exert greater pressure on Moscow to stop its aggression. In a post on social media later Thursday, Zelenskyy said there was information that "a new massive Russian attack may occur tonight," and he urged people to pay attention to air alerts in the coming days and to take shelter.

An agreement for the United States to provide postwar security guarantees to Ukraine "is ready to be finalized," Zelenskyy said, indicating that he could sign it alongside U.S. President Donald Trump.

The agreement would help deter any future Russian attack, but only after a peace deal is reached.

Zelenskyy said that Ukraine, the U.S. and European countries are still discussing postwar reconstruction and development.

Ukraine has presented to U.S. officials possible options for a peace settlement, and Washington will discuss them with Russia, Zelenskyy said.

"We're waiting for a feedback on whether the enemy is truly ready to end the war," Zelenskyy added. During the day Thursday, Russia launched two ballistic missiles on Kryvyi Rih, hitting apartment buildings and injuring 10 people with one man in critical condition, according to Oleksandr Vikul, head of the regional military administration.

The Russian Defense Ministry, meanwhile, said air defenses downed 66 Ukrainian drones overnight over Russian regions, the illegally annexed Crimea, the Black Sea and the Azov Sea.

## Saudi Arabia alleges UAE smuggled wanted Yemen separatist leader out of the country

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Saudi Arabia said Thursday that the United Arab Emirates smuggled a separatist leader in Yemen wanted for treason out of the country and flew him to Abu Dhabi.

The UAE had no immediate reaction to the accusation, which further escalates tensions between the neighboring nations on the Arabian Peninsula as their partnership in the yearslong war in Yemen breaks down.

A Saudi military statement said that Aidarous al-Zubaidi, the leader of the Southern Transitional Council, fled Yemen by boat to Somalia. Al-Zubaidi was then flown to Abu Dhabi, the UAE's capital, the statement

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said.

Saudi-Emirati relations sour

The UAE has been the major supporter of the council, known as the STC, which sparked a confrontation between Saudi Arabia and the UAE in recent days, after STC fighters advanced in two governorates and appeared to be preparing to secede from Yemen.

The Saudi statement from Maj. Gen. Turki al-Malki included him naming a major general in the UAE as being involved in al-Zubaidi's purported escape, along with identifying his nom de guerre — something highly unusual in Gulf Arab relations. It also suggested that an Ilyushin Il-76 aircraft used in the operation had been deployed in "conflict zones" like Ethiopia, Libya and Somalia — routes that the Emirati military has been accused of funneling weapons through in the past.

The UAE has denied running guns into those areas. The Emirati Foreign Ministry didn't immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

In a statement Thursday, Somalia's Immigration and Citizenship Agency, which is a part of the Ministry of Internal Security, said it was launching an investigation of "the alleged unauthorized use of Somalia's national airspace and airport" calling it unacceptable and a violation of its sovereignty. It also said that any attempt by al-Zubaidi "through alleged external support" to evade Saudi Arabia's call for dialogue is contradictory to the dialogue process and would be a breach of bilateral agreements without naming an external actor.

The STC didn't immediately acknowledge the allegation either, saying Wednesday that al-Zubaidi had remained in Aden, where forces allied against the Iran-backed Houthi rebels had congregated for years since the rebels seized Yemen's capital, Sanaa.

A meeting with the STC

Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Yemen, Mohammed al-Jaber, said on X on Thursday morning that he met with the STC delegation that landed in Riyadh a day earlier. They discussed al-Zubaidi's recent actions, which he said "harmed the southern cause and didn't serve it."

"We also explored ways to work in the future to address what happened in a manner that serves the Southern cause, the Coalition's efforts to achieve security and stability in Yemen, and we addressed the arrangements for the Southern Cause Conference, which will be held in Riyadh soon," he said.

Meanwhile, Mohamed al-Ghaithi, an STC member and head of the negotiation and reconciliation committee supporting the Presidential Leadership Council, called the meeting with al-Jaber "fruitful" and praised the kingdom's initiative to sponsor the conference aimed at finding a resolution in the south. Al-Ghaithi confirmed that the delegation "rejected everything that harms unity."

