

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 1 of 76

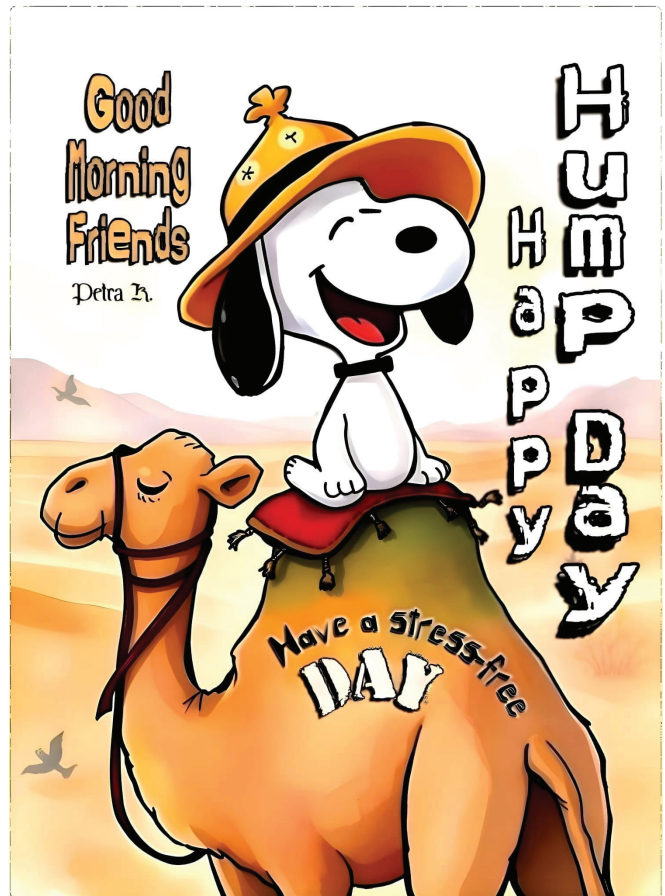
- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Coming up on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [5- NSU President's and Dean's List for Fall 2025](#)
- [5- Ace of Hearts](#)
- [6- 2026 State of the State Address](#)
- [14- GDI Fitness Center Ad](#)
- [15- SD News Watch: Governor calls on lawmakers to 'stop abortion pills from coming into South Dakota'](#)
- [17- SD SearchLight: Native American leaders in Dakotas urge use of tribal IDs, denounce ICE tactics](#)
- [18- SD SearchLight: Registration now required for public to testify at SD legislative committees](#)
- [19- SD SearchLight: Vaccines are victims of their own success](#)
- [20- SD SearchLight: Progressives in Congress vow to oppose immigration enforcement funding](#)
- [21- SD SearchLight: US Supreme Court appears poised to affirm trans athlete bans in Idaho, West Virginia](#)
- [24- Weather Pages](#)
- [29- Daily Devotional](#)
- [30- Subscription Form](#)
- [31- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [32- News from the Associated Press](#)

## Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2026

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.  
School Lunch: Cheese quesadilla, black beans.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.  
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.  
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.  
2nd Grade BBB Practice, 5 p.m.  
6th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.  
3rd/4th Grade Volleyball Practice, 6 p.m.  
5th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.

## Thursday, Jan. 15, 2026

School Breakfast: Egg wraps.  
School Lunch: Lasagna bake, green beans.  
Little Leaders Cheer Clinic, 3:30 p.m.  
Basketball: Tiospa Zina at Groton: (JVBBB-4, JVGBB-5, VBBB-6:15, VGBB-7:30)  
4th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.  
Boys Wrestling Triangular with Webster at Redfield, 6 p.m.



## Friday, Jan. 16, 2026

School Breakfast: Cereal.  
School Lunch: French bread pizza, corn.  
Boys Wrestling at Philip Invitational, 10 a.m.  
Girls Wrestling at Harrisburg Invitational, 4 p.m.  
JH BBB at Milbank (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.)

## Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026

Boys Wrestling at Battler Invitational (Gettysburg), 10 a.m.  
Boys Basketball: Dakota Valley at Groton: (BC-2, JVB-3:15, VB-4:30)

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 2 of 76

# 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.**

## Iran Protest Toll

The death toll from protests in Iran has surpassed 2,500 people, with arrests exceeding 18,000, according to a US-based rights group relying on activists inside the country. A nationwide internet blackout has restricted information, and the Iranian government hasn't released casualty figures, but state television yesterday acknowledged for the first time that many have died.

Unrest began in late December among Tehran merchants after the national currency collapsed and inflation topped 40%. Protests have since spread nationwide, reflecting broader anger at Iran's theocracy. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei has long consolidated power and suppressed internal dissent, but the current unrest may be the deadliest of his over 36-year rule. Khamenei, 86, has not publicly named a successor; meanwhile, some protesters have expressed support for exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi.

Pahlavi has reportedly met with the Trump administration, which imposed 25% tariffs on Iran's trading partners Monday. Yesterday, President Donald Trump canceled talks with Iranian officials and urged civilians to continue protesting.

## Cancer Survival Rises

The five-year cancer survival rate in the US has reached 70% for the first time, according to an American Cancer Society report released yesterday. The figure, based on diagnoses from 2015 to 2021, is up from 49% in the mid-1970s and 63% in the mid-1990s.

The ACS attributes the rise to wider and earlier screening, lower smoking rates, and advances in targeted and immunotherapy treatments. Survival has improved across most major cancer types, including thyroid (98%), prostate (98%), testis (95%), melanoma (95%), and breast (92%), though racial, economic, and regional disparities persist. Myeloma (blood cancer) survival nearly doubled to 62% since the 1990s, and liver cancer survival more than tripled to 22%. Rates were lowest for cancers of the lung (28%), liver (22%), esophagus (22%), and pancreas (13%).

Between 1991 and 2023, advances in cancer care prevented an estimated 4.8 million deaths. The ACS projects about 2.1 million new cases and over 626,000 cancer deaths in 2026.

## 'Dilbert' Cartoonist Dies

Scott Adams, the author and cartoonist behind the "Dilbert" comic strip, has died at age 68 after a battle with prostate cancer.

"Dilbert" offered a satirical take on corporate America, inspired by Adams' own experiences at Crocker National Bank and the Pacific Bell Telephone Company (acquired by AT&T). The comic featured a cubicle-dwelling middle manager named Dilbert, who wore glasses and an upturned black-and-red striped tie. Other characters included Dilbert's anthropomorphic pet Dogbert as well as Catbert, the company's head of human resources. By 2013, the strip was syndicated in over 2,000 newspapers across 65 countries. In 2023, many newspapers cut ties with Adams after comments he made encouraging white people to stay away from Black people; Adams later said the comments were intended to be hyperbolic.

Adams also published several books, including "Win Bigly," which analyzed President Donald Trump's persuasion techniques in his 2016 campaign, and "The Dilbert Principle," which suggests ineffective workers are systematically promoted to management.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 3 of 76

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Zoe Saldña becomes highest-grossing actor ever with combined estimated box office gross of over \$15.4B about a month after "Avatar: Fire and Ash" release.

K-pop band BTS releases 79-show world tour dates after more than three-year hiatus.

Mike Tomlin steps down as Pittsburgh Steelers head coach after 19 seasons.

Sports merchandising company Fanatics to launch content studio; first projects include 2028 Olympic Games film and Tom Brady docuseries.

Trevor Noah to host his sixth and final Grammy Awards Feb. 1; this year is the show's last broadcast on longtime home CBS ahead of 10-year Disney deal.

Actor Kiefer Sutherland arrested, released after Hollywood ride-share driver altercation.

## Science & Technology

US greenhouse gas emissions rise by 2.4% in 2025, ending two-year decline; researchers link uptick to 13% increase in coal power, driven partly by AI data centers' energy demands and rising natural gas prices.

Moon dust suggests lunar chemistry was altered by an ancient massive impact, offering an explanation for why the nearside is smooth, dark, and covered in lava plains while the farside is lighter and crater-scarred.

Analysis of 99 bee tongues suggests queen bees retire once worker bees are born because worker bees' tongues are better suited to collect nectar.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -0.2%, Dow -0.8%, Nasdaq -0.1%) as JPMorgan Chase kicks off earnings season; shares in America's biggest bank fell 4.2% after missing estimates and reporting a \$2.2B hit from Apple Card deal.

Consumer price index rose 2.7% year over year in December, unchanged from November's pace and in line with economists' expectations.

Boeing reports it outsold Airbus last year for the first time since 2018, with 1,173 airplane orders for 2025, while Airbus reported 889 sales for 2025.

## Politics & World Affairs

Six federal prosecutors resign from the US attorney's office in Minnesota amid alleged Justice Department pressure to investigate the widow of Renee Nicole Good, who was killed by an ICE agent last week.

Trump administration announces it will end temporary protected status for Somali nationals, a program dating back to 1991; an estimated 2,500 Somalis with TPS status will be required to leave the US by March 17.

South Korean prosecutors announce they will seek the death penalty for former South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, who imposed martial law for six hours in December 2024.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 4 of 76



Coming Up on  
GDILIVE.COM

Groton  
Area  
Tigers  
Groton, SD

# GDILIVE



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*Groton Daily Independent*



For more info: [GDILIVE.COM](http://GDILIVE.COM)



**Thurs., Jan. 15, 2026 - Tiospa Zina  
Basketball Doubleheader in Groton  
Boys Varsity 6:15, Girls Varsity 7:30**



**Sat., Jan. 17, 2026 - Dakota Valley  
Boys Basketball in Groton  
C at 2:00, JV at 3:15, Varsity at 4:30**

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 5 of 76

## NSU President's and Dean's List for Fall 2025

ABERDEEN, S.D. – Northern State University is proud to recognize the outstanding academic achievements of students for the Fall 2025 semester. The university is pleased to announce the students who have earned a place on the President's List, Dean's List, and Academic Recognition List.

The President's List honors full-time undergraduate students who have achieved a perfect 4.00 grade point average (GPA) for the semester. This distinction reflects a commitment to academic excellence and dedication to their studies.

The Dean's List recognizes full-time undergraduate students who have attained a GPA of 3.50 to 3.99 during the semester. This reflects their dedication and sustained effort in achieving high academic standards.

Part-time undergraduate students earning a place on the Academic Recognition List have achieved a system honor point average of 3.50 or higher for the semester. Eligibility requires completion of at least 12 credit hours prior to the current semester at one or more Regental institutions. This honor demonstrates their sustained commitment to academic success.

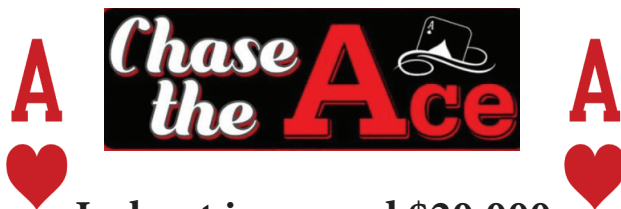
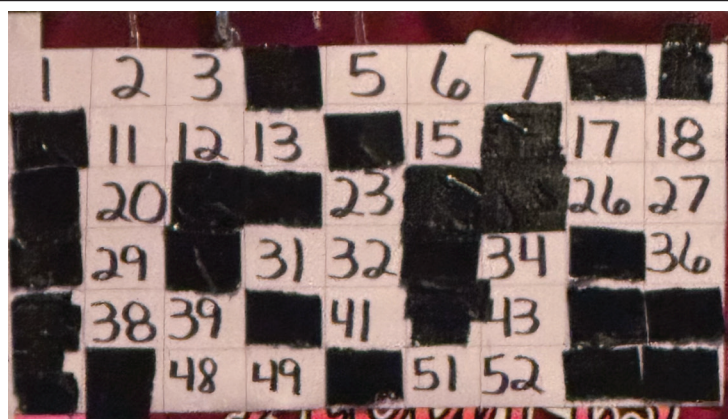
Northern State University congratulates these students on their remarkable accomplishments and wishes them continued success in their academic pursuits. Their hard work and dedication exemplify the university's values of excellence and perseverance.

### PRESIDENT'S LIST

Alexandria Cutler (Claremont, S.D.)  
Reegan Cvancara (Columbia, S.D.)  
Elizabeth Fliehs (Groton, S.D.)  
Abigail Hinman (Groton, S.D.)  
Ava Kramer (Groton, S.D.)  
Triston Leidholdt (Bath, S.D.)  
Stella Meier (Groton, S.D.)  
Olivia Morlock (Frederick, S.D.)  
Diego Nava Remigio (Groton, S.D.)  
Cole Simon (Groton, S.D.)  
Cali Vandervorst (Claremont, S.D.)  
Bryson Wambach (Groton, S.D.)  
Laney Widener (Langford, S.D.)

### DEAN'S LIST

Stephen Achen (Frederick, S.D.)  
Kaylin Anderson (Bristol, S.D.)  
Katelyn Beckler (Bath, S.D.)  
Anna Bisbee (Columbia, S.D.)  
Anna Fjeldheim (Groton, S.D.)  
Emma Grandpre (Conde, S.D.)  
Logan Hinman (Groton, S.D.)  
Katelyn Mehlhaff (Westport, S.D.)  
Lydia Meier (Groton, S.D.)  
Kelly Miles (Conde, S.D.)  
Emily Richie (Bristol, S.D.)  
Laila Roberts (Groton, S.D.)  
Anthony Schinkel (Groton, S.D.)  
Nicholas Schwab (Andover, S.D.)  
Veronica Scott (Bath, S.D.)  
Cadance Tullis (Groton, S.D.)  
Avery West (Langford, S.D.)



Jackpot is around \$20,000

Text Paul at 605-397-7460 if you would like to purchase a ticket.

Tickets are \$5 each or 5 for \$20.

Deadline to purchase from Paul is 3 p.m. Thursday. Or stop in at the Groton Legion by 5:30 p.m. Thursday.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 6 of 76

## 2026 State of the State Address

By: Gov. Larry Rhoden

January 13, 2026

### Introduction

Lieutenant Governor Venhuizen, Mr. Speaker, members of the House and Senate, Chief Justice Jensen, Supreme Court justices, constitutional officers, and my fellow South Dakotans:

We are gathered here at the convening of another session of the South Dakota Legislature. I've thought a lot this past year about that word, convene. Convene means, "To meet formally as a group... for a serious purpose." We are gathered here for such a purpose: to do the work of the people of South Dakota.

Before I became Governor a year ago, a good friend of mine reminded me of an important power of the Governor: "the power to convene." When I served as Majority Leader in this Chamber, our Republican caucus was 52 members with a wide range of wisdom over many areas. Convening the right group at the right time helped us get things done.

We've accomplished much in the past year – much of it through convening. The last time a vote was cast on this House floor was in a Special Session after the convening of the prison task force. I have convened both the GRIT task force and the Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force to work on key issues. And of course, your legislative summer studies also convened and got to work on important problems.

I'm talking about convening because it's important for you all to understand my leadership style. I don't need to be the smartest person in the room. It's more important to me to get the right people in the room – people with different perspectives who are focused on solutions. Shortly after becoming Governor, I pledged to all of you that a cornerstone of my administration would be civility. We achieved that last year. Let's all recommit to civility this legislative session.

At face value, this session might not be as historic as last year. For starters, we won't have a change of power this session – so Tony, don't get any ideas. But our work this session matters. If we all recommit to civility, work together, and focus on our small-government, commonsense conservative principles, we can do great work for the people this year. After all, "Under God, the People Rule."

South Dakota is a pretty special place. Our strength lies in our people. South Dakota has become a beacon to the rest of the nation. Our people have tremendous opportunities because we keep South Dakota strong, safe, and free. We've protected opportunity for all South Dakotans to live, work, raise their families, and do business.

I'm committed to keeping South Dakota Open for Opportunity. Today, I'd like to share my Opportunity Agenda – my plans to keep South Dakota strong, safe, and free for our kids and grandkids.

### Strong

I am focused on keeping South Dakota strong. In the past few years, the hard work of farmers, ranchers, small businesses, and families has built a remarkably strong state. We've weathered national economic headwinds with steady growth, low unemployment, and fiscal responsibility. We balance our budget and keep taxes low. We have the second most competitive tax system in America, the second least regulations, the lowest unemployment rate, and growing incomes that have exceeded the national average.

We need to keep working, though, to hold down property taxes. Last session, I convened a group of

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 7 of 76**

legislators to work on a solid first step, and we worked collaboratively to put together a bill that passed with bipartisan support. That was the only property tax bill that passed last session. It wasn't meant to solve every problem, but it helped to stem the bleeding. Now, it's time for more substantial relief.

I propose that we cut owner-occupied property taxes by giving the people in each county a simple option: replace the county's share of property taxes with a half-cent sales tax. The people's elected leaders at the county level could implement this plan if it fits their community, or they could refer it to a vote of the people, or the people could even initiate it. The areas with the biggest property tax increases are also those that attract the most visitors, so this proposal will allow those counties to cut property taxes and draw more revenues from tourists and out-of-staters. We've modeled this carefully, and we have estimated impacts for every county. If you'd like details on how it affects your constituents, my team will get the information to you.

This is a commonsense conservative plan: not a mandate, but a choice. We are giving local decision makers the flexibility to make the best decisions for their counties. We're empowering them to deliver significant property tax relief for homeowners. And my plan doesn't have to stand alone; legislative ideas could work in tandem, and I look forward to considering your ideas this year.

I also want to continue to listen to South Dakotans on this topic. Over the next few weeks, I will host property tax town halls in hard-hit areas like Sioux Falls, the Black Hills, and counties like Clay, Turner, and Union. If you'd like one of these events in your community, let me know. We will meet face-to-face to discuss and refine these solutions. Together, we'll keep our economy strong, our taxes low, and opportunity wide open.

After last session, I wanted to get out of my office and see the people of this state. As a new governor, I felt that I should get out so people could talk to me, and I could learn from them. Over the next several months, I toured communities across South Dakota, and we focused on turning challenges into opportunities. Much of what I'm telling you today was motivated by what I saw and heard on those visits. I've lived in South Dakota my whole life, and I am always impressed by the work ethic and creativity of our fellow South Dakotans. Everywhere I looked, I saw incredible products that aren't just Made in America – they're Made in South Dakota.

We helped tackle challenges for many of these businesses – and we even changed policies at the federal level. I heard from many businesses that are making good use of the new apprenticeship opportunities that we expanded during the Noem-Rhoden Administration, and there is room to do more in this area. This year, my Department of Labor and Regulation is bringing legislation to set up a State Apprenticeship Agency. This will give us more flexibility to structure apprenticeships in a way that makes sense for South Dakota businesses.

All told, we visited dozens and dozens of businesses on my Open for Opportunity tour, and I hate to pick favorites. But I have about a dozen leaders of those businesses here today. They reflect a variety of sectors including manufacturing, agriculture, firearms, biotech, and more. Would you all help me recognize these entrepreneurial South Dakotans?

Those business leaders are helping our state grow. And that's a good thing. An old pastor once told me, "Don't wait for doors to open. Check the doors; see if they're unlocked." Ultimately, economic development is about opening more doors of opportunity for our kids and grandkids. We want them to be able to pursue their careers right here in South Dakota. We will continue to check the doors, and we certainly should not lock the doors by limiting our economic potential.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 8 of 76**

This session, there will be plenty of conversation about economic growth and development. Let me be clear where I stand: economic growth is a good thing, and we should encourage it. But growth should not be reckless. We should be bold enough to seize opportunity – and wise enough to prepare for the future in a responsible way.

In recent weeks, I've prioritized bold, long-lasting projects. In Brookings, Dakota BioWorx is developing the technology to create new opportunities for value-added ag and bioprocessing. In Aberdeen and Watertown, community and business leaders are joining together to create new industrial development parks. These projects bring tremendous potential for strong growth in our communities. They are excellent examples of how the Future Fund can be used, strategically, to support forward-looking projects. Future Fund investments have moved South Dakota forward by turning bold vision into reality! And for as long as I am your Governor, that is the approach that we will take to economic development.

Access to healthcare is an important building block of every community. In many communities, healthcare is also one of the largest employers. I am proud that South Dakota has some of the best healthcare in the nation. But we also have plenty of wide-open spaces. I grew up in Union Center, so I understand exactly how important access to healthcare is in rural areas.

This is a big year for rural healthcare in South Dakota. Our state was recently awarded \$189 million in federal funding for our Rural Health Transformation Plan. This is the first year of a five-year investment to strengthen healthcare access across our state. As I told you in my Budget Address, we planned for \$100 million a year, so this higher award is a major win for South Dakota! And we will readjust our request for federal authority, accordingly.

We didn't commit to policy changes or programs that don't make sense for South Dakota. We focused on what our communities actually need. Our plan modernizes healthcare by bringing more services to rural and remote areas – and by bolstering technology. But ultimately, healthcare is about people, and we need the best people to provide the best healthcare, so this plan strengthens our healthcare workforce. We will attract and retain health professionals, expand community health workers, integrate behavioral health into primary care, improve chronic disease management, and support rural facilities. We will also establish Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics statewide and create regional EMS hubs.

This plan was built with extensive input from rural communities, the Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board, and healthcare providers and other stakeholders across the state. They told us what they need, and this plan delivers it. South Dakota is competing with every other state, and in future years, the federal government will reward states that move quickly. We could be the first state in the nation to authorize this funding, so I would love it if this was the first bill that reaches my desk.

Speaking of supporting our rural communities, in the last decade, we lost 3,600 family farms in South Dakota. Farms keep getting larger, but we can help families pass their farms on to the next generation. I recently announced that we're extending the State's support for the Keep Farmers Farming initiative. The South Dakota Ag Foundation helps family farms and ranches with estate and transition planning so that the operation can stay in the family. It's about transferring more than just money and assets – it's about passing down experience, work ethic, values, and history. Ag is king in South Dakota, so let's keep it strong for the future.

A strong economy depends on strong infrastructure. I launched the GRIT task force to assess our resilience to disasters, system failures, and cyber threats. This year, GRIT recommends expanding the SecureSD program at Dakota State University to extend cybersecurity support from cities and counties to nonprofit utilities like rural water systems. It is another way that we can maintain a strong economy and

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 9 of 76

strong communities, which will lead to a stronger South Dakota.

## Safe

In the last year, we have also taken several key steps to keep South Dakota safe. In my first month as Governor, I announced the formation of a new Highway Patrol squad in Sioux Falls, and you all responded and funded that new squad in last year's budget.

As Sioux Falls grew, we saw a major opportunity to improve public safety, so I launched Operation: Prairie Thunder. It has two missions. First: saturation patrols between the Highway Patrol and local law enforcement to fight crime and drugs. Second, targeted support for ICE, using resources from the National Guard, Highway Patrol, and Department of Corrections.

Let me be clear: Highway Patrol troopers do not have a special mission to find illegal aliens. They are working on crime and drug enforcement. When that mission brings them in contact with someone who is here illegally, they enforce the law and hand that individual over to the proper authorities. That's just common sense, and in South Dakota, we respect the rule of law.

Our saturation patrols were so successful in Sioux Falls that we took them on the road to Belle Fourche, Huron, Sturgis, Winner, and Yankton – and yes, we were in Brookings last week. And the numbers speak for themselves. To date, Operation: Prairie Thunder has yielded 432 individuals brought into custody, over 1,000 drug charges, nearly 250 warrants executed, 20 parole and probation absconders arrested, more than 2,100 traffic citations including 38 DUIs and 112 revoked licenses, 22 vehicle pursuits – nearly all of which were successful, 63 illegal aliens handed over to ICE custody, and 9 cartel or gang members apprehended. Separate from the saturation patrols, there was also a record 207 pound meth bust.

Operation: Prairie Thunder is not done. I said that we'd start with six months, and now it's time to reassess. We will continue the saturation patrols and add a trooper to the Sioux Falls Drug Task Force later this year. We'll continue the support for ICE, increase our 287(g) agreements with Highway Patrol and the Department of Corrections, and extend our administrative support from the National Guard.

Today, we have with us several of the Highway Patrol troopers and their leadership who delivered those outstanding results. We also have some of the National Guard soldiers who have provided administrative support to ICE. Please stand – and please join me in honoring these heroes who do so much to keep us safe.

Our National Guard also supported crucial national security missions this year. Our guardsmen served at the southern border and helped to deliver the most secure border in American history. And when President Trump committed to Make D.C. Safe and Beautiful Again, we did our part. Today, we have leadership of the South Dakota National Guard who do so much to keep America safe. Please stand – let's honor all of our men and women who have served in our armed forces, especially those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our nation.

The men and women in uniform are heroes. They signed up, and they show up. They truly go above and beyond. Last August, one Highway Patrol trooper took decisive action to save lives. She saw a vehicle speeding down I-90 – only it was going the wrong direction. So she drove her vehicle across the median and initiated a collision. When the vehicle again tried to drive away, she initiated another collision, then arrested the offender. Today, Trooper Emily Metzger is here with us. Would you please stand? Today, I am proud to honor Trooper Metzger with the Governor's Award for Heroism. Please join me in thanking her for her incredible courage!

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 10 of 76**

Our law enforcement deserves respect – at all levels. But for too many years, tribal law enforcement officers have not had the full protection of South Dakota law. This year, I will be supporting the State-Tribal Relations Committee’s bill to recognize tribal law enforcement under the definition of “law enforcement officer” in state law.

We also must increase protections for all law enforcement officers. In recent years, law enforcement officers have come under fire across the country. Well, South Dakota took a different path. The Noem-Rhoden Administration recruited law enforcement officers to move to South Dakota, and many answered that call. Now that they’re here, we’re going to protect them. Doxxing of law enforcement officers has become a serious problem in other states. They’ve had their homes targeted and their families attacked. We’ve also seen elected officials targeted, including the tragic attacks on state legislators in Minnesota.

To address this, my office is bringing forward two bills to protect the personal information of law enforcement, judges, legislators, and statewide officials by removing it from public voter files. We will also add doxxing to the crime of stalking and increase penalties when it targets law enforcement and public officials. South Dakota will not tolerate threats against those who uphold the law and serve the public.

In the last year, my office has worked with this Legislature to make important progress on improving our entire criminal justice system. We got the plan done for the new prison in Sioux Falls, and dirt work has started! And the new women’s prison in Rapid City is set to open in just a few months.

The Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force is hard at work. They’ve already recommended the Prison Seminary Model, and I was proud to accept that recommendation. This faith-based program will restore hope, build character, and strengthen our correctional system from the inside out. The task force has also advanced other recommendations, including tribal-focused rehabilitation opportunities. Thank you to the legislators on that task force – keep up the good work!

While we keep South Dakota safe, South Dakota is keeping the nation safe and secure. In fact, our state is punching above our weight in national security. Of course, our Secretary of Homeland Security is my predecessor, Kristi Noem. John Thune is our U.S. Senate Majority Leader. Senator Mike Rounds serves on the armed services committee and focuses on defense, intelligence, and cybersecurity. The Secretary of the Air Force is a South Dakotan, Dr. Troy Meink. The next generation B-21 bomber is coming to Ellsworth Air Force Base in Western South Dakota. And our cybersecurity industry has grown by 350% over the last decade, the second-fastest growth in the nation.

Governor Noem declared that cybersecurity would be South Dakota’s “next big industry,” and we’ve put real action behind those words. Today, I am taking it a step further. I am declaring that national security is South Dakota’s next big industry. This will be the major focus of my economic development efforts. National security creates major opportunities for South Dakota, and we need to seize them.

Businesses are already recognizing South Dakota as a great place for national security companies. When I recognized businesses earlier, one of those was MMS Products. They’re a Sioux Falls-based warfare-technology company. And they’re leading the field for innovation of drone munitions. Just last month, we announced that they received a \$35 million contract from the Department of War to produce groundbreaking warheads for America’s drone fleet.

And they won’t be the last announcement we make. The continued growth and leadership of Ellsworth Air Force base will pave the way for economic development in national security. Dakota State University will continue leading the field in cybersecurity. And bold, innovative companies like MMS Products will

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 11 of 76

continue to make important contributions to America's security. I talked to Senator Rounds about this last month, and he agreed that there is huge potential in this area.

We also recognize that food security is national security, and that is why I will continue to prioritize value-added ag. The new High Plains Processing plant near Mitchell and the CJ Schwan's development in Sioux Falls are each half-a-billion dollar investments in our state. Both will create new markets and better prices for our farmers. I look forward to more announcements in value-added ag as well.

## Free

In all those ways, we are keeping South Dakota – and our nation – safe. And we will also keep South Dakota free. We're the freest state in America, and we will keep it that way for our kids and our grandkids.

This past year, we took some important steps to protect freedom. This Legislature protected landowner rights, and I was proud to sign that into law. When the issue with the Maude family came up, I worked with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins to make sure that the charges against them got dismissed. And when out-of-state organizations tried to attack the right to life of unborn South Dakotans, I worked quickly with Attorney General Jackley to put a stop to it.

South Dakota is the most pro-life state in America, and we will keep it that way. The biggest threat to unborn lives is abortion pills being illegally mailed into our state. Abortion pills cause a higher rate of medical complications for women – that's a fact. More than that, they end the life of an unborn child. I've worked on this issue for over 20 years. Back in my freshman term in the Legislature, I was the prime sponsor of a House Concurrent Resolution urging the FDA to reconsider its approval of drugs that kill babies.

Some folks have tried to question whether abortion pills are actually dangerous. Well, don't take my word for it. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is actively reviewing the safety of these pills. Here today, we have medical professionals from two crisis pregnancy centers, the Alpha Center in Sioux Falls and Black Hills Pregnancy Center in Rapid City. They are seeing firsthand how abortion pills harm women. Some moms come in with medical complications; other moms come in seeking reversal pills, which are a medical miracle. Would you please join me in thanking these medical professionals for their life-saving work?

This session, I will be working with legislators and the Attorney General on legislation to stop abortion pills from coming into South Dakota, and I hope that legislation reaches my desk.

South Dakota is also the most pro-Second Amendment state in America, and we will keep it that way. I'm proud of our state for recognizing the right to Constitutional Carry for every South Dakotan. I focused on it as a legislator and during the Noem-Rhoden years, and there's more work to do. This year, I am working with legislators including Senator Crabtree to deregulate suppressors as part of a movement at the national level. This is another opportunity for our state to be first, and I look forward to signing that bill.

My wife, Sandy, is in the gallery today with some of our family. Our children and grandchildren are our greatest asset, and our pride and joy. I'm proud to tell you that, in 2026, our brood of grandkids will be growing from seven to ten! Please help me welcome Sandy and our family.

Sandy will be busy as a grandma, but she's also been busy as First Lady. She spent her career as a teacher and coach, and she is applying that experience now. Over the past year, Sandy has visited schools and talked to school leaders. They've discussed the problems caused by cell phones in the classrooms, and we've seen how local decision-makers are already confronting that issue without a state mandate.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 12 of 76**

Her "South Dakota Rising" initiative is all about encouraging South Dakotans to pursue a positive lifestyle of a sound mind in a sound body. She is doing great work – please help me thank her!

A free state is one where students are able to learn in a commonsense way. We emphasize innovation through competition, excellence, and new pathways to brighter career opportunities. Even in a tough funding year – maybe especially in a tough funding year – we can be proud of our educators and the work they do. And we can look for ways to support that work.

I am very proud of the work that my Department of Education is doing to improve outcomes in key areas, including reading and math. Our Science of Reading initiative is bringing phonics back into the classrooms. This effort is fueled by a \$6 million investment from this Legislature, which leveraged \$54 million in federal dollars. We rewrote our reading standards, changed our teacher training at the universities and offered training to current teachers. Last year, we began bold changes to the math standards, as well, to make it easier for parents to help with homework. We're replacing common core with common sense. And the Noem-Rhoden Administration's social studies reforms were implemented this fall.

And we're addressing teacher shortages. The Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway produces dozens of new teachers yearly. We're helping paraprofessionals achieve full teacher certification while still filling classroom jobs. Our teacher pay reforms are also helping recruit quality teachers.

For students, freedom means options. I was proud to opt-in to the Trump Administration's school choice opportunity through the One Big Beautiful Bill. This is not about public versus private schools. It's about unleashing innovation for every child, just as competition drives success in business and beyond. Over the next year, we will be working with leaders from private schools, public schools, and the homeschooling community, so that our state is ready to implement this program on January 1, 2027. It's a great opportunity to increase options for students and families.

Career and Technical Education is helping steer our kids toward high-demand fields, so we will continue prioritizing the growth of our Tech Colleges, such as our proposal this year for the new welding and machining facility at Southeast Tech. I also know CTE is an important part of the high school curriculum. Just last month, I visited the CTE Academy in Sioux Falls, where high school students learn everything from nursing and homebuilding to baking and aviation. They are even adding a large animal livestock facility.

Our schools sometimes have to deal with students who come from tough circumstances and cause disruptions in class. This year, my Department of Education will be bringing a bill to address the most challenging circumstances. It will give school boards more flexibility to find alternative settings for students in these tough situations. Legislators are focused on this issue, as well, and I hope we can work together on this important topic.

In South Dakota, you never feel freer than when you are enjoying the great outdoors. 2024 was our strongest pheasant season in a decade, and by all accounts, 2025 was just as strong. We have nearly 1.7 million acres of private land enrolled for public hunting access. And over 120,000 acres are enrolled by GFP's habitat programs. GFP fisheries stocked nearly 300,000 pounds of fish across the state in 2025. And we welcomed nearly 23,000 visitors for the 60th annual Buffalo Roundup.

In particular, we're focused on expanding opportunities for youth hunting and fishing. In October, we opened up Capitol Lake to youth mentored fishing for the first time – it's been fun to see families fishing and making memories. Last year, I signed legislation to streamline requirements for mentored youth hunting and fishing to encourage more participation and recruit the next generation of outdoors enthusiasts.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 13 of 76

As Kristi often said, we're encouraging our kids to put down the Xbox and pick up the tackle box.

Talking about the outdoors reminds us what makes South Dakota special. I have talked to you today about a vision for the future, but we also can't lose sight of all there is to celebrate, to preserve, and to imitate about our past.

This year is the 250th birthday of the United States of America, the freest nation in history. And South Dakota will host the very best and brightest celebration of that occasion when fireworks go off over Mount Rushmore on July 3rd. That monument celebrates four of our greatest presidents, who fought for the revolutionary ideal "that all men are created equal, and that [we] are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights." Nearby, Crazy Horse monument celebrates the legacy of the native people who met us here.

We are able to enjoy our Black Hills today, in part, because of the foresight of one of South Dakota's greatest leaders, our ninth governor, Peter Norbeck. As I close today, I would like to read the conclusion to his State of the State Address from 1919:

"I believe in South Dakota, in the fertility of her soil, the warmth of her sunshine, and the nurturing tenderness of her winter snows; I believe in the simple beauty of her rolling prairies and the more pretentious splendor of her western hills; I believe in her government, and in her institutions of home and church and school; I believe in the sturdy, intelligent manhood of her sons, and the chaste womanhood of her daughters; the hundred percent Americanism of her whole people;

"I believe that under the skies of South Dakota will continue to grow and prosper an intelligent, patriotic, and God-fearing people amply able to work out and solve the perplexing problems of the future as they have those of the past. I believe that as the bright noonday sun is only the fulfillment of the morning prophecy of its dawning splendor, so the accomplishments of our State today are the monuments of the hardy pioneers of yesterday. I believe that as the gorgeous tints of the sunset skies predict the coming of a bright tomorrow, the proud record and accomplishments of South Dakota surely point to a State whose star shall outshine all others in the Flag of our Country."

## Conclusion

Governor Norbeck's words hold true today. And it is why I am committed, as he was, to keeping our state strong, safe, and free. Today I have shared my Opportunity Agenda with you. South Dakota is in good shape. We have the opportunity this year to do commonsense things to make our state even better. If you need to talk to me or someone on my team, we'll be open and responsive. As I told you a year ago, I am not hard to find.

For as long as I have the honor to serve as your Governor, I will continue to make sure our people are blessed to live in the freest state in a nation founded on the principle of freedom.

Thank you. God bless you all, and may God continue to bless the great state of South Dakota.

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## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

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### **Governor calls on lawmakers to 'stop abortion pills from coming into South Dakota'**

**State of the State speech also lays out Rhoden's agenda on property taxes, economic growth, public safety**

**BY: JOHN HULT**

PIERRE — South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden asked lawmakers on Tuesday to pass legislation that would stop the delivery of medication into the state that can be used to end pregnancies.

"This session, I'll be working with legislators and the attorney general on legislation to stop abortion pills from coming into South Dakota, and I hope that legislation reaches my desk," Rhoden said.

Abortion is already illegal in South Dakota, unless the mother's life is threatened by a pregnancy.

Late last year, a New York-based nonprofit called Mayday Health posted abortion rights advertisements at gas stations around South Dakota. The ads, which directed people to a website on medication abortion options, drew a cease-and-desist letter from South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley.

"Abortions are banned in South Dakota except for specific, extenuating circumstances," Jackley's office wrote in a press release on the issue. "State law also prohibits the administering or procuring of any medicine, drug or substance to perform an abortion."

Jackley is suing the organization to stop the ads. Mayday Health countersued in federal court, arguing that South Dakota is trying to suppress constitutionally protected free speech.

In his State of the State speech Tuesday during the first day of the 2026 legislative session at the Capitol in Pierre, Rhoden, a Republican, told a joint session of the state Senate and House of Representatives that the state can do more to stop medication abortion.

He also asked lawmakers to rise and thank the leaders of two crisis pregnancy centers in the state, which he said help women who have "complications" from abortion medication and some who are "seeking reversal" of the medication's effect.

No bill outlining how the state would stop abortion pills from entering the state has been filed. Rhoden and Jackley's offices did not offer any details on any such proposal when asked by South Dakota Searchlight.

"The bill has not yet been introduced, and the supporters will be made known at the appropriate time," said Josie Harms, Rhoden's spokeswoman.

### **Democrats decry 'misinformation'**

In his speech, Rhoden said abortion medication being "illegally mailed into South Dakota" is the "biggest threat to unborn lives" in the state. He also said the pills are dangerous for women.

Senate Minority Leader Liz Larson, D-Sioux Falls, said she "obviously" disagrees with South Dakota's abortion ban, but said her biggest issue with Rhoden's speech was the governor's "mentioning of facts that are untrue" about abortion pills.

"They are used in a variety of medical situations, including miscarriage and abortion, that are really necessary for women," Larson said.

Rep. Kady Wittman, D-Sioux Falls, told South Dakota Public Broadcasting she took issue with "blatant misinformation and mistruths" about medication abortion, and that Mayday Health's ads amount to "First Amendment rights and protected speech."

Wittman mentioned the state's "life of the mother" exception and said she'd like to see legislation "clari-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 16 of 76

fying what the life of the mother actually means.”

“I’m hopeful that we’ll see it this year,” Wittman said. “We’ve always been looking for clarity around abortion access in South Dakota.”

Rhoden’s proclamation on abortion drew praise from a political opponent, however.

Speaker of the House Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, is running against Rhoden in this year’s primary election for governor. Hansen said he appreciated that portion of Rhoden’s speech and called it an area of agreement.

“Pro-life has always been near and dear to my heart,” Hansen said. “And the governor called out our pregnancy help centers in the state, who do incredible work each and every day.”

## Property taxes

Hansen said he disagrees with Rhoden on property tax legislation, an issue that’s set to be heavily debated throughout the three-month legislative session. A summer task force, a group Hansen was a part of, came up with 19 proposals to deal with growth in property taxes. Rhoden said last year that he didn’t like many of the ideas.

On Tuesday, he talked about his own previously announced plan, which would allow counties to replace their share of owner-occupied property tax revenue with a half cent sales tax.

His proposal offers “flexibility” to local decision-makers, Rhoden said, noting that sales tax collections could help the counties that most need property tax relief.

“The areas with the biggest property tax increase are also those that attract the most visitors,” Rhoden said.

Hansen rejected that plan as a tax increase.

“I remain committed to lowering the tax burden on the people of the state by actually cutting the size of government,” Hansen said. “And I’m looking for more support out of the governor’s office for that kind of approach.”

There were also a host of property tax proposals last year. Rhoden noted in his speech that a property tax bill he’d championed was the only one that passed. It sought to slow residential property tax growth with several methods, including temporarily capping assessment growth, exempting some home improvements from assessment calculations, and expanding eligibility among disabled and elderly people for assessment freeze programs.

“It wasn’t meant to solve every problem, but it helped to stem the bleeding,” Rhoden said. “Now, it’s time for more substantial relief.”

## Focus on national security in economic development

Rhoden declared national defense the next major area of economic development for the state.

He pointed to Sioux Falls-based MMS Products, which he said is “leading the field for innovation of drone munitions.” The company recently secured a \$35 million federal contract.

National security “will be the major focus of my economic development efforts,” Rhoden said.

He said economic development “is a good thing,” and pointed to recent Future Fund awards to a biotechnology project company in Brookings and industrial parks in Aberdeen and Watertown as proof that money “can be used, strategically, to support forward-looking projects.”

The Future Fund is a pool of money, paid for through a tax on employers, that’s meant for economic development and is under the governor’s sole control.

Gov. Kristi Noem’s use of the fund, including for a rodeo and to support gun range funding rejected by the Legislature, drew scrutiny prior to her exit from the state.

The first bill filed for this year’s session in the state Senate seeks to require the state Board of Economic Development to review all applications for loans or grants out of the Future Fund.

Rep. Scott Odenbach, R-Spearfish, is the majority leader for the House of Representatives. All lawmakers agree that economic development is good, he said, but the details are important.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 17 of 76

"It's a good thing, but it's not the only thing," Odenbach said.

Some lawmakers have expressed concerns about data centers, including Rep. Dylan Jordan, a Clear Lake Republican. A data center proposal in his county has drawn opposition, as has a proposal for Minnehaha County.

Odenbach expects to see plenty of discussion on data centers, which have drawn opposition from even those he described as "free-market" Republicans who support growth but also "like peace and quiet."

"We need to make sure we're safeguarding our water resources and also safeguarding our residential electric utility users so that they don't wake up one day and there's a 25% rate increase or a blackout because we've gotten ahead of ourselves in building data centers," Odenbach said.

## Public safety

The Spearfish Republican said lawmakers in both parties are likely to support Rhoden's policy initiatives on public safety.

Rhoden threw his support behind a bill offered by South Dakota's State Tribal Relations Committee that would recognize tribal officers as law enforcement officers in South Dakota.

Under current law it's a felony to assault a state, county or local police officer, but not to assault an officer employed by one of the state's tribes.

"For far too many years, tribal law enforcement officers have not had the full protection of South Dakota law," Rhoden said.

Rhoden also said he will propose a bill that would scrub the addresses of law enforcement officers and judges from the state's voter registration database to protect them from potential attacks.

The doxing — releasing home addresses and contact information — of law enforcement "has become a serious problem in other states," Rhoden said.

Rhoden recognized one law enforcement officer by name during his speech: Emily Metzger, a state trooper. Metzger ran her patrol car into a vehicle speeding in the wrong direction on Interstate 90 last year in an attempt to stop it. The offending vehicle kept going after the first collision, Rhoden said, and Metzger again ran into it to stop it before arresting the driver.

Metzger was in the House gallery for the speech. Rhoden awarded her the Governor's Award for Heroism on Tuesday and asked her to stand for an ovation from lawmakers.

*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.*

## Native American leaders in Dakotas urge use of tribal IDs, denounce ICE tactics

BY: MARY STEURER

Tribal leaders in the Dakotas are urging their citizens to carry tribal IDs and other forms of identification amid reports of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents detaining Native Americans in Minnesota.

At least five tribal citizens were reportedly detained by ICE last week in Minneapolis, reported ICT, an Indigenous news organization. Four are citizens of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, and the fifth is a descendant of the Red Lake Nation, the news organization reported.

Reports of Indigenous people being targeted by ICE agents prompted Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chair Steve Sitting Bear to issue a public safety alert on social media Friday.

Standing Rock is working on a designated telephone line to ensure tribal members know their rights if they come into contact with immigration agents, Sitting Bear said in a statement.

"Our Nation is a sovereign government and our members are not immigrants," he said. "We are not subject to immigration enforcement on our own lands."

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 18 of 76

The Spirit Lake Nation and Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate in a joint statement with the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe said ICE's activities in Minnesota have "caused fear and uncertainty" among their citizens.

The joint statement also condemned the killing of Renee Good by an ICE agent on Wednesday.

"As Dakota people, we are reminded of the sacrifices of our ancestors and the enduring impacts of displacement and violence experienced by our Nations," the tribes said.

Tribal governments have advised tribal members to carry tribal identification cards, certificates of degree of Indian blood or other official documentation.

The warnings come as at least 2,000 ICE agents are in neighboring Minnesota, with Homeland Security Director Kristi Noem reportedly ordering additional federal agents to the area.

"As tribal nations, our fundamental rights are not granted, they are inherent and written in our treaties, our sovereignty, and our laws," North Dakota Native Vote Deputy Director Kendyl Harrison said in a statement to the North Dakota Monitor. "Any attacks or discrimination on any Indigenous person is a clear violation and intrusion upon those rights."

Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Chairman Jamie Azure in a Facebook post also denounced ICE's activity as "divisive and abhorrent." He told tribal citizens that ICE cannot go on tribal land without the consent of the tribe.

In addition to the incidents in Minneapolis, ICE reportedly detained multiple Arizona tribal citizens last year, with one woman nearly being deported in November, according to the Arizona Mirror.

Tribal leaders also urged citizens who are approached by immigration agents to contact their respective tribal governments, as well as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Native American Rights Fund.

"We're seeing the same reports that Native people are being unlawfully detained as U.S. citizens," said Matthew Campbell, deputy director of the Native American Rights Fund. "It appears that there is certainly unlawful force and violence being used in these detentions."

He said the organization is investigating the reports. Campbell invited any tribal citizen who has been detained by ICE to contact his organization.

"We certainly welcome speaking to them to understand the issues and what has been happening, and looking at what a lawsuit may look like," he said.

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

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

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

## Registration now required for public to testify at SD legislative committees

**BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF**

People planning to testify at legislative committee hearings during the 2026 South Dakota legislative session must pre-register on the Legislature's website, according to an announcement by the Legislative Research Council.

The budget committees utilized the registration system during last year's session, and it's now being expanded to all committees, the council said.

Testifiers may access the digital registration form on [SDLegislature.gov](http://SDLegislature.gov) by:

Clicking the weblink that appears on the top of every committee agenda.

Scanning the QR code located on the bottom of every committee agenda.

Clicking on the icon (a head-and-shoulders figure with a plus sign) that appears next to agenda links.

When completing the online form, people will be asked to submit their name, email, what group they represent, their city and state, how they would like to participate in the meeting (in-person, remotely or

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 19 of 76

submitting written testimony) and which agenda items they wish to testify about.

For those without a device or who need assistance in registering, an iPad will be available in the committee room at the time of the meeting with legislative pages available to assist. The preferred testifier registration deadline is at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting time, the council said.

For more information on how to participate in the legislative process, view the Public Participation Guideline document on the LRC website.

The 2026 legislative session began Tuesday and continues through March.

## **COMMENTARY**

### **Vaccines are victims of their own success**

**by Tom Dean**

There is much about vaccines in the news these days. A great deal of it is thoroughly confusing. I would like to add a few comments — and hopefully not make a confusing situation worse.

I will say upfront that I believe vaccines have provided a vitally important contribution — perhaps the most important contribution — to the health of our population, especially the health of children. Early in my career I saw children die or be left with lifelong disability from diseases that, for all practical purposes, are no longer a threat because of the availability of vaccines. Does that mean that vaccines are free of risks or that the threat of infectious disease has disappeared? Of course not. However, we must not allow anxiety resulting from some new questions to distract us from the fundamental importance of vaccines in dealing with the threat of infectious disease.

Among current infection threats, pertussis (whooping cough), hepatitis B and measles are all diseases of concern. Measles has probably gotten the most attention. The measles vaccine has been available for many years. It has been combined with vaccines for mumps and rubella (German measles) to produce the MMR shot. Widespread use of MMR has been highly successful, and in the year 2000, the elimination of measles in the U.S. was recognized by the World Health Organization. Until recently, the only outbreaks of measles in the U.S. resulted from cases brought in from other countries.

Now, however, questions have been raised about the safety of this vaccine, particularly questioning a possible link to autism. There has been a considerable increase in the diagnosis of autism. To a large degree, however, this is due to a better understanding of the condition and expansion of the criteria for diagnosis.

No authentic scientific study has shown a link between vaccines and autism. In fact, over the last 25 years, more than 40 studies have looked for a link between vaccines and autism and have failed to demonstrate a connection. The publication which originally claimed a link between vaccines and autism was eventually shown to be based on falsified data. The study was retracted by the medical journal that published it, and the physician author had his medical license revoked.

Be that as it may, the questions raised have caused significant concerns, especially on the part of parents. As a result, the rate of measles immunization has declined significantly. That decline has led to multiple locally originated outbreaks. In 2025 in the U.S., there were more than 2,000 documented cases spread over 42 states. These have resulted in many hospitalizations with complications such as pneumonia and encephalitis. Three deaths were attributed to measles. These are the first deaths from measles in more than a decade. Virtually all of the complications have occurred in unvaccinated patients.

Measles is one of the most contagious infections known. Even casual contact with an infected person can result in transmitting the infection. To make it even more complicated, infected individuals may spread the virus even before they develop symptoms.

Required immunizations for school attendance and for some employment have created controversy. The issue is complicated and contentious. I certainly accept, and support, the concept of individual freedom and responsibility regarding health care decisions. Problems arise, however, when those decisions directly impact the health and safety of other people.

To a large extent, I believe current vaccines are victims of their own success. Because vaccine-preventable diseases are now rarely seen, the general public has largely lost appreciation for how dangerous these infections can be. I fear the threat of infection is not taken as seriously as it once was, or as seriously as it should be.

We need to continually work to respect the right of individuals to control their own decisions. At the same time, we must do all we can to see that our society is protected from these major emerging public health threats. It is a major challenge.

*Tom Dean is a retired family physician who grew up on a farm west of Wessington Springs. He graduated from Wessington Springs High School, Carleton College in Minnesota and medical school in Rochester, New York. He completed a family medicine residency at the University of Washington in Seattle. He returned to Wessington Springs to practice in 1978 along with his wife, Kathy, a certified nurse midwife. He retired after 43 years of practice and still lives in Wessington Springs.*

## Progressives in Congress vow to oppose immigration enforcement funding

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — Members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus announced Tuesday they will oppose any federal funding for immigration enforcement following the deadly shooting of a woman by an immigration officer in Minneapolis.

“Our caucus will oppose all funding for immigration enforcement in any appropriations bills until meaningful reforms are enacted to end militarized policing practices,” Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar, who represents Minneapolis, said during a press conference.

Last week, federal immigration officer Jonathan Ross killed 37-year-old Renee Good in Minneapolis, which has seen a drastic increase in immigration enforcement for weeks following allegations of fraud. After the shooting, massive protests against the Trump administration’s aggressive immigration enforcement occurred in Minnesota and across the country.

The U.S. Senate is moving forward with the remaining appropriations bills for Congress to avoid a partial shutdown by a Jan. 30 deadline, and negotiations continue over funding for the Department of Homeland Security. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said Tuesday that funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement is “one of the major issues that the appropriators are confronting right now.”

Senate Majority Leader John Thune of South Dakota said the appropriations bill for “Homeland is obviously the hardest one,” and that flat funding, or a continuing resolution, for the agency is the likely outcome.

Members of the Progressive Caucus are pushing for reforms including a ban on federal immigration officers wearing face coverings, the requirement of a warrant for an arrest and greater oversight of private detention facilities that hold immigrants.

Washington Rep. Pramila Jayapal said Congress also needs to pass legislation to roll back the billions allocated to the Department of Homeland Security last summer in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. The massive GOP spending and tax cuts package provided a huge budget increase to DHS for immigration enforcement of roughly \$175 billion.

“We have to urgently pass legislation to roll back the excessive funding for immigration enforcement” in the spending and tax cuts package, Jayapal said. “We cannot support additional funding for the Department of Homeland Security without seriously meaningful and significant reforms to the way that federal authorities conduct activity in our cities, our communities and our neighborhoods.”

### Progressives press Jeffries

The Progressive Caucus has nearly 100 Democratic House members. Those members joining the press conference included Omar, Jayapal, Maxwell Frost of Florida, Chuy Garcia of Illinois, Delia Ramirez of Il-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 21 of 76

Illinois and Maxine Dexter of Oregon.

Garcia, who is the whip of the Progressive Caucus, said the group has informed House Leader Hakeem Jeffries of their position, but did not say if Jeffries supported slashing DHS funds.

"They are very concerned, and they also share our sentiment that we need to do something to bring reform, to bring change to stop the lawlessness, the cruelty and the abuse of power that's taking place within ICE and (Customs and Border Patrol) and DHS," he said of Democratic leadership.

While Democrats do not control either chamber, one tool lawmakers have used amid the Trump administration's aggressive immigration campaign is the power of congressional oversight of federal facilities that house immigrants and are funded by Congress.

But following the shooting in Minnesota, several lawmakers were denied an oversight visit to a federal ICE facility, a move that Democrats argue violates a court order.

There will be an emergency hearing in the District Court for the District of Columbia on Wednesday on a new Trump administration policy that argues those facilities are funded through the spending and tax cuts package and therefore exempt from unannounced oversight visits.

Jayapal called the reasoning "a B.S. argument, and hopefully the court is going to see that."

## Investigations urged

Jayapal added that there also needs to be "independent investigations of lawlessness and violence by immigration agents and border patrol agents, and meaningful consequences for those who commit these acts of violence, not a slap on the wrist."

Dexter, who represents part of Portland, Oregon, where two people were shot by CBP the same week Good was shot and killed, agreed.

"One thing is absolutely clear, when any law enforcement officer fires a weapon in any community, the public must have answers to questions," Dexter said.

Ramirez said there needs to be greater accountability beyond appropriations, and said Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem should be impeached.

Illinois Democratic Rep. Robin Kelly is planning to introduce articles of impeachment for Noem on three counts: obstructing Congress, violating public trust and self-dealing. While such a move likely would be uphill in the House, Republicans at the moment control the chamber by a very narrow margin.

"DHS and ICE have been empowered through a lack of oversight and too much latitude to violate our rights under the pretense of security and safety," Ramirez said.

Frost said that Congress needs to assert its control over appropriations as a check against the Trump administration.

"We cannot depend on this administration to police themselves and an end to the enforcement practices that are terrorizing our communities," Frost said.

*Jennifer Shutt contributed to this report.*

*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 Supreme Court appears poised to affirm trans athlete bans in Idaho, West Virginia

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court's conservative majority appeared likely Tuesday to keep in place laws in Idaho and West Virginia banning transgender athletes from participating on women's and girls' sports teams.

The outcomes from the nation's highest court expected later this year could have sweeping implications for transgender rights more broadly as President Donald Trump's administration's efforts to roll back those

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 22 of 76

rights have extended far beyond athletics.

In lengthy, back-to-back oral arguments, justices heard two cases — Little v. Hecox and West Virginia v. B.P.J. — which both deal with whether those states' bans violate the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

The West Virginia case also calls into question whether its prohibition on transgender athletes participating in women's and girls' sports violates the federal civil rights law barring sex-based discrimination in education programs known as Title IX.

Rulings in lower courts have halted the two states from implementing the bans, to varying extents, leading GOP attorneys general in Idaho and West Virginia to ask the Supreme Court to step in.

Idaho and West Virginia represent just two of the nearly 30 states with laws banning transgender students' participation in sports consistent with their gender identity, according to the Movement Advancement Project, an independent think tank.

During oral arguments in the Idaho case, Justice Brett Kavanaugh said he sees the growth of women's and girls' sports as one of the country's great successes over the past half-century.

He noted that some states, the federal government, the NCAA and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee "think that allowing transgender women and girls to participate will undermine or reverse that amazing success and will create unfairness."

He added that "for the individual girl who does not make the team, or doesn't get on the stand for the medal, or doesn't make all league, there's a harm there, and I think we can't sweep that aside."

Kavanaugh is part of the court's conservative wing, whose members outnumber liberals 6-3.

## Title IX debated

Kavanaugh's comment seemingly endorsed West Virginia Solicitor General Michael Williams' framing of the issue, as a protection of women and girl athletes.

Williams told the justices that "maintaining separate boys' and girls' sports teams ensures that girls can safely and fairly compete in school sports."

He argued that Title IX "permits sex-separated teams," and "it does so because biological sex matters in athletics in ways both obvious and undeniable."

Joshua Block, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union, argued on behalf of Becky Pepper-Jackson, a transgender athlete at the forefront of the West Virginia case.

Block said that though West Virginia "argues that to protect these opportunities for cisgender girls, it has to deny them" to Pepper-Jackson, "Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause protect everyone, and if the evidence shows there are no relevant physiological differences between B.P.J. and other girls, then there's no basis to exclude her."

## Idaho case

Idaho's solicitor general, Alan Hurst, argued that "gender identity does not matter in sports, and that's why Idaho's law does not classify on the basis of gender identity."

Hurst said the law "treats all males equally and all females equally, regardless of identity."

Kathleen Hartnett, an attorney with Cooley LLP, represented Lindsay Hecox, a transgender student in Idaho who wanted to try out for the women's track and cross-country teams at Boise State University but would have been barred from doing so under the Idaho law because she is transgender.

A federal court in Idaho halted the law from taking effect in 2020. A federal appeals court initially upheld the ruling in 2023 but adjusted the scope of it in 2024 to only apply to Hecox, not other athletes.

Hartnett said the law ignored that trans girls who take medication to block testosterone do not have an inherent physical advantage in sports.

"Circulating testosterone after puberty is the main determinant of sex-based biological advantage that (the Idaho law) sought to address," she said.

Hecox "has mitigated that advantage because she has suppressed her testosterone for over a year and taken estrogen," Hartnett said.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 23 of 76

The Idaho law, Hartnett said, “thus fails heightened scrutiny as applied to Lindsay and transgender women like her who have no sex-based biological advantage as compared to birth sex females.”

Hecox has asked both an Idaho federal court and the Supreme Court to drop the case. Though a federal judge in Idaho rejected that attempt in October, the Supreme Court deferred the request until after oral arguments and could ultimately dismiss her case in the coming months.

## Issue actively debated

Earlier landmark rulings involving transgender rights came up before the court Tuesday — including *United States v. Skrmetti* in 2025 and *Bostock v. Clayton County* in 2020.

In *United States v. Skrmetti*, the Supreme Court upheld Tennessee’s prohibition on gender-affirming care for minors.

The court held in *Bostock v. Clayton County* that LGBTQ+ employees are protected from employment discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Kavanaugh suggested the wide-ranging landscape of laws on the issue throughout the country meant the court should tread carefully in meddling in state laws.

“Given that half the states are allowing transgender girls and women to participate, about half are not, why would we at this point — just the role of this court — jump in and try to constitutionalize a rule for the whole country while there’s still, as you say, uncertainty and debate?” he asked Hartnett.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration has taken steps at the federal level to prohibit trans athletes’ participation in women’s sports teams aligning with their gender identity, including the president signing an executive order in February 2025 that banned such participation.

He also signed executive orders regarding transgender people including orders that make it the “policy of the United States to recognize two sexes, male and female,” restrict access to gender-affirming care for kids and aim to bar openly transgender service members from the U.S. military.

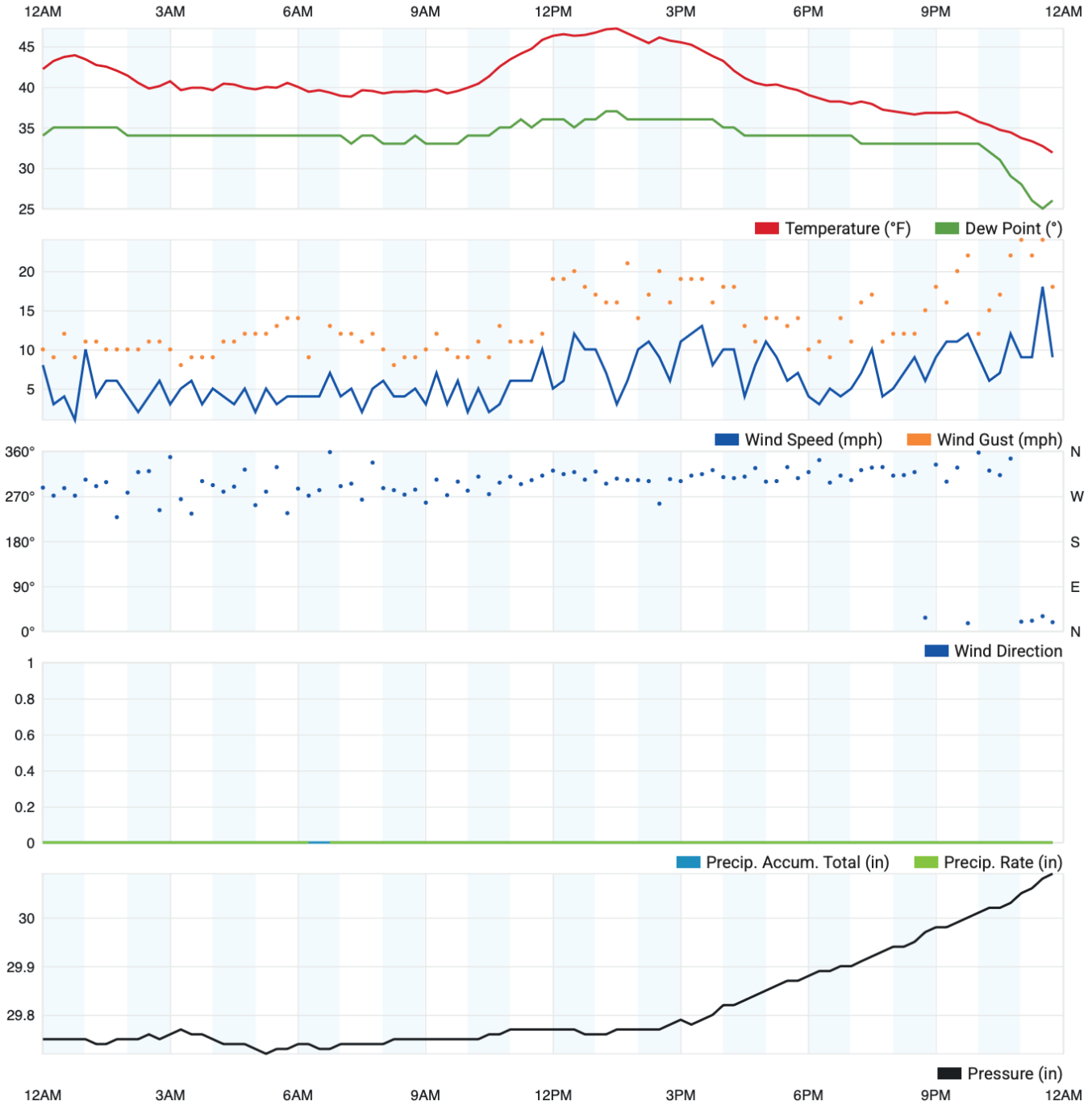
*Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom’s Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.*

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 24 of 76

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

January 13, 2026



# Broton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 25 of 76

Today



High: 24 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 24 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Thursday



High: 41 °F

Partly Sunny  
then Mostly  
Sunny and  
Breezy

Thursday  
Night



30 % → 70 %

Low: 14 °F

Snow Likely  
and Patchy  
Blowing Snow

Friday



50 % → 20 %

High: 23 °F

Windy. Chance  
Snow then  
Slight Chance  
Snow



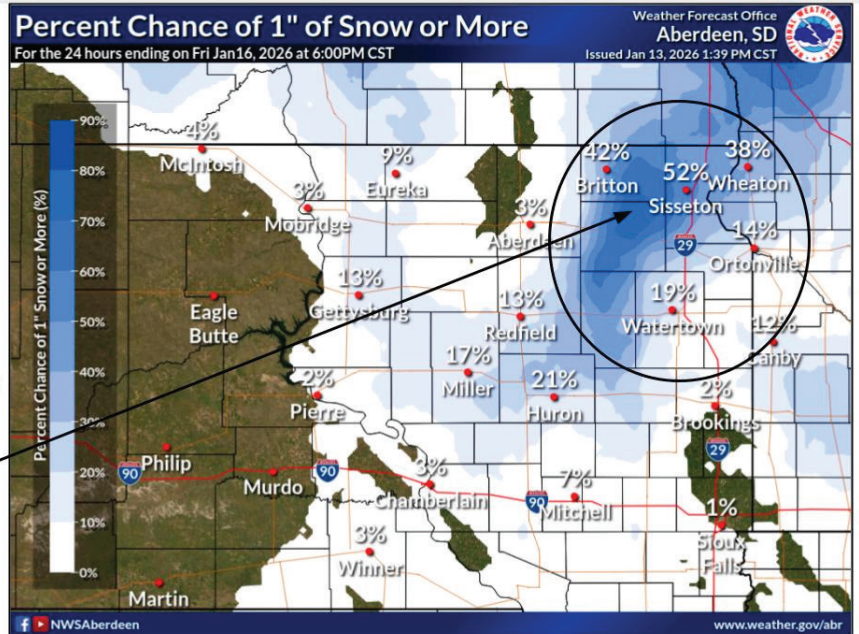
## Snowfall Thursday into Friday

January 13, 2026  
2:19 PM CST

Minor snowfall accumulations are possible over northeastern SD and western MN Thursday and Friday

### Key Messages

- **Light snow** expected Thursday through Friday.
  - Highest chances of snow (60 to 80%) are east of the James River **Thursday evening through Friday morning.**
  - The probability for an inch of snow is highest over the Sisseton Hills (about 60 to 80%).
- **Strong winds** combining with falling snow may lead to **areas of drifting/blowing snow that could significantly reduce visibility at times.**
  - Especially over and along the Sisseton Hills into west central MN making travel difficult Thursday evening and Friday.



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

A storm system will bring light snow to the region with the highest chances of snow (60-80%) east of the James River Thursday evening through Friday morning. The probability for an inch of snow is highest over the Sisseton Hills (60 to 80%). Strong winds combining with falling snow may lead to areas of drifting/blowing snow that could significantly reduce visibility at times, especially over and along the Sisseton Hills.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 26 of 76

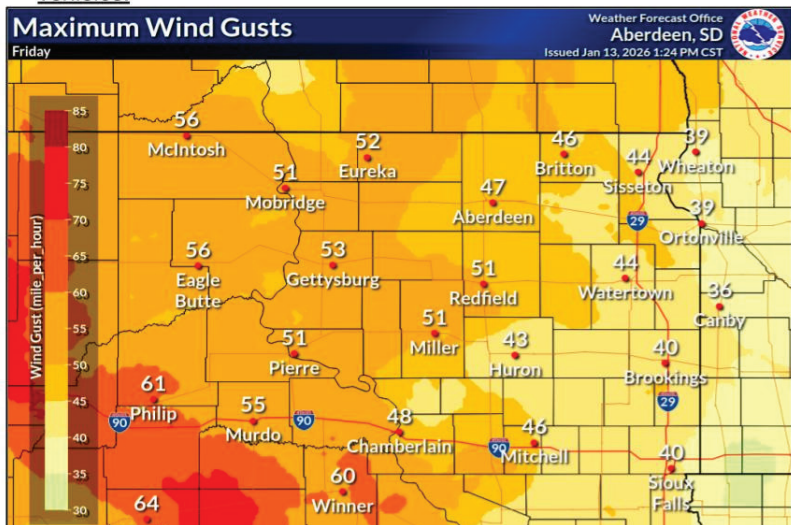


## Maximum Wind Gusts and Timing

January 13, 2026  
2:25 PM

Strong Winds Expected Thursday and Friday

- Winds increase Thursday and remain strong through Friday.
- Wind gusts between 40 to 60 mph with the **highest gusts expected over central South Dakota.**
- **IMPACTS:** High winds may move loose debris, damage property and cause power outages. Travel could be difficult, especially for high profile vehicles.



	Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)							
	1/15 Thu				1/16 Fri			
	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	
Aberdeen	29	39	38	41	46	46	37	
Britton	30	39	38	43	45	46	37	
Chamberlain	32	40	39	39	47	49	36	
Clark	26	40	40	41	45	47	39	
Eagle Butte	43	49	48	52	56	56	44	
Eureka	39	46	44	48	52	52	39	
Gettysburg	37	46	44	47	53	53	39	
McIntosh	46	54	49	53	56	58	43	
Milbank	25	35	36	35	39	41	35	
Miller	33	44	40	45	49	52	39	
Mobridge	37	43	44	47	51	49	37	
Murdo	38	47	45	47	55	56	44	
Pierre	32	43	41	44	48	51	39	
Redfield	29	41	38	44	49	52	38	
Sisseton	30	38	37	39	41	44	36	
Watertown	28	38	38	39	43	44	37	
Webster	30	38	38	39	44	45	37	
Wheaton	23	32	35	36	39	39	35	

Winds will increase Thursday with gusts of 40 to 60 mph continuing Thursday night through Friday, with the highest gusts over central South Dakota. Travel could be difficult, especially for high profile vehicles.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT SNOW SQUALLS

WWW.WEATHER.GOV/SAFETY

## Snow Squall Safety

January 13, 2026  
5:17 AM CST

What are Snow Squalls, and How can you stay safe?



### WHAT ARE THEY?

Quick intense bursts of snow  
Accompanied by strong gusty winds  
Short-lived, typically less than 3 hours  
Normally occur during the day

### WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS?

Rapidly reduced visibility  
Treacherous travel conditions  
Potential for chain-reaction accidents



### WHAT'S A SNOW SQUALL WARNING?

Warning is usually 30-60 minutes in length  
Issued for small areas where snow squalls are expected  
Similar to a Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm Warning

### HOW CAN YOU STAY SAFE?

Have a way to get forecasts and warnings  
Consider an alternate route or delaying travel  
Stay alert for rapidly changing road conditions  
Reduce speed and use low beam headlights



- Snow Squalls, or quick, intense snow storms, will be possible **Thursday night into Friday.**
- The combination of strong winds and falling snow may significantly reduce visibility for a brief period, making travel dangerous.
- The area of greatest concern is in the *Sisseton Hills Thursday night into early Friday morning.*
- Please see the Q&A to the left for additional information on Snow Squalls.



# Groton Daily Independent

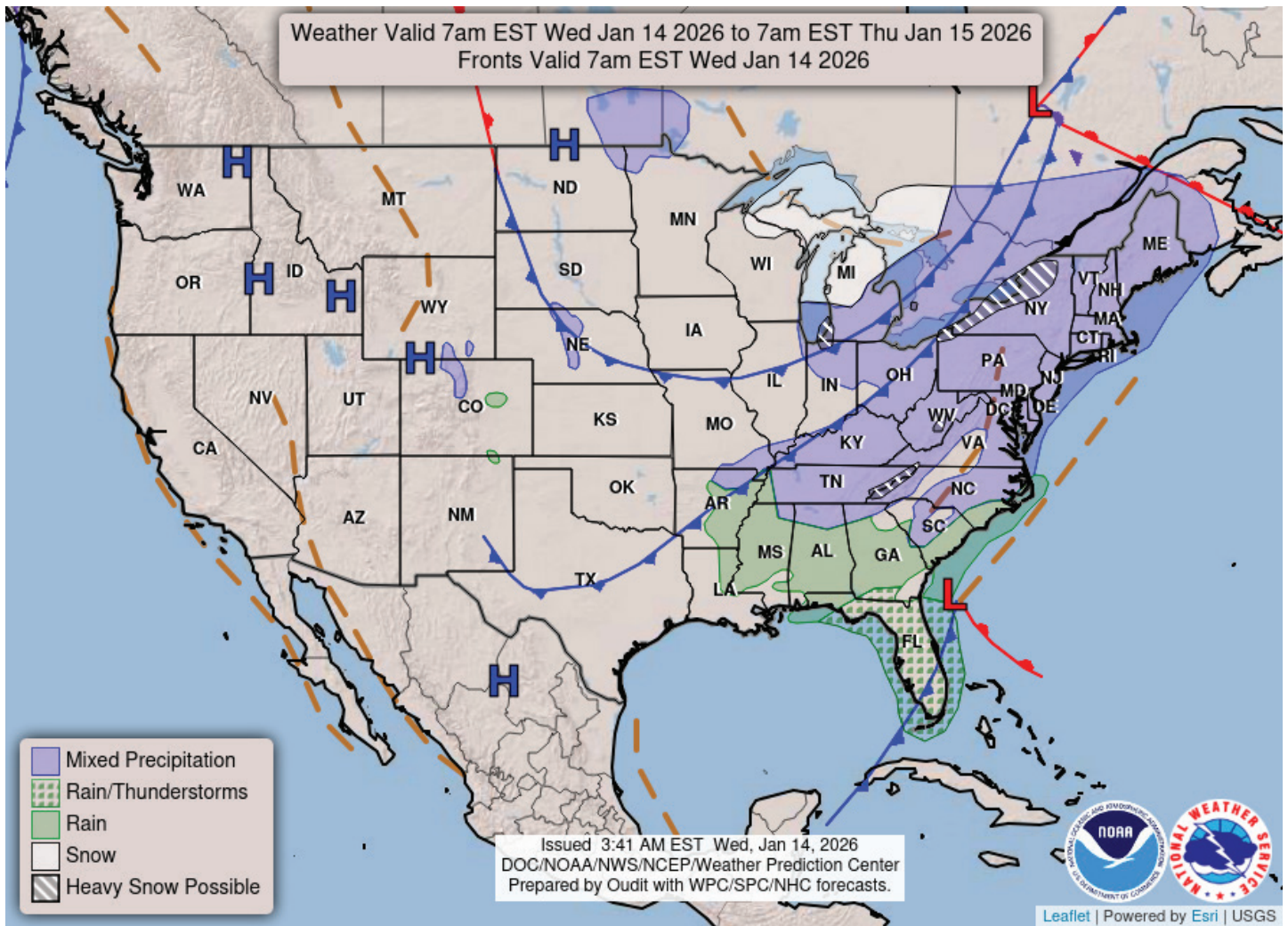
Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 27 of 76

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 47 °F at 1:31 PM**  
**Low Temp: 33 °F at 11:28 PM**  
**Wind: 25 mph at 10:54 PM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

## Today's Info

Record High: 50 in 1901  
Record Low: -36 in 1916  
Average High: 23  
Average Low: 2  
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.28  
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00  
Average Precip to date: 0.28  
Precip Year to Date: 0.00  
Sunset Tonight: 5:13 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:08 am



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 28 of 76

## Today in Weather History

January 14, 1916: Record cold continued on this date in weather history in 1916 across central and north-east South Dakota and west-central Minnesota. Aberdeen, Kennebec, Mobridge, Timber Lake, Watertown, and Wheaton all set record lows. The record lows were 24 degrees below zero at Kennebec, 28 degrees below zero at Wheaton, 31 degrees below zero at Timber Lake, 35 degrees below zero at Mobridge, 36 degrees below zero at Aberdeen, and 38 degrees below zero at Watertown.

1863 — The greatest snowstorm of record for Cincinnati OH commenced, and a day later twenty inches of snow covered the ground. That total has remained far above the modern day record for Cincinnati of eleven inches of snow in one storm. (David Ludlum)

1882: Snow fell in southern California, with the highest amount of 15 inches at San Bernardino. Three feet of snow fell in Campo over four days and produced 8-foot drifts in spots. Two to five inches fell in outlying San Diego, including four inches along Poway Grade, 3 inches at El Cajon, and one inch in Poway. Five inches fell in Riverside. Light snow fell in Del Mar. Snowflakes fell but did not stick at San Diego Lindbergh Field. Birds and livestock were killed, telegraph lines were knocked down, and citrus crops were damaged.

1972: In Loma, Montana, the temperature soared from 54 degrees below zero to 49 degrees above zero on January 14-15, 1972. The 103-degree change is the greatest ever recorded in the world for a 24 hour period.

1979 — Chicago, IL, was in the midst of their second heaviest snow of record as, in thirty hours, the city was buried under 20.7 inches of snow. The twenty-nine inch snow cover following the storm was an all-time record for Chicago. (David Ludlum)

1987 — Arctic cold invaded the north central U.S. By evening blustery northwest winds and temperatures near zero at Grand Forks ND were producing wind chill readings of 50 degrees below zero. (National Weather Summary)

1988 — A powerful Pacific storm produced rain and high winds in the western U.S. In Nevada, a wind gust to 90 mph at Reno was an all-time record for that location, and wind gusts reached 106 mph southwest of Reno. A wind gust to 94 mph was recorded at nearby Windy Hill. Rainfall totals in Oregon ranged up to six inches at Wilson River. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — A winter storm spread snow and sleet and freezing rain from the Middle Mississippi Valley to the northeastern U.S. Freezing rain in West Virginia caused fifteen traffic accidents in just a few minutes west of Charleston. Tennessee was deluged with up to 7.5 inches of rain. Two inches of rain near Clarksville TN left water in the streets as high as car doors.

1990 — A winter storm in the southwestern U.S. blanketed the mountains of southwest Utah with 18 to 24 inches of snow, while sunshine and strong southerly winds helped temperatures warm into the 60s in the Central Plains Region. Five cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including North Platte NE with a reading of 63 degrees. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2009: In Washington State, freezing fog and freezing drizzle enveloped much of the Inland Northwest during 13-23 January 2009. The area most affected by this was the high plateau region along Highway 2 between Wenatchee and Spokane.

2016: Hurricane Alex became the first January hurricane in the Atlantic since Hurricane Alice in 1955.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 29 of 76

 In Touch Ministries

Daily Devotion

## Meeting With God

**God wants to speak directly to you, so open His Word and listen.**

Jeremiah 24:7: 7 `I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart.

Many of us have been blessed with close friends. Imagine if we never spent time with them but instead just thought and talked about how wonderful these special people are. Wouldn't it be strange? Yet some Christians do just that. Though they accumulate knowledge about God, they miss out on rich fellowship with their heavenly Father, the best friend anyone could ever have.