"We have heard clear commitments from our brothers in Riyadh toward our people's cause and ensuring a secure and stable future," he posted on X. On Wednesday, the STC had said it lost contact with its delegation after they landed in Riyadh, with a council representative saying that members' cellphones were either switched off or ringing with no one answering.

Southern Yemen had been run under the Presidential Leadership Council, a group including al-Zubaidi and others, since 2022. On Wednesday, the leadership council expelled al-Zubaidi and charged him with treason after he apparently declined to fly to Saudi Arabia for talks. It marked the latest pushback against the STC by Saudi Arabia, which also recently launched airstrikes against the group and an arms shipment the kingdom said came from the UAE.

Addressing long-standing grievances

Meanwhile, Hans Grundberg, the U.N. special envoy for Yemen, met Thursday with PLC members in Riyadh to discuss developments in Yemen and its broader implications, according to a statement released by the envoy's office.

Grundberg said that an anticipated conference expected to be hosted by the kingdom "offers a timely opportunity to reduce tensions, address long-standing grievances through political means, and move discussions towards stabilization."

Background on the conflict

The war in Yemen, on the southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula and bordering the Red Sea and the

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Gulf of Aden, has killed more than 150,000 people, including fighters and civilians. It has created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. The Houthis have also launched attacks against shipping over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, disrupting a vital route for global commerce.

The U.S., which earlier praised Saudi-Emirati efforts to end the crisis over the separatists, has launched airstrikes against the Houthi rebels under both Presidents Joe Biden and Donald Trump. Saudi Arabia's foreign minister met with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Washington on Wednesday.

This latest accusation will further strain ties between Saudi Arabia and the UAE, OPEC members and neighbors that increasingly have competed over economic issues and regional politics, particularly in the Red Sea area. The Yemen dispute has become their most serious confrontation in decades.

The Saudi statement came as part of what appeared to be an organized media push over the incident by Saudi broadcasters and newspapers that offered details that could prove embarrassing for the Emiratis. The Saudi-owned satellite news channel Al Arabiya aired what it described as intercepted telephone calls highlighting al-Zubaidi's alleged escape.

Saudi Arabia's English-language newspaper Arab News offered a front-page image of al-Zubaidi under the headline "WANTED" in the style of a poster from the American Old West. A scathing front-page editorial by the state-backed newspaper said that the separatist leader's refusal to come to the kingdom was "cementing his image as a traitor to his country."

"Al-Zubaidi chose narrow self-interest, aligning with foreign powers at the expense of his homeland and attempting to impose southern secession by force," the editorial said. "His sole aim: to seize power for himself."

## Trump officials and Louisiana put an end to another decades-old school desegregation order

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration and Louisiana officials have lifted another decades-old school desegregation order, part of a campaign to end court mandates they describe as outdated.

A federal judge on Monday approved a joint motion from Louisiana and the U.S. Justice Department to dismiss a 1967 lawsuit in DeSoto Parish schools, a district of about 5,000 students in the state's northwest. It's the second such dismissal since the Justice Department began working to overturn desegregation cases it once championed.

Louisiana Attorney General Liz Murrill thanked President Donald Trump and Attorney General Pam Bondi on Wednesday for "helping us to finally end some of these cases."

"DeSoto Parish has its school system back," Murrill said in a statement. "For the last 10 years, there have been no disputes among the parties, yet the consent decree remained."

The case dates to 1967, when the Justice Department sued DeSoto Parish to end its racially segregated school system. The case resulted in a 1970 court order requiring the district to eliminate segregation and provide regular progress reports. The order was modified several times over the decades but there had been little activity in recent years.

In the motion for dismissal, Louisiana and Trump officials said the order was no longer needed.

"While this case has been pending for over a half-century, there has been no dispute among the parties since 2014," they wrote in a Dec. 30 court filing. "The parties thus are no longer adverse, and there is no case or controversy."

Their motion was approved by U.S. District Judge S. Maurice Hicks Jr., who was appointed by former President George W. Bush.

State officials say the court orders place an unfair burden on school districts. Districts under such orders usually have to get approval from the court to build new schools, change attendance boundaries or make policy changes touching on court orders.

Civil rights groups say the orders are needed to fight the enduring impact of racial discrimination.

DeSoto went to the court for numerous changes over the years, including new attendance zones in 2014

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that remain in place today. The district also files status reports showing the racial breakdown of students and teachers, along with data on student transfers. The district's last report was filed in October.

Louisiana Republicans see the decades-old desegregation orders as a challenge to local control and have worked to get them lifted in recent years. Working alongside Trump's justice officials, they successfully dismissed a 1966 order in the Plaquemines Parish.

In the Plaquemines case, the lawsuit had been idle for decades after the judge overseeing it died in the 1970s.

An effort to overturn a 1960s order in Concordia Parish schools has faced pushback from a federal court. A judge in that case rejected a motion to dismiss the suit, saying Concordia must first demonstrate it has fully ended segregation. State and federal officials are appealing the decision.

The Concordia case was originally brought by Black families who demanded access to the town's all-white schools.

## Google adds new AI features to Gmail, turning it into a personal assistant

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

More artificial intelligence is being implanted into Gmail as Google tries to turn the world's most popular email service into a personal assistant that can improve writing, summarize far-flung information buried in inboxes and deliver daily to-do lists.

The new AI features announced Thursday could herald a pivotal moment for Gmail, a service that transformed email when it was introduced nearly 22 years ago. Since then, Gmail has amassed more than 3 billion users to become nearly as ubiquitous as Google's search engine.

Gmail's new AI options will only be available in English within the United States for starters, but the company is promising to expand the technology to other countries and other languages as the year unfolds.

The most broadly available tool will be a "Help Me Write" option designed to learn a user's writing style so it can personalize emails and make real-time suggestions on how to burnish the message.

Google is also offering subscribers who pay for its Pro and Ultra services access to technology that mirrors the AI Overviews that's been built into its search engine since 2023. The expansion will enable subscribers pose conversational questions in Gmail's search bar to get instant answers about information they are trying to retrieve from their inboxes.

In what could turn into another revolutionary step, "AI Inbox" is also being rolled out to a subset of "trusted testers" in the U.S. When it's turned on, the function will sift through inboxes and suggest to-do lists and topics that users might want to explore.

"This is us delivering on Gmail proactively having your back," said Blake Barnes, a Google vice president of product.

All of the new technology is tied to the Google's latest AI model, Gemini 3, which was unleashed into its search engine late last year. The upgrade, designed to turn Google search into a "thought partner" has been so well received that it prompted OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, whose company makes the popular ChatGPT chatbot, to issue a "code red" following its release.

But thrusting more AI into Gmail poses potential risks for Google, especially if the technology malfunctions and presents misleading information or crafts emails that get users into trouble — even though people are able to proofread the messages or turn off the features at any time.

Allowing Google's AI to dig deeper into inboxes to learn more about their habits and interest also could raise privacy issues — a challenge that Gmail confronted from the get-go.

To help subsidize the free service, Google included targeted ads in Gmail that were based on information contained within the electronic conversations. That twist initially triggered a privacy backlash among lawmakers and consumer groups, but the uproar eventually died down and never deterred Gmail's rapid growth as an email provider. Rivals eventually adopted similar features.

As it brings more AI into Gmail, Google promises none of the content that the technology analyzes will

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be used to train the models that help Gemini improve. The Mountain View, California, company says it also has built an "engineering privacy" barrier to corral all the information within inboxes to protect it from prying eyes.

## Slightly more Americans file for jobless benefits in the last week of 2025, but layoffs remain low

By MATT OTT AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. filings for jobless benefits rose in the last week of 2025 but remain historically low, despite signs that the labor market is weakening.

The number of Americans filing for jobless claims for the week ending Jan. 3 rose by 8,000 to 208,000, up from 200,000 the previous week, the Labor Department reported Thursday. The figure was right in line with what analysts surveyed by the data firm FactSet were expecting.