It is possible to fill our life with spiritual information and activities—all of which are good—but fail to develop a close relationship with God. Scripture tells of many people whose personal encounter with Him was energizing and life-changing. Noah, Abraham, Moses, Gideon, the Samaritan woman, and Paul are a few who spoke with Him one-on-one (Genesis 7:4; Genesis 12:2; Exodus 3:2; Judges 6:12; John 4:1-42; Acts 9:3-6). We don't expect dramatic "burning bush" experiences today, yet all believers should still have precious, intimate times with God. Whenever we open His Word and invite the Holy Spirit to teach us, we can hear directly from our Maker.

James 4:8 tells us, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." Walking closely with the Lord takes commitment and time, but it is essential if we want to grow in Christlikeness.

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 30 of 76

## The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 31 of 76



## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.13.26

16 40 56 64 66 4

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$230,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 29 Mins 30 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.12.26

9 20 25 30 51 10

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$12,740,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 44 Mins 30 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.13.26

21 32 34 35 38 14

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 59 Mins 30 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.10.26

1 8 23 24 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$188,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 59 Mins 30 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.12.26

11 23 24 54 56 5

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 28 Mins 30 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.12.26

5 27 45 56 59 4

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$156,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 28 Mins 30 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the Associated Press

### BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Christian 52, Wolsey-Wessington 49, OT  
Avon 60, Canistota 28  
Bowman County, N.D. 64, Harding County 47  
Britton-Hecla 60, Wilmot 28  
Centerville 55, Scotland/Menno 28  
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 94, Crow Creek Tribal School 30  
Clark-Willow Lake 47, Castlewood 26  
Corsica/Stickney 46, Mitchell Christian 14  
DeSmet 53, Howard 24  
Deuel 57, Arlington 26  
Elkton-Lake Benton 52, Dell Rapids St Mary's 42  
Estelline-Hendricks 67, Great Plains Lutheran 45  
Ethan 59, Emery 56  
Faulkton 64, Highmore-Harrold 49  
Freeman 72, Parker/Marion 29  
Hamlin 57, Sioux Valley 54  
Harrisburg 46, Brandon Valley 43  
Huron 54, Yankton 43  
Irene-Wakonda 78, Burke 67  
James Valley Christian School 37, Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 32  
Lemmon High School 54, Wakpala 49  
Lennox 61, Western Christian, Iowa 48  
Leola-Frederick High School 49, North Central 42  
Miller 76, Redfield 52  
Northwestern 71, Florence-Henry 54  
Parkston 62, Platte-Geddes 50  
Rapid City Stevens 57, Sturgis Brown High School 49  
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket 66, Kimball-White Lake 23  
Sioux Falls Christian 85, Dell Rapids 56  
Sioux Falls Lutheran 59, Gayville-Volin High School 44  
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 72, Sioux Falls Washington 35  
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 57, Mitchell 48  
Sisseton 46, Waubay/Summit 45  
St Thomas More 54, Rapid City Christian 43  
Sully Buttes 74, Ipswich 52  
Tea 63, T F Riggs High School 43  
Todd County 65, Little Wound 60  
Tripp-Delmont-Armour 63, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 42  
Viborg-Hurley 61, Alcester-Hudson 41  
Wagner 61, Elk Point-Jefferson 54  
Warner 49, Hitchcock-Tulare 38  
Watertown 59, Aberdeen Central 45  
Waverly-South Shore 62, Flandreau Indian 60  
Wessington Springs 52, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 27  
West Central 55, Dakota Valley 41

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 33 of 76

White River 81, Bennett County 41  
Winner 62, Bon Homme 31

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

## GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 53, Watertown 20  
Aberdeen Roncalli 51, Faulkton 15  
Arlington 60, Deuel 44  
Avon 53, Canistota 22  
Bennett County 60, Hot Springs 36  
Brandon Valley 60, Crofton, Neb. 31  
Britton-Hecla 59, Wilmot 28  
Centerville 68, Scotland/Menno 17  
Clark-Willow Lake 59, Castlewood 43  
DeSmet 43, Howard 29  
Elk Point-Jefferson 48, Wagner 46  
Estelline-Hendricks 46, Great Plains Lutheran 45  
Ethan 83, Bridgewater-Emery 33  
Ethan 83, Emery 33  
Flandreau 41, Garretson 10  
Freeman 52, Parker/Marion 26  
Gettysburg 42, Stanley County 38  
Hamlin 51, Sioux Valley 32  
Hemingford, Neb. 60, Oelrichs 45  
Irene-Wakonda 56, Burke 47  
Lemmon High School 71, Wakpala 24  
Lennox 66, Western Christian, Iowa 22  
Lyman 57, Kadoka 37  
Mahpiya Luta Red Cloud 76, Lakota Tech 62  
McCook Central-Montrose 46, Hanson 39  
Milbank 72, Tiospa Zina 23  
Miller 41, Redfield 29  
Mitchell 51, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 32  
North Central 35, Leola-Frederick High School 19  
Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 51, James Valley Christian School 32  
Parkston 63, Platte-Geddes 29  
Rapid City Stevens 54, Sturgis Brown High School 26  
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket 63, Kimball-White Lake 34  
Sioux Falls Christian 70, Dell Rapids 40  
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 72, Sioux Falls Washington 35  
St Thomas More 54, Rapid City Christian 43  
Timber Lake 61, Bison 42  
Tripp-Delmont-Armour 36, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 18  
Upton, Wyo. 56, Edgemont 41  
Vermillion 60, Madison 31  
Viborg-Hurley 35, Alcester-Hudson 29  
Wall 44, Philip 29  
Warner 62, Hitchcock-Tulare 61

Waverly-South Shore 61, Flandreau Indian 49  
Wessington Springs 40, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 37  
West Central 68, Dakota Valley 36  
Winner 58, Bon Homme 42  
Wolsey-Wessington 53, Aberdeen Christian 27

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

## Oglala Sioux Tribe says three tribal members arrested in Minneapolis are in ICE detention

By GRAHAM LEE BREWER Associated Press

The president of Oglala Sioux Tribe in South Dakota on Tuesday called for the immediate release of tribal members who were detained at a homeless encampment by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in Minnesota last week.

Three of the four Oglala Sioux Tribe members who were arrested in Minneapolis on Friday have been transferred to an ICE facility at Fort Snelling, President Frank Star Comes Out said in a statement released with a memorandum sent to federal immigration authorities.

"The Oglala Sioux Tribe's memorandum makes clear that 'tribal citizens are not aliens' and are 'categorically outside immigration jurisdiction,'" Star Comes Out said. "Enrolled tribal members are citizens of the United States by statute and citizens of the Oglala Sioux Nation by treaty."

Details about the circumstances that led to their detention were unclear.

In the memorandum sent to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, Star Comes Out said the when tribal nation reached out to the agency it was provided with only the first names of the men. Homeland Security refused to release more information, unless the tribe "entered into an immigration agreement with ICE."

DHS did not immediately respond to a request for comment Tuesday evening.

Star Comes Out said the tribe has no plans enter an agreement with ICE.

In a post to his Facebook page, Star Comes Out said that the four detained tribal members are experiencing homelessness and living under a bridge in Minneapolis. One of the members was released from detention.

In the press release, he demanded information on the status of the three men in detention, the release of all tribal citizens in ICE custody and a meeting between the tribe and the government.

Fort Snelling has a troubling history for Indigenous people. It was the first military outpost in the area, and Dakota people were held prisoner there during the Dakota War of 1862, an armed conflict between the U.S. and Native Americans, said Nick Estes, an associate professor in American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota and a member of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe.

"It has this really notorious anti-Indigenous, specifically anti-Dakota, history," Estes said. "It's kind of like a continuation on the monopoly of violence from the military outpost to the ICE facility."

It's not the first time in recent months that ICE agents have detained tribal members.

Last year, elected leaders in the Navajo Nation said that tribal citizens in Arizona and New Mexico reported being stopped and detained by ICE officers. In November, a member of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community in Arizona who had been arrested in Iowa was mistakenly scheduled to be deported before the error was caught and she was released.

That same month, Elaine Miles, a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Oregon and an actress known for her roles in "Northern Exposure" and "The Last of Us," said she was stopped by ICE officers in Washington state who told her that her tribal ID looked fake.

Indigenous rights groups as well as the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians have established places in Minneapolis where tribal citizens can apply for tribal ID cards, in case they are approached by ICE and need to provide identification.

"I never thought that I'd have my tribal ID hanging around my neck, but I do," said Mary LaGarde, executive director of the Minneapolis American Indian Center. "So, it's just important that they have proper identification on them and not to panic."

## 'Dances with Wolves' actor Nathan Chasing Horse's child sex abuse trial begins

By JESSICA HILL Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Jury selection began Tuesday in the Las Vegas trial of Nathan Chasing Horse, the former "Dances with Wolves" actor accused of sexually abusing Indigenous women and girls.

Prosecutors allege he used his reputation as a spiritual leader and healer to take advantage of his victims over two decades. Chasing Horse, who was present in the courtroom Tuesday, has pleaded not guilty to 21 charges, including sexual assault, sexual assault with a minor, first degree kidnapping of a minor and the use of a minor in producing pornography.

The case sent shock waves across Indian Country when he was arrested and indicted in early 2023. After several delays, the case finally proceeded to trial after prosecutors added allegations that Chasing Horse filmed himself sexually abusing a girl younger than 14.

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

After starring in the Oscar-winning film, according to prosecutors, Chasing Horse proclaimed himself to be a Lakota medicine man while traveling around North America to perform healing ceremonies.

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

One victim was 14 years old when she approached him, hoping he would heal her mother, who was diagnosed with cancer. Chasing Horse previously had treated the victim's breathing issues and her mother's spider bite, according to a court transcript. He allegedly told her the spirits wanted her to give up her virginity in exchange for her mother's health. He allegedly sexually abused her and said her mother would die if she told anyone, according to the victim's testimony to the grand jury.

The original indictment was dismissed in 2024 after the Nevada Supreme Court ruled prosecutors abused the grand jury process when they provided a definition of grooming as evidence without any expert testimony.

The high court, specifying that the dismissal had nothing to do with Chasing Horse's innocence or guilt, left open the possibility of charges being refiled. In October 2024, the charges were refiled with the new allegations that he recorded himself sexually abusing one of his accusers.

Prosecutors have said the recordings, made in 2010 or 2011, were found on cellphones in a locked safe inside the North Las Vegas home that Chasing Horse is said to have shared with five wives, including the girl in the videos.

Jury selection is expected to take multiple days. Judge Jessica Peterson asked potential jurors if they could be fair and impartial having heard the charges. Several spoke up about past experiences of sexual assault and said they'd be biased.

The trial could last four weeks, and prosecutors plan to call 18 witnesses. A week before the trial, Chasing Horse attempted to fire his private defense attorney, saying his lawyer hadn't come to visit him. Peterson removed Chasing Horse from the courtroom when he tried to interrupt her, and she denied his request.

The case is a reminder that violence also occurs within Native communities and is not just something committed by outsiders, said Crystal Lee, CEO and founder of the organization United Natives, which offers services to victims of sexual abuse.

Chasing Horse's trial requires hard conversations about Native perpetrators, she said.

"How do we hold them accountable?" she said. "How do we start these tough conversations?"

## Vance to meet Danish and Greenlandic officials in Washington as locals say Greenland is not for sale

By EMMA BURROWS AP European Security Correspondent

NUUK, Greenland (AP) — Along the narrow, snow-covered main street in Greenland's capital, international journalists and camera crews stop passersby every few meters (feet) asking them for their thoughts on a crisis which Denmark's prime minister has warned could potentially trigger the end of NATO.

Greenland is at the center of a geopolitical storm as U.S. President Donald Trump is insisting he wants to own the island — and the residents of its capital Nuuk say it is not for sale. Trump said he wants to control Greenland at any cost and the White House has not ruled out taking the island by force.

U.S. Vice President JD Vance will meet Denmark's foreign minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen and his Greenlandic counterpart Vivian Motzfeldt in Washington on Wednesday to discuss the Arctic island, which is a semiautonomous territory of the United States' NATO ally Denmark.

Ahead of the meeting, France's foreign minister denounced what he described as U.S. "blackmail" over Greenland in the latest sign of irritation among America's allies.

Tuuta Mikaelson, a 22-year-old student, told The Associated Press in Nuuk that she hoped American officials would get the message to "back off."

Greenland's Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen told a news conference in the Danish capital Copenhagen on Tuesday that, "if we have to choose between the United States and Denmark here and now, we choose Denmark. We choose NATO. We choose the Kingdom of Denmark. We choose the EU."

Asked later Tuesday about Nielsen's comments, Trump replied: "I disagree with him. I don't know who he is. I don't know anything about him. But, that's going to be a big problem for him."

A strategically important territory

Greenland is strategically important because as climate change causes the ice to melt, it opens up the possibility of shorter trade routes to Asia. That also could make it easier to extract and transport untapped deposits of critical minerals which are needed for computers and phones.

Trump also said he wants the island to expand America's security and has cited what he says is the threat from Russian and Chinese ships as a reason to control it.

But both experts and Greenlanders question that claim.

"The only Chinese I see is when I go to the fast food market," Lars Vintner, a heating engineer told AP. He said he frequently goes sailing and hunting and has never seen Russian or Chinese ships.

His friend, Hans Nørgaard, agreed, adding "what has come out of the mouth of Donald Trump about all these ships is just fantasy."

Denmark has said the U.S. — which already has a military presence — can boost its bases on Greenland. For that reason, "security is just a cover," Vintner said, suggesting Trump actually wants to own the island to make money from its untapped natural resources.

Nørgaard told AP he filed a police complaint in Nuuk against Trump's "aggressive" behavior because, he said, American officials are threatening the people of Greenland and NATO. He suggested Trump was using the ships as a pretext to further American expansion.

"Donald Trump would like to have Greenland, (Russian President Vladimir) Putin would like Ukraine and (Chinese President) Xi Jinping would like to have Taiwan," Nørgaard said.

Mikaelson, the student, said Greenlanders benefit from being part of Denmark, which provides free health care, education and payments during study.

"I don't want the U.S. to take that away from us," she said.

Ahead of Wednesday's meeting, Naaja Nathanielsen, Greenland's minister for business and mineral resources said it's "unfathomable" that the United States is discussing taking over a NATO ally and urged the Trump administration to listen to voices from the Arctic island's people.

More diplomatic efforts

Following the White House meeting, Løkke Rasmussen and Motzfeldt, along with Denmark's ambassador to the U.S., are due to meet with senators from the Arctic Caucus in the U.S. Congress. Sen. Angus King,

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 37 of 76

an independent from Maine, is to host the gathering.

It comes as two other lawmakers — Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, a New Hampshire Democrat, and Sen. Lisa Murkowski, an Alaska Republican — have introduced bipartisan legislation that would prohibit the use of funds from the U.S. Defense or State departments to annex or take control of Greenland or the sovereign territory of any NATO member state without that ally's consent or authorization from the North Atlantic Council.

A bipartisan delegation of lawmakers is also heading to Copenhagen at the end of the week to meet with Danish and Greenlandic officials.

Last week, Denmark's major European allies joined Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen in issuing a statement declaring that Greenland belongs to its people and that "it is for Denmark and Greenland, and them only, to decide on matters concerning Denmark and Greenland."

On Wednesday, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot told RTL radio that his country plans to open a consulate in Greenland on Feb. 6. He said the decision had been taken to open the diplomatic outpost when President Emmanuel Macron visited last summer.

"Attacking another NATO member would make no sense; it would even be contrary to the interests of the United States. And I'm hearing more and more voices in the United States saying this," Barrot said. "So this blackmail must obviously stop."

## **A construction crane falls onto a moving train in Thailand, killing at least 29 people**

BANGKOK (AP) — A construction crane fell onto a moving passenger train, causing a fiery derailment that killed at least 29 people Wednesday in northeastern Thailand. Another 64 people were injured and rescuers were still searching the wreckage and giving first aid.

The derailment occurred on part of an ambitious planned high-speed rail project that will eventually connect China with much of Southeast Asia.

The crane, which was being used to build an elevated part of the railway, fell as the train was traveling from Bangkok to Ubon Ratchathani province, according to the public relations office for Nakhon Ratchasima province, where the accident took place.

Photos published in Thai media showed plumes of white then dark smoke above the scene, and construction equipment hanging down from between two concrete support pillars.

Rescue workers stood on top of overturned railways carriages, some of them with gaping holes torn on their sides, video from public broadcaster ThaiPBS showed. What appeared to be sections of the crane were scattered along the track. Meanwhile, paramedics gave first aid to injured passengers.

Thai media reported the train had three carriages, the last two being the most damaged.

Transport Minister Piphat Ratchakitprakan said 195 people were on board the train. He said he ordered an investigation.

The elevated segment that collapsed is a part of a Thai-Chinese high-speed railway project linking the national capital Bangkok to the northeastern province of Nong Khai, bordering Laos. The two-stage rail project has a total investment cost of more than 520 billion baht (\$16.8 billion) and is associated with an ambitious plan to connect China with Southeast Asia under Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative.

In August 2024, a railway tunnel on the planned route, also in Nakhon Ratchasima, collapsed, killing three workers. Days of heavy rainfall were believed to have been a factor in the collapse.

## **Iran signals fast trials and executions for protesters as death toll in crackdown goes over 2,500**

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The head of Iran's judiciary signaled Wednesday there would be fast trials and executions ahead for those detained in nationwide protests despite a warning from U.S.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 38 of 76

President Donald Trump.

The comments from Iran's judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei come as activists had warned hangings of those detained could come soon. Already, a bloody security force crackdown on the demonstrations has killed at least 2,571, the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency reported. That figure dwarfs the death toll from any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades and recalls the chaos surrounding the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Trump repeatedly has warned that the United States may take military action over the killing of peaceful protesters, just months after it bombed Iranian nuclear sites during a 12-day war launched by Israel against the Islamic Republic in June.

Meanwhile Wednesday, Iran prepared for the mass funeral of 100 security force members killed in the demonstrations as people remained fearful in the streets. Plainclothes security forces still milled around some neighborhoods, though anti-riot police and members of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard's all-volunteer Basij force appeared to have been sent back to their barracks.

"We are very frightened because of these sounds (of gunfire) and protests," said one mother of two children shopping for fruits and vegetables Wednesday, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals. "We have heard many are killed and many are injured. Now peace has been restored but schools are closed and I'm scared to send my children to school again."

Ahmadreza Tavakoli, 36, told The Associated Press he witnessed one demonstration in Tehran and was shocked by the use of firearms by authorities.

"People were out to express themselves and protest, but quickly it turned into a war zone," Tavakoli said. "The people do not have guns. Only the security forces have guns."

'We have to do it quickly'

Mohseni-Ejei made the comment in a video shared by Iranian state television online.

"If we want to do a job, we should do it now. If we want to do something, we have to do it quickly," he said. "If it becomes late, two months, three months later, it doesn't have the same effect. If we want to do something, we have to do that fast."

His comments stand as a direct challenge to Trump, who warned Iran about executions an interview with CBS aired Tuesday.

"We will take very strong action," Trump said. "If they do such a thing, we will take very strong action."

"We don't want to see what's happening in Iran happen. And you know, if they want to have protests, that's one thing, when they start killing thousands of people, and now you're telling me about hanging — we'll see how that works out for them. It's not going to work out good."

Meanwhile, activists said Wednesday that Starlink was offering free service in Iran. The satellite internet service has been key in getting around an internet shutdown launched by the theocracy on Jan. 8. Iran began allowing people to call out internationally on Tuesday via their mobile phones, but calls from people outside the country into Iran remain blocked.

"We can confirm that the free subscription for Starlink terminals is fully functional," said Mehdi Yahyanejad, a Los Angeles-based activist who has helped get the units into Iran. "We tested it using a newly activated Starlink terminal inside Iran."

Starlink itself did not immediately acknowledge the decision.

Security service personnel also apparently were searching for Starlink dishes, as people in northern Tehran reported authorities raiding apartment buildings with satellite dishes. While satellite television dishes are illegal, many in the capital have them in homes, and officials broadly had given up on enforcing the law in recent years.

Death toll continues to rise

The Human Rights Activists News Agency said 2,403 of the dead were protesters and 147 were government-affiliated. Twelve children were killed, along with nine civilians it said were not taking part in protests. More than 18,100 people have been detained, the group said.

Gauging the demonstrations from abroad has grown more difficult, and the AP has been unable to independently assess the toll given the communications being disrupted in the country.

## Luxury retailer Saks Global files for bankruptcy as it prepares to restructure

The Associated Press undefined

Luxury retailer Saks Global has filed for bankruptcy, preparing to reposition itself in the increasingly competitive upscale market after obtaining about \$1.75 billion in financing commitments.

The New York-based private company that owns retailers Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus said in a release Wednesday that it had filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in the Southern District of Texas.

The company's top executive, Marc Metrick, stepped down earlier this month as the firm struggled with debt it took on for its \$2.65 billion acquisition of Neiman Marcus in 2024. He was succeeded as CEO by executive chairman Richard Baker, who quit both roles earlier this week and was replaced as chief executive by Geoffroy van Raemdonck.

The company is also facing increasing competition as it tries to winnow down its heavy debt load, while its customers have balked against extravagant price hikes.

The company said it was "evaluating its operational footprint to invest resources where it has the greatest long-term potential."

Saks said it did not expect its operations to be disrupted and it would continue to honor its customer programs and pay its suppliers and employees.

It said it has financing commitments of \$1.5 billion from some of its creditors and another \$240 million in "incremental liquidity" from its lenders.

Hudson's Bay Co., the Canadian owner of Saks Fifth Avenue, split off the luxury retailer's e-commerce business, Saks.com, in 2021. After acquiring Neiman Marcus three years later, Saks Fifth Avenue changed its name to Saks Global.

Global sales of luxury goods are expected to contract for the second straight year in 2026 as consumers anxious about the global economy pare back their spending, according to a study by Bain & Co. consultancy released in November.

Hudson's Bay, Canada's oldest company, moved to begin liquidating all but six of its stores in March 2025.

## Hundreds more in Venezuela say their loved ones are 'political prisoners'

By REGINA GARCIA CANO and MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

GUANARE, Venezuela (AP) — Freedom came too late for Edilson Torres.

The police officer was buried Tuesday in his humble, rural hometown following his death in a Venezuelan prison, where he was held incommunicado since being detained in December on what his family said were politically motivated accusations.

Torres, 51, died of a heart attack Saturday, just as his family awaited the government's promised release of prisoners following the U.S. capture of then-President Nicolás Maduro. The loss left his family reeling.

Now scores of families — who once hesitated to approach advocacy groups — are coming forward to register their loved ones as "political prisoners" in the hope that they might have a more optimistic future than Torres.

Foro Penal, which tracks and advocates for Venezuelan prisoners, has received a "flood of messages" from families since last week, said Alfredo Romero, director of the nongovernmental organization.

"They didn't report it out of fear, and now they're doing it because, in a way, they feel that there is this possibility that their families will be freed," Romero said. "They see it as hope, but more importantly, as an opportunity."

Waiting for liberations

The head of Venezuela's national assembly, Jorge Rodríguez, said last week that a "significant number" of Venezuelan and foreigners imprisoned in the country would be released as a gesture to "seek peace" following the operation that captured Maduro in the early hours of Jan. 3. The U.S. and Venezuela's opposi-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 40 of 76

tion have long demanded the widespread release of detained opposition figures, activists and journalists, whom they claim are used as a political tool by the ruling party.

Venezuela's government denies that there are prisoners unjustly detained, accusing them of plotting to destabilize Maduro's government.

Following Torres' death, Venezuela's Attorney General Tarek William Saab said in a statement that the case had been assigned to a terrorism unit and "was linked to criminal activities detected by state security agencies." He did not offer any details, but the vague language tracks with past accusations leveled against real or perceived government critics.

Romero said that of the roughly 300 families who reached out to Foro Penal, about 100 cases so far have been confirmed as politically motivated. Most of those reported over the past few days, he said, once worked for Venezuela's military. That is on top of more than 800 people that the organization says continue to be detained for political reasons in Venezuela.

As of Tuesday evening, Foro Penal had confirmed 56 prisoners it said were detained for political reasons had been freed. The group criticized the lack of government transparency over the releases. Venezuela's government negated the organization's count, and reported a far higher figure of 400 Tuesday afternoon.

But the government did not provide evidence of the releases, a time range in which they were carried out nor identify those freed, making it impossible to determine whether those freed were behind bars for political or other reasons.

'Pure and real kidnapping'

Before Torres' funeral on Tuesday, a procession of cars and motorcycles stopped at a local jail, where his wife remains detained on disputed accusations.

"My little brother, my little brother," Emelyn Torres said between sobs after his casket, cloaked in Venezuela's flag, arrived at her home for the wake. A few feet away, their grandmother nearly fainted as dozens of people crammed into the living room to pay their respects.

Hours earlier, as a minivan transported the body of her brother 267 miles (430 kilometers) from the capital, Caracas, to Guanare, Torres learned that other men linked to the WhatsApp group that led to her brother's arrest had just been released from prison. She wailed.

Among those who have been released are: human rights attorney Rocío San Miguel, who immediately relocated to Spain; Biagio Pilieri, an opposition leader who was part of Nobel Peace Prize winner María Corina Machado's 2024 presidential campaign; and Enrique Márquez, a former electoral authority and presidential candidate.

Italian businessman Marco Burlò, who was released from prison Monday, told reporters outside a Rome airport Tuesday that he was kept isolated throughout his detention, which he characterized as a "pure and real kidnapping."

"I can't say that I was physically abused, but without being able to talk to our children, without the right to defense, without being able to speak to the lawyer, completely isolated, here they thought that I might have died," he said.

A rare moment of hope

The small set of releases over the past few days continues to fuel criticisms by families, human rights watchdogs at the United Nations and U.S. politicians, who have accused the government of not following through on their word of a wider release.

But the rapid political shifts in the Latin American nation and the distant possibility of release simultaneously marked a rare moment of hope for many families who have spent years wondering if their loved ones would ever be freed.

Part of the reason that Romero said he believed so many people had not come forward is the government's ongoing crackdown on dissent since Venezuela's tumultuous 2024 election, which Maduro claimed to have won despite ample credible evidence to the contrary.