Applications for unemployment aid are viewed as a proxy for layoffs and are close to a real-time indicator of the health of the job market.

Last month, the government reported that the U.S. gained a decent 64,000 jobs in November but lost 105,000 in October as federal workers departed after cutbacks by the Trump administration. That helped to push the unemployment rate up to 4.6%, the highest since 2021.

The government's December jobs report will be released Friday, with analysts expecting that the U.S. added 55,000 non-farm jobs.

On Wednesday, the Labor Department reported that businesses posted far fewer jobs in November than the previous month, a sign that employers aren't yet ramping up hiring even as growth has picked up.

Businesses and government agencies posted 7.1 million open jobs at the end of November, down from 7.4 million in October. Layoffs also dropped as companies seem to be retaining workers even as they are reluctant to add staff, a trend economists refer to as "low hire, low fire."

Recent government data has revealed a labor market in which hiring has clearly lost momentum, hobbled by uncertainty raised by President Donald Trump's tariffs and the lingering effects of the high interest rates the Fed engineered in 2022 and 2023 to rein in a spike of pandemic-induced inflation. Since March, job creation has fallen to an average 35,000 a month, compared to 71,000 in the 12 months ended in March.

In an attempt to stabilize a softening labor market, the Federal Reserve last month trimmed its benchmark lending rate by a quarter-point, its third straight cut.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell said members of the committee are increasingly concerned that the job market is even weaker than it appears. Powell suggested that recent job figures could be revised lower by as much as 60,000, which would mean employers have actually been shedding an average of about 25,000 jobs a month since the spring, when the Trump administration rolled out its sweeping import taxes.

Companies that have recently announced job cuts include UPS, General Motors, Amazon and Verizon.

The Labor Department reported Thursday that the four-week average of claims, which softens some of the week-to-week volatility, fell by 7,250 to 211,750.

The total number of Americans filing for jobless benefits for the previous week ending Dec. 27 jumped by 56,000 to 1.91 million, the government said.

## Today in History: January 9, the iPhone makes its debut

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, Jan. 9, the ninth day of 2026. There are 356 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Jan. 9, 2007, Apple CEO Steve Jobs introduced the iPhone at the Macworld conference in San Francisco.

Also on this date:

In 1861, Mississippi became the second state to secede from the Union, the same day the Star of the West, a merchant vessel bringing reinforcements and supplies to Federal troops at Fort Sumter, South

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Carolina, retreated because of artillery fire.

In 1916, the World War I Battle of Gallipoli ended with an Ottoman Empire victory as Allied forces withdrew.

In 1945, during World War II, American forces began landing on the shores of Lingayen Gulf in the Philippines as the Battle of Luzon got underway, resulting in an Allied victory over Imperial Japanese forces.

In 2005, Mahmoud Abbas was elected president of the Palestinian Authority following the death of Yasser Arafat the previous November.

In 2018, downpours sent mud and boulders roaring down Southern California hillsides that had been stripped of vegetation by a wildfire; more than 20 people died and hundreds of homes were damaged or destroyed.

In 2022, 17 people, including eight children, died after a fire sparked by a malfunctioning space heater filled a high-rise apartment building with smoke in the New York City borough of the Bronx; it was the city's deadliest blaze in three decades.

Today's birthdays: Musician-activist Joan Baez is 85. Rock musician Jimmy Page (Led Zeppelin) is 82. Singer Crystal Gayle is 75. Actor J.K. Simmons is 71. Actor Imelda Staunton is 70. Nobel Peace Prize laureate Rigoberta Menchú is 67. Actor Joely Richardson is 61. Musician Dave Matthews is 59. Rapper and singer Sean Paul is 53. Actor Angela Bettis is 53. Singer AJ McLean (Backstreet Boys) is 48. Golfer Sergio Garcia is 46. Catherine, Princess of Wales, is 44. World champion bull rider J.B. Mauney is 39. Actor Nina Dobrev is 37.