As mass street protests broke out, authorities said they detained more than 2,000 people. In the month after July elections, Venezuela's government passed a law — dubbed the "anti-NGO law" by critics — mak-

ing it easier for the government to criminalize human rights groups.

That had a chilling effect, Romero said, making families hesitant to come forward — until now.

## Minnesota protesters, agents repeatedly square off while prosecutors quit after Renee Good's death

By MARK VANCLEAVE and TIM SULLIVAN Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Federal officers dropped tear gas and sprayed eye irritant at activists Tuesday during another day of confrontations in Minneapolis, while students miles away walked out of a suburban school to protest the Trump administration's bold immigration sweeps.

Meanwhile, the fallout from the fatal shooting of a Minneapolis woman by an immigration agent reached the local U.S. Attorney's Office: At least five prosecutors have resigned amid controversy over how the U.S. Justice Department is handling the investigation, according to people familiar with the matter.

Separately, a Justice Department official said Wednesday there's no basis for a criminal civil rights investigation. An FBI probe of Renee Good's death is ongoing.

Strife between federal agents and the public continues to boil, six days since Good was shot in the head while driving off in her Honda Pilot. At one scene, gas clouds filled a Minneapolis street near where she died. A man scrubbed his eyes with snow and screamed for help after agents in a Jeep sprayed an orange irritant and drove off.

It's common for people to boo, taunt and blow orange whistles when they spot heavily armed immigration agents passing through in unmarked vehicles or walking the streets, all part of a grassroots effort to warn the neighborhood and remind the government that they're watching.

"Who doesn't have a whistle?" a man with a bag of them yelled.

Brita Anderson, who lives nearby and came to support neighborhood friends, said she was "incensed" to see agents in tactical gear and gas masks, and wondered about their purpose.

"It felt like the only reason they'd come here is to harass people," Anderson said.

In Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, students protesting the immigration enforcement operation walked out of school, as students in other communities have done this week.

Later, a large crowd gathered outside a hotel in Minneapolis banging drums and blowing whistles as officers wearing helmets and carrying batons stood guard just inside. Meanwhile, confrontations erupted between protesters and officers guarding the federal building being used as a base for the Twin Cities crackdown.

Good's death has ripple effect

The departures in the U.S. Attorney's Office include First Assistant U.S. Attorney Joe Thompson, who had been leading the sprawling prosecution of public fraud schemes in the state, according to people who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to discuss personnel matters.

With the Department of Homeland Security pledging to send more than 2,000 immigration officers into Minnesota, the state, joined by Minneapolis and St. Paul, sued President Donald Trump's administration Monday to halt or limit the surge.

The lawsuit says Homeland Security is violating the First Amendment and other constitutional protections by focusing on a progressive state that favors Democrats and welcomes immigrants.

"What we are seeing is thousands — plural — thousands of federal agents coming into our city. And, yeah, they're having a tremendous impact on day-to-day life," Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said.

A judge set a status conference for Wednesday.

Homeland Security says it has made more than 2,000 arrests in the state since early December and is vowing to not back down. Spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin, responding to the lawsuit, accused Minnesota officials of ignoring public safety.

ICE tactics on docket

In a different lawsuit, a judge said she would rule by Thursday or Friday on a request to restrict the use of force, such as chemical irritants, on people who are observing and recording agents' activities. Govern-

ment attorneys argued that officers must protect themselves.

The Trump administration has repeatedly defended the immigration agent who shot Good, a 37-year-old mother of three, saying he acted in self-defense. But that explanation has been widely panned by Frey, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz and others based on videos of the confrontation.

State and local authorities are urging the public to share video and any other evidence as they seek to separately investigate Good's death after federal authorities insisted they would approach it alone and not share information.

In Wisconsin, Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez is proposing that the state ban civil immigration enforcement around courthouses, hospitals, health clinics, schools, churches and other places. She is hoping to succeed Gov. Tony Evers, a fellow Democrat, who is not running for a third term.

"We can take a look at that, but I think banning things absolutely will ramp up the actions of our folks in Washington, D.C.," Evers said, referring to the Trump administration. "They don't tend to approach those things appropriately."

## Senate readies vote on Venezuela war powers as Trump pressures GOP defectors

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republicans are facing intense pressure from President Donald Trump to vote down a war powers resolution Wednesday that is aimed at limiting the president's ability to carry out further military action against Venezuela.

Five GOP senators joined with Democrats to advance the resolution last week, but Trump has lashed out at the defectors as he tries to head off passage of the bill. Democrats are forcing the vote after U.S. troops captured Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro in a surprise nighttime raid earlier this month.

"Here we have one of the most successful attacks ever and they find a way to be against it. It's pretty amazing. And it's a shame," Trump said at a speech in Michigan Tuesday. He also hurled insults at several of the Republicans who advanced the legislation, calling Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky a "stone cold loser" and Sens. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Susan Collins of Maine "disasters."

Trump's latest comments followed earlier phone calls with the senators, which they described as terse. The fury being directed their way from the president underscored how the war powers vote has taken on new political significance as Trump expands his foreign policy ambitions in the Western Hemisphere.

The legislation, even if passed by the Senate, has virtually no chance of becoming law because it would eventually need to be signed by Trump himself. But it represented both a test of GOP loyalty to the president and a marker for how much leeway the Republican-controlled Senate is willing to give Trump to use the military abroad.

At least one Republican reconsidering

Sen. Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican who helped advance the war powers resolution last week, has indicated he may change his position.

Hawley said that Trump's message during a phone call last week was that the legislation "really ties my hands." The senator said he had a follow-up phone call with Secretary of State Marco Rubio that was "really positive."

Hawley said that Rubio told him Monday "point blank, we're not going to do ground troops." The senator said he also received assurances that the Trump administration will follow constitutional requirements if it becomes necessary to deploy troops again to the South American country.

"I'm in listening-and-receive mode at this time," said Hawley, adding, "I don't know how we're going to proceed next on the floor."

Sen. Todd Young, an Indiana Republican who also voted to advance the resolution, declined repeatedly to discuss his position but said he was "giving it some thought." Collins had voted against similar war powers resolutions in previous months before voting last week to advance the one currently before the Senate.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 43 of 76

Democratic Sen. Tim Kaine, who has brought a series of war powers resolutions this year, said he wasn't surprised at Trump's reaction to Congress asserting its ability to check the president.

"They're furious at the notion that Congress wants to be Congress," he said. "But I think people who ran for the Senate, they want to be U.S. senators and they don't want to just vote their own irrelevance."

The shifting rationale for military intervention

Trump has used a series of legal rationales for his campaign against Maduro.

As he built up a naval force in the Caribbean and destroyed vessels that were allegedly carrying drugs from Venezuela, the Trump administration tapped wartime powers under the global war on terror by designating drug cartels as terrorist organizations.

The administration has claimed the capture of Maduro himself was actually a law enforcement operation, essentially to extradite the Venezuelan president to stand trial for charges in the U.S. that were filed in 2020.

In a classified briefing Tuesday, senators reviewed the Trump administration's still undisclosed legal opinion for using the military for the operation. It was described as a lengthy document.

As he exited the classified briefing room at the Capitol, Paul said, "Legal arguments and constitutional arguments should all be public, and it's a terrible thing that any of this is being kept secret because the arguments aren't very good."

Lawmakers, including some Republicans, have been alarmed by Trump's recent foreign policy talk. In recent weeks, he has pledged that the U.S. will "run" Venezuela for years to come, threatened military action to take possession of Greenland and told Iranians protesting their government that "help is on its way."

"It's amazing. He's concerned about the protesters in Iran, but not concerned about the damage that ICE is doing to the protesters and Americans in Minnesota and other places," said Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer, referring to the fatal shooting of a woman in Minnesota by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer.

How Senate will tackle the war powers resolution

Republican Senate leaders were looking for ways to defuse the conflict between their members and Trump and were eager to move on quickly to other business.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., questioned whether this war powers resolution should be prioritized under the chamber's rules.

"We don't have troops in Venezuela. There is no kinetic action. There are no operations. There are no boots on the ground," he said, arguing that the legislation "doesn't reflect what is current reality in Venezuela."

But even if Republican leaders attempt to dismiss the legislation under those grounds, it would still get a vote.

Schumer said he hoped at least the five Republicans would hold to their position because they "understand how important this is."

## Marine Le Pen's appeal trial opens in Paris, with far-right leader's 2027 presidential bid at stake

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — France's far-right leader Marine Le Pen denied any wrongdoing as she appeared in court Tuesday to appeal an embezzlement conviction, with her 2027 presidential ambitions hanging on the outcome.

Le Pen, 57, is seeking to overturn a March ruling that found her guilty of misusing European Parliament funds in the hiring of aides from 2004 to 2016. She was given a five-year ban from holding elected office, two years of house arrest with an electronic bracelet, a further two-year suspended sentence and a 100,000-euro (\$116,800) fine.

"I'd like to tell the court that ... we did not feel we had committed any offence," Le Pen told the three-judge panel. She said European Parliament officials did not at the time tell her party that the way it was hiring people was potentially against any rules.

"We have never concealed anything," she added. The room was packed with dozens of reporters and

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 44 of 76

members of the general public.

The European Parliament's lawyer, Patrick Maisonneuve, said he disagrees with Le Pen's presentation of the institution's role as "an arbitrator."

"There's a contradiction in saying at the same time: 'I deny you the right to examine the content of my work as a member of parliament' and then saying: 'but the European Parliament didn't conduct a thorough review,'" Maisonneuve told reporters.

Leading presidential contender

Le Pen was seen as the potential front-runner to succeed President Emmanuel Macron in the 2027 election until last year's ruling, which sent shock waves through French politics. She denounced it as "a democratic scandal."

Her National Rally party has been coming out on top in opinion polls, and Le Pen alleged that the judicial system brought out "the nuclear bomb" to prevent her from becoming France's president.

Anti-corruption campaigners argue that Le Pen's conviction was proof that French democracy works, and that no one is above the law. Advocacy group Transparency France noted that her conviction came after years of investigation and a lengthy trial in which Le Pen and other party members were able to freely defend their positions.

The appeal trial, involving Le Pen, 10 other defendants and the National Rally party as a legal entity, is scheduled to last for five weeks. The panel is expected to announce its verdict later, possibly before summer.

Several scenarios are possible, from acquittal to another conviction that may bar her from running in 2027. She also could face an even tougher punishment if convicted anew — up to 10 years in prison and a fine of 1 million euros (\$1.17 million).

Doubt over political future

In March, Le Pen and other party officials were convicted of using money intended for EU parliamentary assistants who instead had other duties between 2004 and 2016, in violation of EU rules. Some did work for the party, known as the National Front at the time, in French domestic politics, the court said.

In handing down the sentence, the judge said Le Pen was at the heart of a "system" set up to siphon off EU parliament funds — including to pay for her bodyguard and her chief of staff.

All defendants denied wrongdoing, and Le Pen argued the money was used in a legitimate way. The judge said Le Pen and the others did not enrich themselves personally.

The legal proceedings initially stemmed from a 2015 alert raised by Martin Schulz, then-president of the European Parliament, to French authorities.

The case and its fallout weigh heavily on Le Pen's political future after more than a decade spent trying to bring the far right into France's political mainstream. Since taking over the party from her late father, Jean-Marie Le Pen in 2011, she has sought to shed its reputation for racism and antisemitism, changing its name, expelling her father in 2015 and softening the party's platform and her own public image.

Designated successor

The National Rally is now the largest single political group in France's lower house of parliament and has built a broad network of elected officials across the country. It is most well-known for its anti-immigration, nationalist stance and its rhetoric often targeting Muslims.

Le Pen and other party members also have long criticized the EU and its rules and campaigned for more national sovereignty, even while serving in the EU Parliament. She stepped down as party president in 2021 to focus on the presidential race, handing the role to Jordan Bardella.

If Le Pen is ultimately prevented from running in 2027, Bardella, 30, is widely expected to be her successor. His popularity has surged, particularly among younger voters, though some within the party have questioned his leadership.

Le Pen's potential conviction would be "deeply worrying for (France's) democracy," Bardella said Monday in a New Year address.

## Proposed billionaires' tax in California rattles Silicon Valley, entangles Gov. Newsom

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD AND MICHAEL LIEDTKE Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A proposed billionaires' tax in California has ignited a political uproar in Silicon Valley, with tech titans threatening to leave the state while Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom maneuvers to defeat a levy that he fears will lead to an exodus of wealth.

A technology mecca, California has more billionaires than any other state — a few hundred, by some estimates. Nearly half its personal income tax revenue, a financial backbone in the nearly \$350 billion budget, comes from the top 1% of earners.

A large health care union is attempting to place a proposal before voters in November that would impose a one-time 5% tax on the assets of billionaires — including stocks, art, businesses, collectibles and intellectual property — to backfill federal funding cuts to health services for lower-income people that were signed by President Donald Trump last year.

In a state with a vast gap between rich and poor, the plan has resulted in a tangle of competing interests at a time when both Democrats and Republicans are struggling to respond to economic anxiety driven by rising costs ahead of this year's midterm elections.

An online war of words has tech leaders pondering a hollowing out of Silicon Valley, and millions of dollars are flowing to political committees engaged in the fight. That includes \$3 million from billionaire Peter Thiel, a founder of PayPal, to a committee tied to a business group opposing the tax.

However it's not clear if the proposal will make the ballot, with more than 870,000 petition signatures required for it to qualify.

Threatened exodus

Although the tax would affect only a minuscule slice of California's roughly 39 million residents, it would siphon money from an immense pool of wealth. It would apply retroactively to billionaires living in the state as of Jan. 1.

At least 25 billionaires listed among Forbes magazine's 2025 rankings of the world's 500 wealthiest people either lived in California or had some significant ties to the state, based on a review by The Associated Press. But determining whether they were full-time residents or just frequent visitors could turn into a matter of dispute, since many of them own property elsewhere.

"You are really playing with fire with this one," said Aaron Levie, CEO of the publicly traded Silicon Valley company Box. He fears that the proposed tax would drive entrepreneurs to look elsewhere to run their companies and launch startups.

Even liberal-leaning tech pioneers would "find it absurd just on pure economic and structural grounds, even if they might agree that the cause itself is very worthy," said Levie, who is not a billionaire.

Governor worries about a competitive disadvantage

Newsom has long opposed state-level wealth taxes, believing such levies would be disadvantageous for the world's fourth-largest economy. At a time when California is strapped for cash and he is considering a 2028 presidential run, he is trying to block the proposal before it reaches the ballot.

Analysts say an exodus of billionaires could mean a loss of hundreds of millions of tax dollars.

"It's one of the reasons why Newsom's path to the Democratic nomination is not going to be an easy one," Claremont McKenna College political scientist Jack Pitney said. "He's already facing a (budget) deficit the size of which is uncertain ... and in the years to come, a billionaires tax that could backfire badly."

Democrats divided on the issue

The proposal has created a deep rift between Newsom and prominent members of his party's progressive wing, including Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who endorsed it and said it should be a template for other states.

"Our nation will not thrive when so few have so much while so many have so little," Sanders said on the social platform X.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 46 of 76

Another supporter, and a potential 2028 Newsom rival, is Democratic Rep. Ro Khanna, who mocked billionaires for threatening to flee over a tax intended to provide health care for lower-income people.

The measure's lead proponent, the Service Employees International Union, sees the threat of an exodus as exaggerated.

The tax is a "workable response to a crisis created by Congress," Suzanne Jimenez, chief of staff of SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West, said in a statement. She added that it would "keep emergency rooms open, hospitals staffed and health care systems functioning."

The California Business Roundtable, meanwhile, is leading an effort to defeat the measure, saying it would "undermine our economy, decimate the state budget, drive investment out of the state and ultimately make everyday life more expensive for working families."

A business climate known for heavy regulation and steep costs

Fleeing California because of its high cost of living and reputation for stringent regulations started to gather momentum well before the proposed wealth tax began circulating last year.

Elon Musk, the world's wealthiest man with a \$724 billion fortune, bought a home in Texas and moved his electric automaker Tesla to Austin several years ago.

The financial threat posed by the proposed tax apparently is pushing even more of Silicon Valley's renowned pioneers to curtail their exposure to California and its liberal policies, including Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin, who moved to the state during the mid-1990s for graduate study at Stanford University.

Page and Brin stepped away from their executive roles years ago but remain the largest shareholders in Google parent company Alphabet, with stakes that account for most of their combined fortunes of \$530 billion, according to Forbes.

But both men have begun moving more of their assets to Florida, according to multiple reports. Google, which has been based in Mountain View for the past quarter century, did not respond to an AP inquiry about their recent moves.

## See the dates and ticket plans for the BTS tour that starts in April

By MARIA SHERMAN AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The BTS comeback is upon us.

The K-pop septet has announced a 2026 - 2027 world tour, kicking off in South Korea in April and running through March 2027 with over 70 dates across Asia, North America, South America, Australia and Europe.

They mark the group's first headline performances since their 2021-22 Permission to Dance on Stage tour.

A presale will take place Jan. 22 and Jan. 23 for ARMY Membership holders who register on Weverse, an online fan platform owned by BTS management company HYBE. A general sale for all regions will follow on Jan. 24.

The news arrives a few weeks after the entertainment company BigHit Music revealed that BTS will make their return to music on March 20, following a nearly four-year hiatus. That's because all seven members of BTS — RM, Jin, Jimin, V, Suga, Jung Kook and j-hope — had to complete South Korea's mandatory military service.

Rapper Suga was the last group member to be released, from his duties as a social service agent, an alternative to serving in the military that he reportedly chose due to a shoulder injury. That was in June 2025.

The six others, RM, V, Jimin, Jung Kook, Jin and j-hope, served in the army.

See the full tour dates below.

BTS 2026 World Tour Dates

April 9, April 11-12 — Goyang, South Korea

April 17-18 — Tokyo

April 25-26 — Tampa, Florida

May 2-3 — El Paso, Texas

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 47 of 76

May 7, May 9-10 — Mexico City  
May 16-17 — Stanford, California  
May 23-24, May 27 — Las Vegas  
June 12-13 — Busan, South Korea  
June 26-27 — Madrid  
July 1-2 — Brussels  
July 6-7 — London  
July 11-12 — Munich  
July 17-18 — Paris  
Aug. 1-2 — East Rutherford, New Jersey  
Aug. 5 -6 — Foxborough, Massachusetts  
Aug. 10-11 — Baltimore  
Aug. 15-16 — Arlington, Texas  
Aug. 22-23 — Toronto  
Aug. 27-28 — Chicago  
Sept. 1 - 2, Sept. 5 - 6 — Los Angeles  
Oct. 2-3 — Bogotá, Colombia  
Oct. 9-10 — Lima, Peru  
Oct. 16-17 — Santiago, Chile  
Oct. 23-24 — Buenos Aires, Argentina  
Oct. 28, Oct. 30-31 — São Paulo  
Nov. 19, Nov. 21-22 — Kaohsiung, Taiwan  
Dec. 3, Dec. 5-6 — Bangkok  
Dec. 12-13 — Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Dec. 17, Dec. 19-20, Dec. 22 — Singapore  
Dec. 26-27 — Jakarta  
BTS 2027 World Tour Dates  
Feb. 12-13 — Melbourne, Australia  
Feb. 20-21 — Sydney  
March 4, March 6-7 — Hong Kong  
March 13-14 — Manila, Philippines

## **The death toll from a crackdown on protests in Iran jumps to at least 2,571, activists say**

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The death toll from nationwide protests in Iran has surpassed 2,500, activists said, as Iranians made phone calls abroad for the first time in days Tuesday after authorities severed communications during a crackdown on demonstrators.

The number of dead climbed to at least 2,571 early Wednesday, as reported by the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency. That figure dwarfs the death toll from any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades and recalls the chaos surrounding the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iranian state television offered the first official acknowledgment of the deaths, quoting an official saying the country had "a lot of martyrs."

The demonstrations began in late December in anger over Iran's ailing economy and soon targeted the theocracy, particularly 86-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Images obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press from demonstrations in Tehran showed graffiti and chants calling for Khamenei's death — something that could carry a death sentence.

As the reported toll grew Tuesday, U.S. President Donald Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform: "Iranian Patriots, KEEP PROTESTING - TAKE OVER YOUR INSTITUTIONS!!!"

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 48 of 76

He added: "I have canceled all meetings with Iranian Officials until the senseless killing of protesters STOPS. HELP IS ON ITS WAY."

However, hours later, Trump told reporters that his administration was awaiting an accurate report on the number of protesters that had been killed before acting "accordingly."

Trump said about the Iranian security forces: "It would seem to me that they have been badly misbehaving, but that is not confirmed."

Iranian officials once again warned Trump against taking action, with Ali Larijani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, responding to U.S. posturing by writing: "We declare the names of the main killers of the people of Iran: 1- Trump 2- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu."

Death toll spikes

The activist group said 2,403 of the dead were protesters and 147 were government-affiliated. Twelve children were killed, along with nine civilians it said were not taking part in protests. More than 18,100 people have been detained, the group said.

Gauging the demonstrations from abroad has grown more difficult, and the AP has been unable to independently assess the toll.

Skylar Thompson with the Human Rights Activists News Agency told AP the new toll was shocking, particularly since it reached four times the death toll of the monthslong 2022 Mahsa Amini protests in just two weeks.

She warned that the toll would still rise: "We're horrified, but we still think the number is conservative."

Speaking by phone for the first time since their calls were cut off from the outside world, Iranian witnesses described a heavy security presence in central Tehran, burned-out government buildings, smashed ATMs and few passersby. Meanwhile, people were concerned about what comes next, including the possibility of a U.S. attack.

"My customers talk about Trump's reaction while wondering if he plans a military strike against the Islamic Republic," said shopkeeper Mahmoud, who gave only his first name out of concern for his safety. "I don't expect Trump or any other foreign country cares about the interests of Iranians."

Reza, a taxi driver who also gave just his first name, said protests are on many people's minds. "People — particularly young ones — are hopeless, but they talk about continuing the protests," he said.

Iranians reach out, but world can't reach in

Several people in Tehran were able to call the AP on Tuesday and speak to a journalist. The AP bureau in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, was unable to call those numbers back. Witnesses said text messaging was still down, and internet users in Iran could connect to government-approved websites locally but nothing abroad.

The witnesses, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal, said police stood at major intersections and security officials in plainclothes were visible in public spaces. Anti-riot police officers wore helmets and body armor while carrying batons, shields, shotguns and tear gas launchers, they said.

Several banks and government offices were burned during the unrest, the witnesses said. Shops were open Tuesday, though there was little foot traffic in the capital.

On the streets, people also could be seen challenging plainclothes security officials, who were stopping passersby at random.

State television also read a statement about mortuary and morgue services being free — a signal that some likely charged high fees for the release of bodies during the crackdown.

Security service personnel also apparently were searching for Starlink satellite internet terminals, as people in northern Tehran reported authorities raiding apartment buildings with satellite dishes. While satellite television dishes are illegal, many in the capital have them in homes, and officials broadly had given up on enforcing the law in recent years.

Activists said Wednesday that Starlink was offering free service in Iran.

"We can confirm that the free subscription for Starlink terminals is fully functional," Mehdi Yahyanejad, a Los Angeles-based activist who has helped get the units into Iran, told The Associated Press in a state-

ment. "We tested it using a newly activated Starlink terminal inside Iran."

Starlink itself did not immediately acknowledge the decision.

## Russia attacks Ukraine's power grid again in freezing temperatures

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia launched a second major drone and missile bombardment of Ukraine in four days, officials said Tuesday, aiming again at the power grid amid freezing temperatures in an apparent snub to U.S.-led peace efforts as Moscow's invasion of its neighbor approaches the four-year mark.

Russia fired almost 300 drones, 18 ballistic missiles and seven cruise missiles at eight regions overnight, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on social media.

One strike in the northeastern Kharkiv region killed four people at a mail depot, and several hundred thousand households were without power in the Kyiv region, Zelenskyy said.

The daytime temperature in Kyiv, which has endured freezing temperatures for more than two weeks, was minus 12 degrees C (about 10 degrees F), with streets covered in ice and the rumble of generators heard throughout the capital.

Kyiv has grappled with severe power shortages for days, although Mayor Vitali Klitschko said Monday night's strikes caused the biggest electrical outage the city has faced so far.

Kyiv residents huddle for warmth

More than 500 residential buildings remained without central heating Tuesday. Throughout the city, bare trees were weighed down with icicles and snow was piled up next to sidewalks.

Olena Davydova, 30, charged her phone at what is called a "Point of Invincibility" shelter in Kyiv's Dniprovskiyi district. The government-built temporary installations, often large tents on the sidewalk, provide food, drinks, warmth and electricity.

Davydova said she had been without power for nearly 50 hours. That forced her to adopt some new routines: sleeping in one bed with her child and two cats, storing fresh food on the balcony, and using candles after dark.

She says she is taking the changes in stride. "I still have enough patience. I'm not reacting to this in a very emotional way," she told The Associated Press.

Elsewhere, friends and relatives gathered in apartments still with power or hot water, at least temporarily, to charge their phones, take showers, or share a warm drink.

Klitschko ordered the city to provide one hot meal per day to needy residents. He also announced that workers in the city's water, heating and road maintenance services would receive bonuses for working "day and night" to restore critical infrastructure.

US calls out 'inexplicable' Russian escalation

Four days earlier, Russia also sent hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles in a large-scale overnight attack and, for only the second time in the war, it used a powerful new hypersonic missile that struck western Ukraine in what appeared to be a clear warning to Kyiv's NATO allies that it won't back down.

On Monday, the U.S. accused Russia of a "dangerous and inexplicable escalation" of the fighting at a time when the Trump administration is trying to advance peace negotiations.

Tammy Bruce, the U.S. deputy ambassador to the United Nations, told an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council that Washington deplores "the staggering number of casualties" in the conflict and condemns Russia's intensifying attacks on energy and other infrastructure.

Russia has sought to deny Ukrainian civilians heat and running water over the course of the war, hoping to wear down public resistance to Moscow's full-scale invasion, which began on Feb. 24, 2022. Ukrainian officials describe the strategy as "weaponizing winter."

The attack in Ukraine's Kharkiv region also wounded 10 people, local authorities said.

In the southern city of Odesa, six people were wounded in the attack, said Oleh Kiper, the head of the regional military administration. The strikes damaged energy infrastructure, a hospital, a kindergarten, an educational facility and a number of residential buildings, he said.

2025 was the deadliest year for Ukrainian civilians

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 50 of 76

Last year was the deadliest for civilians in Ukraine since 2022 as Russia intensified its aerial barrages behind the front line, according to the U.N. Human Rights Monitoring Mission in the country.

The war killed 2,514 civilians and injured 12,142 in Ukraine — 31% higher than in 2024, it said.

“The sharp increase in long-range attacks and the targeting of Ukraine’s national energy infrastructure mean that the consequences of the war are now felt by civilians far beyond the front line,” Danielle Bell, the agency’s head, said in a statement Monday.

Zelenskyy said Ukraine is counting on quicker deliveries of agreed upon air defense systems from the U.S. and Europe, as well as new pledges of aid to counter Russia’s latest onslaught.

Meanwhile, Russian air defenses shot down 11 Ukrainian drones overnight, Russia’s Defense Ministry said Tuesday. Seven were reportedly destroyed over Russia’s Rostov region, where Gov. Yuri Slyusar confirmed an attack on the coastal city of Taganrog, about 40 kilometers (about 24 miles) east of the Ukrainian border, in Kyiv’s latest long-range attack on Russian war-related facilities.

Ukraine’s military said its drones hit a drone manufacturing facility in Taganrog. The Atlant Aero plant designs, manufactures and tests Molniya drones and components for Orion unmanned aerial vehicles, according to the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Explosions and a fire were reported at the site, with damage to production buildings confirmed, the General Staff said.

It wasn’t possible to independently verify the reports.

## Trump calls on Tehran to show protesters humanity amid reports of rising death toll in crackdown

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump was consulting with his national security team Tuesday about next steps with Iran as he looked to get a better understanding of the number of Iranian citizens who have been killed and arrested in more than two weeks of unrest throughout the country.

Trump said he believes that the killing is “significant” and that his administration would “act accordingly.” He added that he believed the Iranian government was “badly misbehaving.”

But the president said he has yet to receive a confirmed number of Iranians killed in the protests that began late last month, saying he has heard “five different sets of numbers” about the death toll.

Since the protests began Dec. 28, 16,700 people have been arrested and more than 2,500 have been killed, the vast majority protesters, according to the Human Rights Activists News Agency. The organization relies on a network of activists inside Iran that confirms all reported fatalities.

“The message is they’ve got to show humanity,” Trump said of the Iranian government. “They’ve got a big problem. And I hope they’re not going to be killing people.”

The comments came after Trump earlier in the day announced he was cutting off the prospect of talks with Iranian officials amid a protest crackdown, telling Iranian citizens “help is on its way.”

Trump did not offer any details about what the help would entail, but his remarks come just two days after the Republican president said Iran wants to negotiate with Washington after his threat to strike the Islamic Republic.

But Trump appeared to make an abrupt shift about his willingness to engage with the Iranian government.

“Iranian Patriots, keep protesting and take over your institutions if you can,” Trump said in speech Tuesday at an auto factory in Michigan. “Save the names of the killers and abusers that are abusing you. You are being very badly abused.”

Iranian ambassador responds to Trump

Iran’s chief envoy to the United Nations, Ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani, denounced Trump’s latest comments in a letter to U.N. officials as “interventionist rhetoric.”

“This reckless statement explicitly encourages political destabilization, incites and invites violence and threatens the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Iravani wrote.

Iranian state media has aired at least 97 confessions from protesters, many expressing remorse for their

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 51 of 76

actions, since the protests began, according to a rights group that is tracking the videos.

Iran alleges these confessions, which often include references to Israel or America, are proof of foreign plots behind Iran's nationwide protests. Activists say they are coerced confessions, long a staple of Iran's hard-line state television, the only broadcaster in the country. And these videos are coming at an unprecedented clip.

Trump, in an exchange with reporters during the factory visit, demurred when asked what kind of help he would provide.

"You're going to have to figure that one out," he said.

The U.S. president has repeatedly threatened Tehran with military action if his administration found the Islamic Republic was using deadly force against antigovernment protesters. Trump on Sunday told reporters he believed Iran is "starting to cross" that line and has left him and his national security team weighing "very strong options" even as he said the Iranians had made outreach efforts to the U.S.

Trump announced Monday he would slap 25% tariffs on countries doing business with Tehran "effective immediately," but the White House has not provided details on that move. China, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Brazil and Russia are among economies that do business with Tehran.

Administration leaders weigh US options

Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and key White House National Security Council officials began meeting Friday to develop options for Trump, ranging from a diplomatic approach to military strikes.

"We don't want to see people killed and we want to see a little bit of freedom for these people," Trump said. "These people have been living in hell for a long time."

Iran, through the country's parliamentary speaker, has warned that the U.S. military and Israel would be "legitimate targets" if Washington uses force to protect demonstrators.

Trump said he was undeterred by threats of Iranian retaliation.

"Iran said that the last time I blew them up," said Trump, referring to threats from the government ahead of U.S. military strikes in June on key Iranian nuclear facilities. "They better behave."

More than 600 protests have taken place across all of Iran's 31 provinces, the Human Rights Activists News Agency reported Tuesday.

Understanding the scale of the protests has been difficult. Iranian state media has provided little information about the demonstrations. Online videos offer only brief, shaky glimpses of people in the streets or the sound of gunfire.

Trump's push on the Iranian government to end the crackdown comes as he is dealing with a series of other foreign policy emergencies around the globe.

It's been more than a week since the U.S. military launched a successful raid to arrest Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro and remove him from power. The U.S. continues to mass an unusually large number of troops in the Caribbean Sea.

Trump is also focused on trying to get Israel and Hamas onto the second phase of a peace deal in Gaza and broker an agreement between Russia and Ukraine to end the nearly four-year war in Eastern Europe.

But advocates urging Trump to take strong action against Iran say this moment offers an opportunity to further diminish the theocratic government that's ruled the country since the Islamic revolution in 1979.

The demonstrations are the biggest Iran has seen in years — protests spurred by the collapse of Iranian currency that have morphed into a larger test of supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's repressive rule.

## **'West Wing' actor Timothy Busfield turns himself in to face child sex abuse charges in New Mexico**

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN AND MORGAN LEE Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Emmy Award-winning actor Timothy Busfield turned himself in to authorities Tuesday and vowed to fight charges of child sex abuse stemming from allegations that he inappropriately

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 52 of 76

touched a minor on the set of a TV series he was directing in New Mexico.

His apprehension comes after authorities in Albuquerque issued a warrant for his arrest on Friday on two counts of criminal sexual contact of a minor and one count of child abuse. A criminal complaint alleges the acts occurred on the set of the series "The Cleaning Lady," which was filmed in Albuquerque.

Busfield, who is married to actor Melissa Gilbert, is known for appearances in "The West Wing," "Field of Dreams" and "Thirtysomething," the latter of which won him an Emmy for outstanding supporting actor in a drama series in 1991.

"Tim voluntarily appeared before New Mexico authorities after traveling across the country to confront these false and deeply troubling allegations," said Stanton Stein, an attorney for Busfield. "He is innocent and is determined to clear his name."

Busfield was booked by Albuquerque police on the charges, said Gilbert Gallegos, spokesperson for the city police department. A first appearance in court was scheduled for Wednesday.

NBC shelved an episode of "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit" that featured Busfield and was set to air Thursday, a network spokesperson confirmed Tuesday to The Associated Press. Busfield was guest-starring as the judge on the long-running show, which focuses on sex crimes.

The criminal complaint filed by an investigator with the police department says the boy reported that he was 7 years old when Busfield touched him three or four times on private areas over his clothing. Busfield allegedly touched him five or six times on another occasion when he was 8, the complaint said.

Busfield has denied the allegations

Busfield denied the allegations when interviewed by authorities last fall as part of an investigation, according to the complaint.

The complaint also says the child was reportedly afraid to tell anyone because Busfield was the director and he feared he would get mad at him.

The boy's twin brother told authorities he was touched by Busfield but did not specify where. He said he didn't say anything because he didn't want to get in trouble.

When he was interviewed by authorities as part of the investigation, Busfield suggested that the boys' mother was seeking revenge for her children being replaced on the series — an argument echoed Tuesday by Busfield's attorney. Busfield also previously said he likely would have picked up and tickled the boys, saying the set was a playful environment.

Lawyer says Warner Bros. investigation unable to corroborate complaint

On Tuesday, Stein invoked the results of a private investigation by Warner Bros. to assert that the allegations are false. The investigator hired by Warner Bros. could not immediately be contacted by phone or email.

Authorities say the Warner Bros. investigation was unable to corroborate details of an anonymous complaint to a union workplace hotline after its private investigator "was not able to talk with anyone who would support evidence that Timothy Busfield engaged in this behavior."

A video obtained by TMZ showed Busfield in front of a window with the Albuquerque skyline in the backdrop. He said he arrived in the city after driving 2,000 miles (3,219 kilometers).

"I'm going to confront these lies. They're horrible. They're all lies," Busfield said.

Marshals Service involved in search for Busfield

The search for Busfield involved the U.S. Marshals Service and extended to New York before Busfield appeared in the video and arrived at a metropolitan detention center, Gallegos said.

"We had the U.S. Marshals' office looking in New York in particular, and other cities," Gallegos said.

The mother of the twins — who are identified only by their initials in court records — reported to Child Protective Services that the abuse occurred between November 2022 and spring 2024, the complaint said.

Busfield's wife, Gilbert, indicated through a publicist that she won't speak publicly at the request of attorneys for Busfield while the legal process unfolds.

"Her focus is on supporting and caring for their very large family," publicist Ame Van Iden said in a statement. "Melissa stands with and supports her husband and will address the public at an appropriate time."

The investigation began in November 2024, when the investigator responded to a call from a doctor at the University of New Mexico Hospital in Albuquerque. The boys' parents had gone there at the recommendation of a law firm, the complaint said.

According to the complaint, one of the boys has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety. A social worker documented him saying he has had nightmares about Busfield touching him.

"The Cleaning Lady" aired for four seasons on Fox, ending in 2025. The show was produced by Warner Bros., which according to the complaint conducted its own investigation into the abuse allegations but was unable to corroborate them.

## Justice Department sees no basis for civil rights probe in Minnesota ICE shooting, official says

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department does not believe there is currently any basis to open a criminal civil rights investigation into the killing of a woman by a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer in Minneapolis, a top department official said Tuesday.

The decision to keep the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division out of the investigation into the fatal shooting of Renee Good marks a sharp departure from past administrations, which have moved quickly to probe shootings of civilians by law enforcement officials for potential civil rights offenses.

While an FBI probe is ongoing, lawyers in the Civil Rights Division were informed last week that they would not play a role in the investigation at this time, according to two people familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal department deliberations.

And on Tuesday, Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche said in a statement that "there is currently no basis for a criminal civil rights investigation." The statement, first reported by CNN, did not elaborate on how the department had reached a conclusion that no investigation was warranted.

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

The quick pronouncement by administration officials before any meaningful investigation could be completed has raised concerns about the federal government's determination to conduct a thorough review of the chain of events precipitating the shooting. Minnesota officials have also raised alarm after federal officials blocked state investigators from accessing evidence and declared that Minnesota has no jurisdiction to investigate the killing.

Also this week, roughly half a dozen federal prosecutors in Minnesota resigned and several supervisors in the criminal section of the Civil Rights Division in Washington gave notice of their departures amid turmoil over the federal probe, according to people familiar with the matter.

Among the departures in Minnesota is First Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph Thompson, who had been leading the sprawling investigation and prosecution of fraud schemes in the state, two other people said. At least four other prosecutors in the Minnesota U.S. attorney's office joined Thompson in resigning amid a period of tension in the office, the people said. The people spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss personnel matters.

They are the latest in an exodus of career Justice Department attorneys who have resigned or been forced out over concerns over political pressure or shifting priorities under the Trump administration. Hundreds of Justice Department lawyers have been fired or have left voluntarily over the last year.

Minnesota Democratic lawmakers criticized the departures, with Sen. Amy Klobuchar, a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, calling the resignations "a loss for our state and for public safety" and warning that prosecutions should not be driven by politics. Gov. Tim Walz said the departures raised concerns about political pressure on career Justice Department officials.

The resignations of the lawyers in the Civil Rights Division's criminal section, including its chief, were announced to staff on Monday, days after lawyers were told the section would not be involved in the probe. The Justice Department on Tuesday said those prosecutors had requested to participate in an

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 54 of 76

early retirement program “well before the events in Minnesota,” and added that “any suggestion to the contrary is false.”

Founded nearly 70 years ago, the Civil Rights Division has a long history of investigating shootings by law enforcement even though prosecutors typically need to clear a high bar to mount a criminal prosecution.

In prior administrations, the division has moved quickly to open and publicly announce such investigations, not only to reflect federal jurisdiction over potential civil rights violations but also in hopes of soothing community angst that sometimes accompanies shootings involving law enforcement.

“The level of grief, tension and anxiety on the ground in Minnesota is not surprising,” said Kristen Clarke, who led the Civil Rights Division under the Biden administration. “And historically the federal government has played an important role by being a neutral and impartial agency committing its resources to conducting a full and fair investigation, and the public loses out when that doesn’t happen,” she said.

In Minneapolis, for instance, the Justice Department during the first Trump administration opened a civil rights investigation into the 2020 death of George Floyd at the hands of city police officers that resulted in criminal charges. The Minneapolis Police Department was separately scrutinized by the Biden administration for potential systemic civil rights violations through what’s known as a “pattern or practice” investigation, a type of police reform inquiry that is out of favor in the current Trump administration Justice Department.

## Gaza’s living conditions worsen as strong winds and hypothermia kill 5

By WAFSA SHURFA and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Strong winter winds collapsed walls onto flimsy tents for Palestinians displaced by war in Gaza, killing at least four people, hospital authorities said Tuesday.

Dangerous living conditions persist in Gaza after more than two years of devastating Israeli bombardment and aid shortfalls. A ceasefire has been in effect since Oct. 10. But aid groups say that Palestinians broadly lack the shelter necessary to withstand frequent winter storms.

The dead include two women, a girl and a man, according to Shifa Hospital, Gaza City’s largest, which received the bodies.

The Gaza Health Ministry said Tuesday a 1-year-old boy died of hypothermia overnight, while the spokesman for the U.N.’s children agency said over 100 children and teenagers have been killed by “military means” since the ceasefire began.

Meanwhile, Israel’s military said it exchanged fire Tuesday with six people spotted near its troops deployed in southern Gaza, killing at least two of them in western Rafah.

Family mourns relatives killed by wall collapse

Three members of the same family — 72-year-old Mohamed Hamouda, his 15-year-old granddaughter and his daughter-in-law — were killed when an 8-meter (26-foot) high wall collapsed onto their tent in a coastal area along the Mediterranean shore of Gaza City, Shifa Hospital said. At least five others were injured.

Their relatives on Tuesday began removing the rubble that had buried their loved ones and rebuilding the tent shelters for survivors.

“The world has allowed us to witness death in all its forms,” Bassel Hamouda said after the funeral. “It’s true the bombing may have temporarily stopped, but we have witnessed every conceivable cause of death in the world in the Gaza Strip.”

A second woman was killed when a wall fell on her tent in the western part of the city, Shifa Hospital said.

Hundreds of tents and makeshift shelters were blown away or heavily damaged, the U.N. humanitarian office reported.

The U.N. and its humanitarian partners were distributing tents, tarps, blankets and clothes as well as nutrition and hygiene items across Gaza, said the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The majority of Palestinians live in makeshift tents since their homes were reduced to rubble during the war. When storms strike the territory, Palestinian rescue workers warn people against seeking shelter

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 55 of 76

inside damaged buildings for fears of collapse. Aid groups say not enough shelter materials are entering Gaza during the truce.

In the central town of Zawaida, Associated Press footage showed inundated tents Tuesday morning, with people trying to rebuild their shelters.

Yasmin Shalha, a displaced woman from the northern town of Beit Lahiya, stood against winds that lifted the tarps of tents around her as she stitched hers back together with needle and thread. She said it had fallen on top of her family the night before, as they slept.

"The winds were very, very strong. The tent collapsed over us," the mother of five told AP. "As you can see, our situation is dire."

On the shore in southern Gaza, tents were swept into the Mediterranean. Families pulled what was left from the sea, while some built sand barriers to hold back rising water.

"The sea took our mattresses, our tents, our food and everything we owned," Shaban Abu Ishaq said, as he dragged part of his tent out of the sea in the Muwasi area of Khan Younis.

Mohamed al-Sawalha, a 72-year-old man from the northern refugee camp of Jabaliya, said the conditions most Palestinians in Gaza endure are barely livable.

"It doesn't work neither in summer nor in winter," he said of the tent. "We left behind houses and buildings (with) doors that could be opened and closed. Now we live in a tent. Even sheep don't live like we do."

Residents aren't able to return to their homes in Israeli-controlled areas of the Gaza Strip.

Child death toll in Gaza rises

Gaza's Health Ministry said the 1-year-old in the central town of Deir al-Balah was the seventh fatality due to the cold conditions since winter started. Others included a baby just seven days old and a 4-year-old girl, whose deaths were announced Monday.

The ministry, part of the Hamas-run government, says more than 440 people were killed by Israeli fire and their bodies brought to hospitals since the ceasefire went into effect. The ministry maintains detailed casualty records that are seen as generally reliable by U.N. agencies and independent experts.

UNICEF spokesman James Elder said Tuesday at least 100 children under the age of 18 — 60 boys and 40 girls — have been killed since the truce began due to military operations, including drone strikes, airstrikes, tank shelling and use of live ammunition. Those figures, he said, reflect incidents where enough details have been compiled to warrant recording, but the total toll is expected to be higher. He said hundreds of children have been wounded.

While "bombings and shootings have slowed" during the ceasefire, they have not stopped, Elder told reporters at a U.N. briefing in Geneva by video from Gaza City. "So what the world now calls calm would be considered a crisis anywhere else," he said.

Gaza's population of more than 2 million people has been struggling to keep the cold weather and storms at bay while facing shortages of humanitarian aid and a lack of more substantial temporary housing, which is badly needed during the winter months. It's the third winter since the war between Israel and Hamas started on Oct. 7, 2023, when militants stormed into southern Israel and killed around 1,200 people and abducted 251 others into Gaza.

Gaza's Health Ministry says more than 71,400 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's retaliatory offensive.

## Trump visits Ford plant and defends his tariffs, hoping to counter jitters about the economy

By WILL WEISSERT and COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — President Donald Trump offered a full-throated defense of his sweeping tariffs on Tuesday, traveling to swing-state Michigan to push the case that he's boosted domestic manufacturing in hopes of countering fears about a weakening job market and still-rising prices that have squeezed American pocketbooks.

Trump visited the factory floor of a Ford plant in Dearborn, where he viewed F-150s — the bestselling domestic vehicle in the U.S. — at various stages of production. That included seeing how gas and hybrid

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 56 of 76

models were built, as well as the all-gas Raptor model, designed for off-road use.

The president chatted with assembly line workers as well as the automaker's executive chairman, Bill Ford, a descendent of Henry Ford. "All U.S. automakers are doing great," Trump said.

He later gave a speech to the Detroit Economic Club that was meant to be focused on his economic policies but veered heavily to other topics as well. Those included falsely claiming to have won Michigan three times (he lost the state in 2020 to Joe Biden) and recalling the snakes that felled workers during U.S. efforts to build the Panama Canal more than a century ago.

"The results are in, and the Trump economic boom has officially begun," the president said at the MotorCity Casino. He argued that "one of the biggest reasons for this unbelievable success has been our historic use of tariffs."

Trump falsely insists tariffs haven't increased costs

The president said that tariffs were "overwhelmingly" paid by "foreign nations and middlemen" — even as economists say steep import taxes are simply passed from overseas manufactures to U.S. consumers, helping exacerbate fears about the rising cost of living.

"It's tariffs that are making money for Michigan and the entire country," the president said, insisting that "every prediction the critics made about our tariff policy has failed to materialize."

But voters remain worried about the state of the economy. The Michigan stop — his third trip to a swing state since last month to talk about his economic policies — followed a poor showing for Republicans in November's off-year elections in Virginia, New Jersey and elsewhere amid persistent concerns about kitchen table issues.

The White House pledged after Election Day that Trump would hit the road more frequently to talk directly to the public about what he is doing to ease their financial fears. The president tried to drive that home on Tuesday, but only amid lengthy asides.

"I go off teleprompter about 80% of the time, but isn't it nice to have a president who can go off teleprompter?" he said, before mocking Biden, suggesting his predecessor gave short speeches and doing an impression that included a dramatic clearing of his throat.

Trump promised to unveil a new "health care affordability framework" later this week that he promised would lower the cost of care. He also pledged to soon offer more plans to help with affordability nationwide — even as he blamed Democrats for hyping up the issue.

"One of our top priorities of this mission is promoting greater affordability. Now, that's a word used by the Democrats," Trump said. "They're the ones who caused the problem."

Trump eased some auto tariffs

Despite cheering tariffs, Trump has actually backed off the import taxes when it comes to the automobile sector. The president originally announced 25% tariffs on automobiles and auto parts, only to later relax those, seeking to provide domestic automakers some relief from seeing their production costs rise.

Ford nonetheless announced in December that it was scrapping plans to make an electric F-150, despite pouring billions of dollars into broader electrification. That followed the Trump administration slashing targets to have half of all new vehicle sales be electric by 2030, eliminated EV tax credits and proposed weakening the emissions and gas mileage rules.

While touring the plant, video posted by TMZ showed Trump making an obscene gesture at someone who was yelling at him from afar. White House spokesman Steven Cheung said "a lunatic was wildly screaming expletives in a complete fit of rage, and the president gave an appropriate and unambiguous response."

Trump also suggested during the tour that a major North American trade pact he negotiated during his first term, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, was irrelevant and no longer necessary for the United States — though he provided few details.

Known as the USMCA, it is up for review this year.

Trump largely sidesteps Powell investigation

The president's attempt to shift national attention to his efforts to spur the economy comes as his Department of Justice has launched a criminal investigation into Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell,

a move that Powell says is a blatant endeavor to undermine the central bank's independence in setting interest rates.

Critics of the move include former Fed chairs, economic officials and even some Republican lawmakers. Trump lobbed his often-repeated criticisms of Powell during his trip, but offered little mention of the investigation.

Some good economic news for Trump arrived, though, before he left Washington, with new data from December showing inflation declined a bit last month as prices for gas and used cars fell — a sign that cost pressures are slowly easing. Consumer prices rose 0.3% in December from the prior month, the Labor Department said, the same as in November.

"We have quickly achieved the exact opposite of stagflation, almost no inflation and super-high growth," he said in his speech.

Trump has made other economic policy speeches

The Michigan stop follows speeches Trump gave last month in Pennsylvania — where his gripes about immigrants arriving to the U.S. from "filthy" countries got more attention than his pledges to fight inflation — and North Carolina, where he also insisted his tariffs have spurred the economy, despite residents noting the sting of higher prices.

Like in Michigan, Trump also used a casino as a backdrop to talk about the economy in Pennsylvania, giving his speech there at Mount Airy Casino Resort in Mount Pocono.

Trump carried Michigan in 2016 and 2024, after it swung Democratic and backed Biden in 2020. He marked his first 100 days in office with a rally-style April speech outside Detroit, where he focused more on past campaign grudges than his administration's economic or policy plans.

Democrats seized on Trump's latest trip to the state to recall his visit in October 2024, when Trump, then also addressing the Detroit Economic Club, said that Democrats' retaining the White House would mean "our whole country will end up being like Detroit."

"You're going to have a mess on your hands," Trump said during a campaign stop back then.

About 100 people protested outside the venue where Trump spoke Tuesday, including Cassandra Rodriguez, a member of the Detroit Community Action Committee.

"He says a lot, but he means very little and I think we can see that," Rodriguez said of the president. "He doesn't know how to enact real policy in a real way."

## **Claudette Colvin, who refused to move seats on a bus at start of civil rights movement, dies at 86**

By KIMBERLY CHANDLER Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Claudette Colvin, whose 1955 arrest for refusing to give up her seat on a segregated Montgomery bus helped spark the modern civil rights movement, has died. She was 86.

Her death was announced Tuesday by the Claudette Colvin Legacy Foundation. Ashley D. Roseboro of the organization confirmed she died of natural causes in Texas.

Colvin, at age 15, was arrested nine months before Rosa Parks gained international fame for also refusing to give up her seat on a segregated bus.

Colvin had boarded the bus on March 2, 1955, on her way home from high school. The first rows were reserved for white passengers. Colvin sat in the rear with other Black passengers. When the white section became full, the bus driver ordered Black passengers to relinquish their seats to white passengers. Colvin refused.

"My mindset was on freedom," Colvin said in 2021 of her refusal to give up her seat.

"So I was not going to move that day," she said. "I told them that history had me glued to the seat."

At the time of Colvin's arrest, frustration was mounting over how Black people were treated on the city bus system. Another Black teenager, Mary Louise Smith, was arrested and fined that October for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger.

It was the arrest of Parks, who was a local NAACP activist, on Dec. 1, 1955, that became the final catalyst

for the yearlong Montgomery Bus Boycott. The boycott propelled the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. into the national limelight and is considered the start of the modern civil rights movement.

Colvin was one of the four plaintiffs in the landmark lawsuit that outlawed racial segregation on Montgomery's buses. Her death comes just over a month after Montgomery celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Bus Boycott.

Montgomery Mayor Steven Reed said Colvin's action "helped lay the legal and moral foundation for the movement that would change America."

Colvin was never as well-known as Parks, and Reed said her bravery "was too often overlooked."

"Claudette Colvin's life reminds us that movements are built not only by those whose names are most familiar, but by those whose courage comes early, quietly, and at great personal cost," Reed said. "Her legacy challenges us to tell the full truth of our history and to honor every voice that helped bend the arc toward justice."

Colvin in 2021 filed a petition to have her court record expunged. A judge granted the request.

"When I think about why I'm seeking to have my name cleared by the state, it is because I believe if that happened it would show the generation growing up now that progress is possible, and things do get better," Colvin said at the time. "It will inspire them to make the world better."

## Denmark, Greenland leaders stand united against Trump's Greenland takeover call ahead of key meeting

By EMMA BURROWS, GEIR MOULSON and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

NUUK, Greenland (AP) — The leaders of Denmark and the country's territory of Greenland on Tuesday offered a united front against President Donald Trump's calls for the United States to take over the strategic Arctic island on the eve of critical meetings in Washington on the matter.

In perhaps their sharpest pushback to date, Denmark and Greenland's prime ministers underscored that the territory is part of Denmark, and thus covered by the umbrella of the NATO military alliance. A U.S. attempt to take over or force the secession of the massive island would tear apart the transatlantic alliance, which has been a linchpin of post-World War II security.

But Trump brushed off the concern, telling reporters in Washington, "That's their problem."

The leaders, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Greenland Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen, sought to underscore their solidarity as their foreign ministers, Denmark's Lars Løkke Rasmussen and Greenland's Vivian Motzfeldt, prepared for talks at the White House on Wednesday with Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

"Dear Greenlanders, you should know that we stand together today, we will do so tomorrow, and we will continue to do so," Frederiksen said during a joint press conference in Copenhagen.

"If we have to choose between the United States and Denmark here and now, we choose Denmark. We choose NATO. We choose the Kingdom of Denmark. We choose the EU," said Greenland's Nielsen.

Tensions have grown this month as Trump has ramped up calls for a U.S. takeover of the island. He has repeatedly said he's considering a range of options, including military force, to acquire Greenland.

Asked by reporters about Nielsen's comments saying Greenland preferred to stay with Denmark, Trump said: "I disagree with him. I don't know who he is. I don't know anything about him. But, that's going to be a big problem for him."

Trump earlier this week reiterated his argument that the U.S. needs to "take Greenland," otherwise Russia or China would. He also says he'd rather "make a deal" for the territory, "but one way or the other, we're going to have Greenland."

In Greenland, 'children are afraid,' official says

Danish officials have made clear they are open to expanding cooperation with the U.S. military in Greenland, but have repeatedly stated the territory is not for sale.

Since 1945, the American military presence in Greenland has decreased from thousands of soldiers over 17 bases and installations on the island to just the remote Pituffik Space Base in the northwest with

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 59 of 76

roughly 200 soldiers today. The base supports missile warning, missile defense and space surveillance operations for the U.S. and NATO.

Denmark's parliament approved a bill last June to allow U.S. military bases on Danish soil. It widened 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.

Naaja Nathanielsen, Greenland's minister for business and mineral resources, said it's "unfathomable" that the United States is discussing taking over a NATO ally and urged the Trump administration to listen to voices from the Arctic island's people. Nathanielsen added that people in Greenland are "very, very worried" over the U.S. administration's desire for control of Greenland.

"People are not sleeping, children are afraid, and it just fills everything these days. And we can't really understand it," Nathanielsen said at a meeting with lawmakers in Britain's Parliament.

Meanwhile, Danish officials have also sought to underscore that Denmark has remained a faithful ally of the United States.

A Danish government official confirmed on Tuesday that Denmark provided U.S. forces in the east Atlantic with support last week as they intercepted an oil tanker for alleged violations of U.S. sanctions.

The official, who was not authorized to comment publicly on the sensitive matter and spoke on the condition of anonymity, declined to provide details about what the support entailed.

The U.S. interception in the Atlantic capped a weeks-long pursuit of the tanker that began in the Caribbean Sea as the U.S. imposed a blockade in the waters of Venezuela aimed at capturing sanctioned vessels coming in and out of the South American country.

The White House and Pentagon did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Danish support for the U.S. operation was first reported by Newsmax.

Separately, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte refused to be drawn into the dispute, insisting that it was not his role to get involved.

"I never, ever comment when there are discussions within the alliance," Rutte said, at the European Parliament in Brussels. "My role has to be to make sure we solve issues."

He said that the 32-nation military alliance must focus on providing security in the Arctic region, which includes Greenland. "When it comes to the protection of the High North, that is my role."

Nathanielsen said Greenlanders understand the need for increased monitoring in the Arctic amid growing geopolitical insecurity. But she said "it is just unfathomable to understand" that Greenland could be facing the prospect of being sold or annexed.

A bipartisan U.S. congressional delegation is headed to Copenhagen for meetings on Friday and Saturday in an attempt to show unity between the United States and Denmark.

Nathanielsen said she thinks the people of Greenland should have a say in their own future.

"My deepest dream or hope is that the people of Greenland will get a say no matter what," she said. "For others this might be a piece of land, but for us it's home."

## Wall Street pulls back from its records as JPMorgan Chase and Delta kick off earnings season

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Wall Street pulled back from its records on Tuesday following a mixed start to the latest profit reporting season for big U.S. companies.

The S&P 500 fell 0.2% from its all-time high set the day before. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 398 points, or 0.8%, from its own record, while the Nasdaq composite slipped 0.1%.

U.S. companies are under pressure to deliver strong growth in profits to justify the runs to records their stock prices have made. Analysts expect companies in the S&P 500 index will deliver earnings per share for the final three months of 2025 that are 8.3% higher than a year earlier, according to FactSet.

JPMorgan Chase helped kick off the latest reporting season by delivering weaker profit and revenue than analysts expected. Its stock fell 4.2% and was one of the heaviest weights on the market.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 60 of 76

The shortfall may have been because some analysts hadn't updated their estimates to account for an earnings hit resulting from the bank's purchase of the Apple Card credit card portfolio. CEO Jamie Dimon sounded relatively optimistic about the U.S. economy, saying "consumers continue to spend, and businesses generally remain healthy."

Delta Air Lines lost 2.4% despite reporting a stronger profit than analysts expected. Its revenue came up short of Wall Street's expectations, as did the midpoint of its forecasted range for profit in 2026.

Chipotle Mexican Grill sank 2.3% after saying it's looking for a new chief marketing officer, a move that surprised analysts.

On the winning side of Wall Street were several health care companies that raised their financial forecasts at an industry conference with analysts.

Moderna jumped 17.1% for the biggest gain in the S&P 500 after saying it expects to report revenue for 2025 that's above the midpoint of the range it had forecast in November. It also offered updates on several products, including a seasonal flu vaccine that could see potential approvals beginning later this year.

Revvity rose 6% after the life sciences company said it expects to report profit for 2025 that's above the top end of the forecasted range it had earlier given. Its forecast for revenue in the fourth quarter also topped analysts' expectations.

Cardinal Health added 2.8% after saying it expects to earn at least \$10 in adjusted earnings per share in its fiscal 2026 year, up from its prior forecasted range of \$9.65 to \$9.85.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 13.53 points to 6,963.74. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 398.21 to 49,191.99, and the Nasdaq composite sank 24.03 to 23,709.87.

In the bond market, Treasury yields eased after a highly anticipated update on inflation came in close to economists' expectations. The data strengthened expectations that the Federal Reserve will cut its main interest rate at least twice in 2026 to shore up the job market.

Lower interest rates could make borrowing cheaper for U.S. households and boost prices for investments, but they could also worsen inflation at the same time. Tuesday's report showed that U.S. consumers paid prices last month for gasoline, food and other costs of living that were 2.7% higher overall than a year earlier. That's a touch worse than economists expected and above the Fed's 2% target for inflation.

But, in a more encouraging sign, an important underlying trend of inflation wasn't as bad last month as economists expected. That could give the Fed more leeway to lower interest rates later.

"We've seen this movie before—inflation isn't reheating, but it remains above target," according to Ellen Zentner, chief economic strategist for Morgan Stanley Wealth Management.

The data helped the 10-year Treasury ease to 4.17% from 4.19% late Monday. The two-year Treasury yield, which more closely tracks expectations for what the Fed will do, inched down to 3.52% from 3.54%.

A day earlier, Treasury yields swung amid worries about the Federal Reserve's worsening feud with President Donald Trump. The concern is that the president's attacks on the Fed could result in a central bank that's more subservient to the White House. Experts say that in turn could lead to higher inflation over the long term.

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

Japan's Nikkei 225 soared 3.1% for one of the world's biggest moves and set a record, thanks in part to strength for technology-related stocks.

Investors expect Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who took office in October, to try to capitalize on her relatively high popularity and call a snap election, hoping to strengthen her mandate for higher government spending.

## Supreme Court seems likely to uphold state bans on transgender athletes in girls and women's sports

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Tuesday appeared ready to deal another setback to transgender people and uphold state laws barring transgender girls and women from playing on school

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 61 of 76

athletic teams.

The court's conservative majority, which has repeatedly ruled against transgender Americans in the past year, signaled during more than three hours of arguments it would rule the state bans don't violate either the Constitution or the federal law known as Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in education.

More than two dozen Republican-led states have adopted bans on female transgender athletes. Lower courts had ruled for the transgender athletes who challenged laws in Idaho and West Virginia.

The legal fight is playing out against the backdrop of a broad effort by President Donald Trump to target transgender Americans, beginning on the first day of his second term and including the ouster of transgender people from the military and declaring that gender is immutable and determined at birth.

The justices are evaluating claims of sex discrimination lodged by transgender people versus the need for fair competition for women and girls, the main argument made by the states.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who coached his daughters in girls basketball, seemed concerned about a ruling that might undo the effects of Title IX, which has produced dramatic growth in girls and women's sports. Kavanaugh called Title IX an "amazing" and "inspiring" success.

Some girls and women might lose a medal in a competition with transgender athletes, which Kavanaugh called a harm "we can't sweep aside."

The three liberal justices seemed focused on trying to marshal a court majority in support of a narrow ruling that would allow the individual transgender athletes involved in the cases to prevail.

A ruling for West Virginia and Idaho would effectively apply to the other two dozen Republican-led states with similar laws.

But the justices soon might be asked to decide about the laws in an additional roughly two dozen states, led by Democrats, that allow transgender athletes to compete on the teams that match their gender identity.

The outcome also could influence separate legal efforts by the Trump administration and others seeking to bar transgender athletes in states that have continued to allow them to compete.

The transgender athletes' cases

In the Idaho case, Lindsay Hecox, 25, sued over the state's first-in-the-nation ban for the chance to try out for the women's track and cross-country teams at Boise State University in Idaho. She didn't make either squad because "she was too slow," her lawyer, Kathleen Hartnett, told the court Tuesday, but she competed in club-level soccer and running.

Becky Pepper-Jackson, a 15-year-old high school sophomore, was in the courtroom Tuesday. She has been taking puberty-blocking medication, has publicly identified as a girl since age 8 and has been issued a West Virginia birth certificate recognizing her as female. She is the only transgender person who has sought to compete in girls sports in West Virginia.

Pepper-Jackson has progressed from a back-of-the-pack cross-country runner in middle school to a statewide third-place finish in the discus in just her first year of high school.

Prominent women in sports have weighed in on both sides. Tennis champion Martina Navratilova, swimmers Summer Sanders and Donna de Varona and beach volleyball player Kerri Walsh-Jennings are supporting the state bans. Soccer stars Megan Rapinoe and Becky Sauerbrunn and basketball players Sue Bird and Breanna Stewart back the transgender athletes.

In 2020, the Supreme Court ruled LGBTQ people are protected by a landmark federal civil rights law that prohibits sex discrimination in the workplace, finding that "sex plays an unmistakable role" in employers' decisions to punish transgender people for traits and behavior they otherwise tolerate.

But last year, the six conservative justices declined to apply the same sort of analysis when they upheld state bans on gender-affirming care for transgender minors.

Chief Justice John Roberts signaled Tuesday he sees differences between the 2020 case, in which he supported the claims of discrimination, and the current dispute.

The states supporting the prohibitions on transgender athletes argue there is no reason to extend the ruling barring workplace discrimination to Title IX.

Idaho's law, state Solicitor General Alan Hurst, said, is "necessary for fair competition because, where sports are concerned, men and women are obviously not the same."

Lawyers for Pepper-Jackson argue that such distinctions generally make sense, but that their client has none of those advantages because of the unique circumstances of her early transition. In Hecox's case, her lawyers want the court to dismiss the case because she has forsworn trying to play on women's teams.

NCAA president Charlie Baker told Congress in 2024 that he was aware of only 10 transgender athletes out of more than a half-million students on college teams. But despite the small numbers, the issue has taken on outsized importance.

Baker's NCAA and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committees banned transgender women from women's sports after Trump, a Republican, signed an executive order aimed at barring their participation.

The public generally is supportive of the limits. An Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll conducted in October 2025 found that about 6 in 10 U.S. adults "strongly" or "somewhat" favored requiring transgender children and teenagers to only compete on sports teams that match the sex they were assigned at birth, not the gender they identify with, while about 2 in 10 were "strongly" or "somewhat" opposed and about one-quarter did not have an opinion.

About 2.1 million adults, or 0.8%, and 724,000 people age 13 to 17, or 3.3%, identify as transgender in the U.S., according to the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law.

A decision is expected by early summer.

## Mike Tomlin steps down after 19 seasons as coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers

By WILL GRAVES AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Mike Tomlin was an unknown when the Pittsburgh Steelers plucked him from obscurity in 2007 and handed the young and charismatic Minnesota Vikings defensive coordinator one of the most stable jobs in sports.

Over the next 19 seasons, Tomlin wrote his own chapter with one of the NFL's marquee franchises, winning a Super Bowl and going to another while becoming one of the most respected voices — if idiosyncratic — voices in the game.

Asked repeatedly what separated Tomlin from his peers, his players pointed to his consistency. Tomlin was the same coach day after day, season after season.

That consistency, far too often of late, also bled into the results. And after yet another quick playoff exit, Tomlin used his voice one last time to tell team president Art Rooney II that it was time to try something else.

The longest-tenured head coach in major American professional sports stepped down from his job leading the Steelers on Tuesday, a seismic shift that will have ripple effects throughout the league.

"I am deeply grateful to Art Rooney II and the late Ambassador (Dan) Rooney for their trust and support," Tomlin said in a statement released by the team. "I am also thankful to the players who gave everything they had every day, and to the coaches and staff whose commitment and dedication made this journey so meaningful."

Art Rooney II, who took over for his Hall of Fame father as team president in 2003, lauded Tomlin for his dedication to the franchise and ability to churn out competitive teams year after year in an era when parity is the norm.

"It is hard for me to put into words the level of respect and appreciation I have for Coach Tomlin," Rooney said in a statement. "He guided the franchise to our sixth Super Bowl championship and made the playoffs 13 times during his tenure, including winning the AFC North eight times in his career. His track record of never having a losing season in 19 years will likely never be duplicated."

Tomlin's early success, however, leveled off into a pattern of solid if not always spectacular play, followed by a playoff cameo that ended with the Steelers looking outclassed at every turn.

The 53-year-old Tomlin won 193 regular-season games in Pittsburgh, tied with Hall of Famer Chuck Noll for the most victories in franchise history. But their resumes diverged when it comes to the playoffs. While Noll won four Super Bowls in the 1970s, Tomlin went 8-12 in the postseason, losing each of his last seven

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 63 of 76

playoff games, all by double-digit margins.

The final came Monday night, when the AFC North champions squandered some early momentum before getting drilled 30-6 by Houston, the most lopsided home playoff loss in team history.

There were chants of "Fire Tomlin!" as the clock kicked toward zero, though they weren't nearly as impassioned as they were in November while the Steelers were getting pushed around by Buffalo in a loss that dropped their record to 6-6.

Tomlin did his best to tune out the noise and his team responded, the way it seemingly always did during his tenure. Pittsburgh won four of its final five games, including a sweep of Baltimore that gave the club its first AFC North title since 2020.

The optimism, however, dimmed once the Texans asserted themselves. The NFL's top-ranked defense suffocated Aaron Rodgers and Pittsburgh's offense while the league's highest-paid defense wilted late.

It was a familiar and frustrating pattern for a place where, as Tomlin noted not long after his introduction, "the standard is the standard."

And while that remains the case for a team whose members walk by six Lombardi Trophies every day on the way to work, the results had plateaued. The Steelers finished with 9 or 10 wins in each of Tomlin's final five seasons, often doing just enough to squeak into the playoffs before being exposed by a more talented opponent.

Tomlin had two years left on the contract extension he signed in 2024, with the club holding the option for 2027. Should Tomlin want to return to coaching in the NFL before his contract with the Steelers expired, the club could seek compensation.

Either way, his departure leaves the Steelers looking for a head coach for just the third time since they hired Noll in 1969.

Pittsburgh likely won't lack for attractive candidates. The club's stability combined with its ability to remain competitive even without a franchise quarterback for the last half-decade means whoever gets the job will be given substantial leeway to get the team back to the top.

The announcement came as somewhat of a shock. In the final question he fielded as head coach, Tomlin painted an upbeat picture about the team's future.

"I'm always feel optimistic about what we're capable of doing in terms of putting together a group, certainly," he said Monday night.

And with that, he stepped off the dais and into a future that will not lack for options. Long one of the most confident and imminently quotable people in football — his weekly news conferences were peppered with what became known as "Tomlin-isms" — he could step into television if he wants, as Cowher did after retiring.

Yet it seems just as likely that he will have his choice of jobs if or when he wants to coach again. Players defended Tomlin — almost uniformly popular within the locker room — to the end.

Tight end Pat Freiermuth called Tomlin "one of the best coaches I'll ever play for, probably the best. In my opinion his message hasn't got stale. I believe in him."

Freiermuth added that his belief extended to general manager Omar Khan, who will be in charge of finding the right person for one of the most attractive coaching gigs in any league.

Tomlin's two predecessors are in the Hall of Fame. Tomlin could very well find himself getting fitted for a gold jacket of his own. Yet rather than try to come back next year and break Noll's record for regular-season wins, he opted to, as Noll once famously put it, "get on with his life's work."

And the Steelers will try to find the right person to help them return to the standard that the franchise lives by, one it clutched at but never quite grasped during Tomlin's final years.

## Trump administration labels 3 Muslim Brotherhood branches as terrorist organizations

By FATIMA HUSSEIN and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's administration has made good on its pledge to label three Middle Eastern branches of the Muslim Brotherhood as terrorist organizations, imposing sanctions on them and their members in a decision that could have implications for U.S. relationships with allies in the region.

The Treasury and State departments announced the actions Tuesday against the Lebanese, Jordanian and Egyptian chapters of the Muslim Brotherhood, which they said pose a risk to the United States and American interests.

The State Department designated the Lebanese branch a foreign terrorist organization, the most severe of the labels, which makes it a criminal offense to provide material support to the group. The Jordanian and Egyptian branches were listed by Treasury as specially designated global terrorists for providing support to Hamas.

"These designations reflect the opening actions of an ongoing, sustained effort to thwart Muslim Brotherhood chapters' violence and destabilization wherever it occurs," Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement. "The United States will use all available tools to deprive these Muslim Brotherhood chapters of the resources to engage in or support terrorism."

Rubio and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent were mandated last year under an executive order signed by Trump to determine the most appropriate way to impose sanctions on the groups, which U.S. officials say engage in or support violence and destabilization campaigns that harm the United States and other regions.

Bessent said in a post on X that the Muslim Brotherhood "has a longstanding record of perpetrating acts of terror, and we are working aggressively to cut them off from the financial system." He added that the Trump administration will "deploy the full scope of its authorities to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat terrorist networks wherever they operate in order to keep Americans safe."

Muslim Brotherhood leaders have said they renounce violence, and the Muslim Brotherhood branches in Egypt and Lebanon denounced their inclusion.

"The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood categorically rejects this designation and will pursue all legal avenues to challenge this decision which harms millions of Muslims worldwide," it said in a statement, denying any involvement in or support for terrorism.

The Lebanese branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, known as al-Jamaa al-Islamiya (the Islamic Group), said in a statement that it is "a licensed Lebanese political and social entity that operates openly and within the bounds of the law" and that the U.S. decision "has no legal effect within Lebanon."

In singling out the chapters in Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt, Trump's executive order noted that a wing of the Lebanese chapter had launched rockets on Israel after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack in Israel that set off the war in Gaza. Leaders of the group in Jordan have provided support to Hamas, the order said.

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in Egypt in 1928 but was banned in that country in 2013. Jordan announced a sweeping ban on the Muslim Brotherhood in April.

Egypt on Tuesday welcomed the designation and praised Trump's efforts to combat global terrorism.

"This is a significant step that reflects the extremist ideology of this group and the direct threat it represents for regional and international security and stability," the Egyptian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Nathan Brown, a professor of political science and international affairs at George Washington University, said other allies of the U.S., including the United Arab Emirates, would likely be pleased with the designation.

"For other governments where the brotherhood is tolerated, it would be a thorn in bilateral relations," including in Qatar and Turkey, he said. While the Turkish ruling party has been associated with members of the Muslim Brotherhood in the past, the government of Qatar has denied any relationship with it.

Brown also said a designation on the chapters may have effects on visa and asylum claims for people entering not just the U.S. but also Western European countries and Canada.

"I think this would give immigration officials a stronger basis for suspicion, and it might make courts less likely to question any kind of official action against Brotherhood members who are seeking to stay in this country, seeking political asylum," he said.

Trump, a Republican, weighed whether to designate the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization in 2019 during his first term in office. Some prominent Trump supporters, including right-wing influencer Laura Loomer, have pushed his administration to take aggressive action against the group.

Two Republican-led state governments — Florida and Texas — designated the group as a terrorist organization this year.

## **Plane used in boat strike off Venezuela was painted to look like a civilian aircraft, AP sources say**

By LISA MASCARO and KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The plane used by the U.S. military to strike a boat accused of smuggling drugs off the coast of Venezuela last fall was painted to look like a civilian aircraft, a move that appears to be at odds with the Pentagon's manual on the laws of war.

The plane, part of a secret U.S. fleet used in surveillance operations, also was carrying munitions in the fuselage, rather than beneath the aircraft, raising questions about the extent to which the operation was disguised in ways that run contrary to military protocol.

Details of the plane's appearance, first reported Monday by The New York Times, were confirmed by two people familiar with the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter.

Pentagon press secretary Kingsley Wilson said in a statement that "the U.S. military utilizes a wide array of standard and nonstandard aircraft depending on mission requirements."

The new details come after the Trump administration's pressure campaign on Venezuela — which began with it massing military resources in Latin America and attacking a series of alleged drug-smuggling boats, killing at least 115 people — culminated this month in a stunning raid that captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. He and his wife were spirited to the United States to face federal drug trafficking charges.

Alarmed by the actions, the U.S. Senate is preparing to vote this week on a war powers resolution that would prohibit further military action in Venezuela without authorization from lawmakers.

Trump said to be trying to deter Republicans from war powers resolution

President Donald Trump was been so incensed over the Senate's potential slapback on his war powers authority that he has been aggressively calling several Republican senators who joined the Democrats in voting to advance the resolution last week. It's headed for a final vote as soon as Wednesday.

"He was very, very fired up," said Senate Majority Leader John Thune, who did not vote for the resolution. He described Trump as "animated" on the subject when they spoke before last week's vote.

In justifying the boat strikes since September, the Trump administration has argued that the U.S. is in an "armed conflict" with drug cartels in the region and that those operating the boats are unlawful combatants.

US military guidelines warn against a civilian disguise

However, U.S. military guidelines on the laws of war prohibit troops from pretending to be civilians while engaging in combat. The practice is legally known as "perfidy."

The Defense Department manual, which runs over 1,000 pages, specifically notes that "feigning civilian status and then attacking" is an example of the practice. An Air Force manual says the practice was prohibited because it means the enemy "neglects to take precautions which are otherwise necessary."

The Navy's manual explains that "attacking enemy forces while posing as a civilian puts all civilians at hazard," and sailors must use offensive force "within the bounds of military honor, particularly without resort to perfidy."

Wilson said each aircraft goes through a "rigorous procurement process to ensure compliance with domestic law, department policies and regulations, and applicable international standards, including the law of armed conflict."

The plane that was painted as a civilian aircraft was used in a Sept. 2 strike, the first in what would

become a monthslong campaign of U.S. deadly military strikes on suspected drug boats with political and policy ramifications for the Trump administration.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and other top officials have been called on by Congress to answer questions and concerns about the actions — particularly the first one because it involved a follow-up strike that killed two survivors holding onto the wreckage of the vessel hit in the initial attack.

Legal experts have said the follow-on strike may have been unlawful because striking shipwrecked sailors is considered out of line with laws of war. Some lawmakers have called for the Pentagon to publicly release the unedited video of the operation, which Hegseth has said he will not do.

In a Dec. 1 meeting of Trump's Cabinet, Hegseth said he "watched that first strike live" but that he left before the follow-up strike.

Legal justification for Maduro's ouster shared with lawmakers

Senators on Tuesday were able to review, in a classified setting, the White House's still undisclosed legal opinion for having used the military to oust Maduro. It was described as a lengthy document outlining the Trump administration's rationale.

Exiting the classified facility at the Capitol, Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, a Republican who has long opposed U.S. military campaigns abroad, said none of the legal rationale should be kept secret.

"Legal arguments and constitutional arguments should all be public, and it's a terrible thing that any of this is being kept secret because the arguments aren't very good," Paul said.

Sen. Peter Welch, D-Vt., said he is not confident in the legality of the Venezuelan operation and in particular Trump's plans to "run" the South American country. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said the control will come from enforcing a quarantine on sanctioned oil tankers tied to Venezuela as the U.S. asserts power over the country's oil.

"There's an ongoing question whether the use of military can be for bringing a person to justice," Welch said, calling Maduro "a really bad guy."

The legal rationale addressed the military action "but not the current reality that the president is saying we'll be there for years and that we're running Venezuela," Welch said.

## What to know about the warrants most immigration agents use to make arrests

By SAFIYAH RIDDLE and VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

As the Trump administration intensifies immigration enforcement nationwide, a wave of high-profile arrests — many unfolding at private homes and businesses and captured on video — has pushed one legal question into the center of the national debate: When can federal immigration agents lawfully enter private property to make an arrest?

That question has taken on new urgency in cities like Minneapolis, where thousands of federal agents are operating on the streets amid protests, confrontations and a fatal shooting, sharpening scrutiny of the legal authority immigration officers rely on when they arrive at the front door.

At the heart of the debate is a legal distinction largely unfamiliar to the public but central to immigration enforcement.

Most immigration arrests are carried out under administrative warrants, internal documents issued by immigration authorities that authorize the arrest of a specific individual but do not permit officers to forcibly enter private homes or other nonpublic spaces without consent. Only criminal warrants signed by judges carry that authority. Legal experts say the administration's aggressive enforcement push, combined with public awareness of those limits, is increasingly turning door-knock encounters into flashpoints, fueling confrontations that are now playing out in cities across the country.

Here is what to know about the limitations on the warrants that authorize most immigration related arrests.

Immigration warrants typically don't authorize entry onto private property

All law enforcement operations — including those conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 67 of 76

and Customs and Border Protection — are governed by the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which protects all people in the country from unreasonable searches and seizures. That means law enforcement is required to have a warrant before searching one's private property or arresting someone, regardless of immigration status.

But not all warrants are the same. Typically, arrests carried out by Department of Homeland Security agencies are authorized by administrative warrants — sometimes known as immigration warrants — not judicial warrants.

Judicial warrants are issued by a court and signed by a magistrate or a state or federal judge. These warrants allow a relevant law enforcement agency to apprehend a specified individual in any context — regardless of whether the person is on public or on private property. In other words, law enforcement is legally allowed to enter and search a home or business to make the arrest without the consent of the property owner once a judge signs off on the arrest.

By contrast, the administrative warrants used in most immigration operations are sanctioned by an agency, officer or immigration judge, and don't allow law enforcement to forcibly enter private property to detain someone.

That means people can legally refuse federal immigration agents entry into private property if the agents only have an administrative warrant.

There are limited exceptions, some of which include if someone is in immediate danger, an officer is actively chasing a suspect or if someone is calling for help inside the residence. But those exceptions don't apply in routine immigration arrests, legal experts say.

John Sandweg, a former ICE acting director, said officers are trained on what circumstances legally justify forced entry. But as the scope of ICE's work has expanded, and more Border Patrol agents have begun conducting the work of ICE officers, there is a greater chance that agents will misapply the rules, he said.

"Your risks of all of these types of incidents increase dramatically when you take officers out of their normal operating environment and ask them to do things that they have not been trained to do, because it's not part of their core missions," Sandweg said.

### Mounting tensions in Minneapolis

The thorny legal distinction between judicial and administrative warrants came to the fore on Sunday when immigration law enforcement raided a private home to make an arrest in Minneapolis, after clashing with protesters who confronted the heavily armed agents. Documents reviewed by The Associated Press revealed that the agents only had an administrative warrant — meaning there was no judge that authorized the raid on private property.

When asked, DHS Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin didn't provide a legal justification for the forced entry and arrest of the man, who is a Liberian national with a deportation order from 2023. She said his arrest was part of the administration's efforts to arrest "the worst of the worst" and added that he had that a criminal history including "robbery, drug possession with the intent to sell, possession of a deadly weapon, malicious destruction and theft."

McLaughlin didn't specify whether he was convicted of any of those crimes, or whether his arrest was related to any criminal activity.

Vice president of policy at the National Immigration Law Center, Heidi Altman, said she couldn't comment on that specific raid, but said that generally an officer entering a home without consent or permission could result in serious consequences.

"That is not just an illegal arrest. It's numerous illegal actions by the officer themselves that could open up liability, not just for being sued, but potential criminal actions under state law as well," she explained.

But in the current political climate, Altman said, it isn't clear if there are any realistic avenues for accountability since the federal government would be responsible for investigating such a breach.

"There are layers of federal laws and regulations and policies prohibiting this kind of behavior. But then the second layer is: Is the federal government going to impose consequences?" she said.

On top of that, immigrants have less recourse after an illegal arrest or search, because illegally obtained evidence can generally still be used in immigration court. A rule of evidence called the exclusionary rule

would prohibit the use of such evidence in criminal court, but most often that rule does not apply in immigration court, Altman explained. Any consequences that the officer may face would probably not undo the immediate consequences immigrants could face if they are quickly deported after an illegal arrest.

"As those legal challenges come and people are facing very, very quick detentions and deportations on the basis of these illegal arrests, there's very little recourse in actual immigration court proceedings that allows people to have a judge disregard evidence or the actual arrest, even if it was done in this very violent, illegal manner," Altman said.

'Know-your-rights' campaigns

ICE has long relied on "knock and talks" to make apprehensions, informally requesting residents to leave a home without giving any indication they plan to make an immigration arrest. As outlined in a 2020 lawsuit in which a federal judge found the practice illegal, officers tell their targets that they need them to step outside to answer a few questions. In one case, they told a woman that they were probation officers looking for her brother.

In response, activists, lawyers and local governments have launched "know-your-rights" campaigns around the country, attempting to educate people on the legal nuances of the extremely convoluted legal framework that is supposed to govern immigration law enforcement.

Many groups have published fact sheets and infographics on social media, while others facilitate meetings that go over constitutional protections that immigrants have — regardless of legal status — in interactions with federal agents.

Often groups will instruct immigrants to request to see a warrant before opening the door if an immigration officer knocks. The trainings also typically emphasize that an immigrant can refuse to open the door if law enforcement only has an administrative warrant.

## What to know about the Muslim Brotherhood after the US terrorist designation

By SAM MEDNICK and ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The Trump administration waded into a regional debate over the Muslim Brotherhood on Tuesday, designating the Lebanese, Jordanian and Egyptian chapters of the transnational Sunni Islamist group as terrorist organizations.

The group founded in the 1920s in Egypt inspired Islamist political movements around the region.

Its ideology has been both popular and divisive in the Arab and Muslim world. The Brotherhood's leaders say it renounced violence decades ago and seeks to set up Islamic rule through elections and other peaceful means, but some of the group's offshoots have armed wings. Critics, including a number of autocratic governments across the region, view it as a threat.

Here's how the group started and where it stands now.

Early days

The Muslim Brotherhood rose as a pan-Arab Islamist political movement, founded in Egypt in 1928 by a school teacher-turned-ideologue Hassan al-Banna. He believed that Islamic teachings should be the basis for governance.

In its early days, the group largely focused on providing social services, but it later turned to militancy, with an armed wing that fought against British colonialists and Israel. It was implicated in the assassination of Egyptian Prime Minister Mahmoud Fahmi al-Nokrashi in 1948 after he outlawed the group. Two months later, al-Banna was assassinated in Cairo.

After Egypt's 1952 military coup, the Brotherhood was accused of an assassination attempt against President Gamal Abdel-Nasser, who retaliated by executing prominent Brotherhood ideologue Sayyed Qutb and imprisoning thousands of other members.

The group witnessed a revival in the 1970s under then-President Anwar Sadat, who tolerated the Brotherhood and used it as a counterweight to leftist opponents. The group formally foreswore violence.

Rise and fall

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 69 of 76

During the 30-year rule of autocrat Hosni Mubarak, the Brotherhood was technically banned but also tolerated. By 2005 it had become Egypt's strongest political opposition group, winning a fifth of the seats in parliament.

The Brotherhood rose to power following elections in Egypt a year after the 2011 popular uprising that toppled Mubarak. But the group fueled opponents' fears that it aimed to monopolize power.

After giant protests over Brotherhood President Mohammed Morsi's divisive rule, the Egyptian army ousted the group in 2013, crushing it in a bloody crackdown.

The authorities later outlawed the group and labeled it a terrorist organization. Authorities under President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi have cracked down heavily on Brotherhood members and those suspected of links to the group, jailing thousands.

The Brotherhood's leader, or supreme guide, Mohammed Badie, remains behind bars in Egypt under several life sentences, the last of which was upheld in July 2021. Nearly all of the group's senior leaders have been imprisoned or live in exile.

The spread of ideology and armed conflict

After its founding in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood developed into a transnational network with chapters across the Middle East.

Some of those have engaged in armed uprisings against their own governments or fought against Israel. In 1982, the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria staged an anti-government rebellion, launching attacks that targeted military officers, state institutions and ruling party offices.

In February 1982, then-Syrian President Hafez Assad ordered an assault on the city of Hama to quell the unrest. Between 10,000 to 40,000 people were killed or disappeared in the government offensive that left the city in ruins.

The Palestinian militant group Hamas, which launched the Oct. 7, 2023 attack on southern Israel triggering the war in Gaza, has roots in the Muslim Brotherhood. Hamas was formed in December 1987 in Gaza, several days after the outbreak of the first intifada, or Palestinian uprising, against Israel. It called for armed resistance and for setting up an Islamic state in all of historic Palestine.

In its founding charter, Hamas defined itself as a Palestinian branch of the Brotherhood.

The Lebanese branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Jamaa al-Islamiya (or the Islamic Group) is a Sunni Muslim political party but also has an armed wing. After the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war, its armed wing joined forces with the Shiite militant group Hezbollah and launched rockets across the border into Israel.

The al-Jamaa al-Islamiya leader Mohammed Takkoush told The Associated Press at the time that his group and Hezbollah supported different sides in regional conflicts and Syria and Yemen but put their differences aside to fight Israel.

Regional and international divisions

Sunni regional powers Turkey and Qatar have been sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology, while other Sunni powers in the region — including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt — see the group as a threat and have cracked down on it.

Earlier this year, Jordan announced a sweeping ban on the Brotherhood that could include shutting down the country's largest opposition party, after accusing the Islamist group of planning attacks. The monarchy banned the Brotherhood a decade ago but officially licensed a splinter group and continued to tolerate the Islamic Action Front while restricting some of its activities.

The U.S. says its chapters in Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt engage in or facilitate and support violence and destabilization campaigns that harm their own regions, United States citizens and United States interests.

The State Department designated the Lebanese branch a foreign terrorist organization, the most severe of the labels, which makes it a criminal offense to provide material support to the group. The Jordanian and Egyptian branches were listed by Treasury as specially designated global terrorists for providing support to Hamas.

## Inflation cooled slightly in December though it remains above Fed's target

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Inflation cooled a bit last month as prices for gas and used cars fell, a sign that stubbornly elevated cost pressures are slowly easing.

Consumer prices rose 0.3% in December from the prior month, the Labor Department said Tuesday, the same as in November. Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core prices rose 0.2%, also matching November's figure. Increases at that pace, over time, would bring inflation closer to the Federal Reserve's target of 2%.

Many economists had expected inflation to jump last month as the government resumed normal data collection after the six-week shutdown last fall, so the modest increases that matched the November figures came as a relief. The price of manufactured goods was flat in December, a sign that the impact of tariffs may be starting to fade.

"Distortions caused by the government shutdown have made the inflation data harder to interpret, but the recent run of figures suggests inflation has peaked," Michael Pearce, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics, wrote in a note to clients.

Signs that inflation is cooling could make it more likely that the Federal Reserve will reduce its key interest rate later this year, which could translate into lower borrowing costs for mortgages, auto loans, and credit cards.

Even so, the large price increases in recent years for necessities such as groceries, rent, and utilities have left many American households feeling squeezed, turning "affordability" issues into high-profile political concerns. Food prices have jumped about 25% since the pandemic.

President Donald Trump, stung by last year's election results that suggested voters are souring on his handling of the economy, has responded with an array of initiatives intended to address rising costs, including a proposed ban on Wall Street firms buying homes, a 10% cap on credit card interest rates, and the suspension of many tariffs on imported goods, such as coffee, pasta, and furniture.

Still, grocery prices jumped 0.7% in December from the previous month, a sign food costs remain elevated. Compared with a year ago, food prices have risen 2.4%, Tuesday's figures showed, a bigger increase than in 2024 or 2023.

Trump celebrated Tuesday's figures on social media: "Great (LOW!) Inflation numbers for the USA," he posted. He also celebrated estimates that the economy expanded at a solid pace in last year's fourth quarter: "Thank you MISTER TARIFF!"

Yet in a speech Monday, John Williams, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and a key member of the Fed's rate-setting committee, said that tariffs have likely increased inflation by about a half-percentage point.

"Tariffs aside, underlying inflation trends have been pretty favorable, and we're seeing no signs of broader inflationary pressures," Williams said. He expects inflation will peak in the first half of this year, before declining toward 2% by 2027.

Tuesday's report is the first clear measure of inflation since September. The six-week government shutdown last fall suspended the collection of price data used to compile the inflation rate, and the government didn't issue a report in October and November's figures were partially distorted by the impact of the closure.

Most prices in November were collected in the second half of the month, after the government reopened, when holiday discounts kicked in, which may have biased November inflation lower. And since rental prices weren't fully collected in October, the agency that prepares the inflation reports used placeholder estimates in November, that may have biased prices lower, economists said.

Still, Tuesday's report suggested that inflation didn't change even with newer, more comprehensive figures. Consumer prices rose 2.7% in December, compared with a year ago, the same figure as November, while core prices increased 2.6% from a year earlier, also unchanged.

Inflation has come down significantly from the four-decade peak of 9.1% that it reached in June 2022,

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 71 of 76

but it has been stubbornly close to 3% since late 2023. The cost of necessities such as groceries is about 25% higher than it was before the pandemic, and other necessities such as rent and clothing have also gotten more expensive, fueling dissatisfaction with the economy that both President Donald Trump and former President Joe Biden have sought to address, though with limited success.

The Federal Reserve has struggled to balance its goal of fighting inflation by keeping borrowing costs high, while also supporting hiring by cutting interest rates when unemployment worsens. As long as inflation remains above its target of 2%, the Fed will likely be reluctant to cut rates much more.

The Fed reduced its key rate by a quarter-point in December, but Chair Jerome Powell, at a press conference explaining its decision, said the Fed would probably hold off on further cuts to see how the economy evolves.

Trump, meanwhile, has harshly criticized the Fed for not cutting its key short-term rate more sharply, a move he has said would reduce mortgage rates and the government's borrowing costs for its huge debt pile. Yet the Fed doesn't directly control mortgage rates, which are set by financial markets.

In a move that cast a shadow over the ability of the Fed to fight inflation in the future, the Department of Justice served the central bank last Friday with subpoenas related to Powell's congressional testimony in June about a \$2.5 billion renovation of two Fed office buildings. Trump administration officials have suggested that Powell either lied about changes to the building or altered plans in ways that are inconsistent with those approved by planning commissions.

In a blunt response, Powell said Sunday those claims were "pretexts" for an effort by the White House to assert more control over the Fed.

"The threat of criminal charges is a consequence of the Federal Reserve setting interest rates based on our best assessment of what will serve the public, rather than following the preferences of the President," Powell said.

## **Scott Adams, whose comic strip 'Dilbert' ridiculed white-collar office life, dies at 68**

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

Scott Adams, whose popular comic strip "Dilbert" captured the frustration of beleaguered, white-collar cubicle workers and satirized the ridiculousness of modern office culture until he was abruptly dropped from syndication in 2023 for racist remarks, has died. He was 68.

His first ex-wife, Shelly Miles, announced the death Tuesday on a livestream posted on Adams' social media accounts. "He's not with us right anymore," she said. Adams revealed in 2025 that he had prostate cancer that had spread to his bones. Miles had said he was in hospice care in his Northern California home on Monday.

"I had an amazing life," the statement said in part. "I gave it everything I had."

At its height, "Dilbert," with its mouthless, bespectacled hero in a white short-sleeved shirt and a perpetually curled red tie, appeared in 2,000 newspapers worldwide in at least 70 countries and 25 languages.

Adams was the 1997 recipient of the National Cartoonist Society's Reuben Award, considered one of the most prestigious awards for cartoonists. That same year, "Dilbert" became the first fictional character to make Time magazine's list of the most influential Americans.

"We are rooting for him because he is our mouthpiece for the lessons we have accumulated — but are too afraid to express — in our effort to avoid cubicular homicide," the magazine said.

"Dilbert" strips were routinely photocopied, pinned up, emailed and posted online, a popularity that would spawn bestselling books, merchandise, commercials for Office Depot and an animated TV series, with Daniel Stern voicing Dilbert.

The collapse of 'Dilbert' empire

It all collapsed quickly in 2023 when Adams, who was white, repeatedly referred to Black people as members of a "hate group" and said he would no longer "help Black Americans." He later said he was being hyperbolic, yet continued to defend his stance.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 72 of 76

Almost immediately, newspapers dropped "Dilbert" and his distributor, Andrews McMeel Universal, severed ties with the cartoonist. The Sun Chronicle in Attleboro, Massachusetts, decided to keep the "Dilbert" space blank for a while "as a reminder of the racism that pervades our society." A planned book was scrapped.

"He's not being canceled. He's experiencing the consequences of expressing his views," Bill Holbrook, the creator of the strip "On the Fastrack," told The Associated Press at the time. "I am in full support with him saying anything he wants to, but then he has to own the consequences of saying them."

Adams relaunched the same daily comic strip under the name Dilbert Reborn via the video platform Rumble, popular with conservatives and far-right groups. He also hosted a podcast, "Real Coffee," where talked about various political and social issues.

After Jimmy Kimmel's late-night show on ABC was suspended in September in the wake of the host's comments on the murder of conservative activist Charlie Kirk, Adams stood for free speech.

"Would I like some revenge?" Adams said. "Yes. Yes, I would enjoy that. But that doesn't mean I get it. That doesn't mean I should pursue it. Doesn't mean the world's a better place if it happens."

### How 'Dilbert' got its start

Adams, who earned a bachelor's degree from Hartwick College and an MBA from the University of California, Berkeley, was working a corporate job at the Pacific Bell telephone company in the 1980s, sharing his cartoons to amuse co-workers. He drew Dilbert as a computer programmer and engineer for a high-tech company and mailed a batch to cartoon syndicators.

"The take on office life was new and on target and insightful," Sarah Gillespie, who helped discover "Dilbert" in the 1980s at United Media, told The Washington Post. "I looked first for humor and only secondarily for art, which with 'Dilbert' was a good thing, as the art is universally acknowledged to be... not great."

The first "Dilbert" comic strip officially appeared April 16, 1989, long before such workplace comedies as "Office Space" and "The Office." It portrayed corporate culture as a "Severance"-like, Kafkaesque world of heavy bureaucracy and pointless benchmarks, where employee effort and skill were underappreciated.

The strip would introduce the "Dilbert Principle": The most ineffective workers will be systematically moved to the place where they can do the least damage — management.

"Throughout history, there have always been times when it's very clear that the managers have all the power and the workers have none," Adams told Time. "Through 'Dilbert,' I would think the balance of power has slightly changed."

Other strip characters included Dilbert's pointy-haired boss; Asok, a young, naive intern; Wally, a middle-aged slacker; and Alice, a worker so frustrated that she was prone to frequent outbursts of rage. Then there was Dilbert's pet, Dogbert, a megalomaniac.

"There's a certain amount of anger you need to draw 'Dilbert' comics," Adams told the Contra Costa Times in 2009.

In 1993, Adams became the first syndicated cartoonist to include his email address in his strip. That triggered a dialogue between the artist and his fans, giving Adams a fountain of ideas for the strip.

"Dilbert" was also known for generating aphorisms, like "All rumors are true — especially if your boss denies them" and "OK, let's get this preliminary pre-meeting going."

"If you can come to peace with the fact that you're surrounded by idiots, you'll realize that resistance is futile, your tension will dissipate, and you can sit back and have a good laugh at the expense of others," Adams wrote in his 1996 book "The Dilbert Principle."

In one real-life case, an Iowa worker was fired from the Catfish Bend Casino in 2007 for posting a "Dilbert" comic strip on the office bulletin board. In the strip, Adams wrote: "Why does it seem as if most of the decisions in my workplace are made by drunken lemurs?" A judge later sided with the worker; Adams helped find him a new job.

### A gradual darkening

While Adams' career fall seemed swift, careful readers of "Dilbert" saw a gradual darkening of the strip's tone and its creator's descent into misogyny, anti-immigration and racism.

He attracted attention for controversial comments, including saying in 2011 that women are treated differently by society for the same reason as children and the mentally disabled — "it's just easier this way

for everyone." In a blog post from 2006, he questioned the death toll of the Holocaust.

In June 2020, Adams tweeted that when the "Dilbert" TV show ended in 2000 after just two seasons, it was "the third job I lost for being white." But, at the time, he blamed it on lower viewership and time slot changes.

Adams' beliefs began bleeding into his strips. In one in 2022, a boss says that traditional performance reviews would be replaced by a "wokeness" score. When an employee complains that could be subjective, the boss said, "That'll cost you two points off your wokeness score, bigot."

Adams put a brave face on his fall from grace, tweeting in 2023: "Only the dying leftist Fake News industry canceled me (for out-of-context news of course). Social media and banking unaffected. Personal life improved. Never been more popular in my life. Zero pushback in person. Black and White conservatives solidly supporting me."

On Tuesday, President Donald Trump remembered Adams as a "Great Influencer."

"He was a fantastic guy, who liked and respected me when it wasn't fashionable to do so. He bravely fought a long battle against a terrible disease," the president posted on his social media platform Truth Social.

## Wisconsin Gov. Evers questions his lieutenant governor's immigration enforcement proposal

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Wisconsin Democratic Gov. Tony Evers is questioning whether a proposal from his own lieutenant governor to ban federal immigration enforcement actions around courthouses, schools, day cares and other locations can, or should, be done.

Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez, a Democrat, is running for governor this year after Evers decided against seeking a third term. She is one of several Democrats vying to succeed Evers in the open race. Evers and Rodriguez were elected together in 2022 after Rodriguez won the lieutenant governor primary.

Rodriguez proposed Monday that civil immigration enforcement actions in Wisconsin should be banned around courthouses, hospitals and health clinics, licensed child care centers and day cares, schools and institutions of higher learning, domestic violence shelters and places of worship. Rodriguez said there would be exceptions if there is a judicial warrant or an immediate threat to public safety.

"I'm not sure we have the ability to do that," Evers said when asked about her proposal at a Monday news briefing.

Evers also expressed concern about how such a move would be received by President Donald Trump's administration.

"We can take a look at that, but I think banning things absolutely will ramp up the actions of our folks in Washington, D.C.," Evers told reporters. "They don't tend to approach those things appropriately."

Rodriguez said Tuesday that she respected Evers' position but did not back down. Wisconsin should join other states looking to rein in federal officers, she said.

"For too long Democrats have dialed back actions in hopes President Trump doesn't escalate, and that's not what happens," she said in a statement. "He always escalates."

Rodriguez put out her plan after an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer fatally shot Renee Good in neighboring Minnesota last week. That killing sparked protests across the country, including in Wisconsin, in opposition to Trump's aggressive deportation operations.

Minnesota, joined by Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, sued the Trump administration Monday to try to stop an immigration enforcement surge. The lawsuit seeks a temporary restraining order to halt the enforcement action or limit the operation.

Rodriguez's proposal to limit ICE actions in Wisconsin is largely based on proposals being offered in other Democratic-controlled states including California, New York, Illinois and New Jersey. Even if introduced in Wisconsin, they would go nowhere in the Republican-controlled Legislature.

Rodriguez is also calling for all ICE agents operating in Wisconsin to be unmasked, clearly identified and

wearing a body camera.

"No one should be afraid to drop off their kids at school, seek medical care, go to court, or attend worship because enforcement actions are happening without clear rules or accountability," Rodriguez said.

When asked if ICE agents were welcome in Wisconsin, Evers said, "I think we can handle ourselves, frankly. I don't see the need for the federal government to be coming into our state and making decisions that we can make in the state."

## Here's how AP reports on the death toll from Iran's protests

By The Associated Press undefined

The difficulty of tracking the death toll from Iran's nationwide protests has been compounded by the government's decision to cut off the internet to the country, but some information has still been getting out.

The Associated Press has been relying on figures provided by the Human Rights Activists News Agency.

The U.S.-based agency, founded 20 years ago, has been accurate throughout multiple years of demonstrations, relying on a network of activists inside Iran that confirms all reported fatalities. That can include speaking with medical officials, family members and community leaders, as well as checking against funeral notices and other official documents.

The agency is a tax-exempt nonprofit registered with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. One of its founders is Keyvan Rafiee, an Iranian political activist who faced repeated imprisonment at home before leaving the Islamic Republic for the United States.

With communications greatly limited in Iran, the AP has been unable to independently confirm the group's toll. The theocratic government of Iran has not provided overall casualty figures for the demonstrations.

Iranian state media has provided little information about the demonstrations, making it difficult to assess the scale of the protests. Videos that have surfaced online offer brief, shaky glimpses of people in the streets or the sound of gunfire.

The AP reporting has relied on some of these videos, which likely have made it out of the country via Starlink satellite dishes. The AP authenticates such footage by checking it against known locations and events, as well as talking to regional experts. The AP also ensures the substance of the video is consistent with its own reporting.

## Top central bankers express 'full solidarity' with Fed Chair Powell in clash with Trump

By DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Central bankers from around the world said Tuesday they "stand in full solidarity" with U.S. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, after President Donald Trump dramatically escalated his confrontation with the Fed with the Justice Department investigating and threatening criminal charges.

Powell "has served with integrity, focused on his mandate and an unwavering commitment to the public interest," read the statement signed by nine national central bank heads including European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde and Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey.

They added that "the independence of central banks is a cornerstone of price, financial and economic stability in the interest of the citizens that we serve. It is therefore critical to preserve that independence, with full respect for the rule of law and democratic accountability."

The dispute is ostensibly about Powell's testimony to Congress in June over the cost of a massive renovation of Fed buildings. But in a statement Sunday, Powell, abandoning his previous attempt to ignore Trump's relentless criticism, called the administration's threat of criminal charges "pretexts" in the president's campaign to seize control of U.S. interest rate policy from the Fed's technocrats.

Trump has repeatedly criticized Powell and the Fed for not moving faster to cut rates. Economists warn that a politicized Fed that caves in to the president's demands will damage its credibility as an inflation

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 75 of 76

fighter and likely lead investors to demand higher rates before investing in U.S. Treasuries.

Fed actions have impacts around the world due to the U.S. dollar's role as the leading currency for trade transactions and central bank reserves. Fed interest rate changes can affect the dollar's exchange rate against other currencies and the value of foreign investors' U.S. assets.

Politically independent central banks have become a cornerstone of the global economy because they can more easily take steps to fight inflation, such as rate hikes, that are unpopular in the short term but preserve price stability over the longer term.

Other signatories of the statement carried on the ECB's website were Erik Thedeen, governor of Sweden's central bank; Christian Kettel Thomsen, chair of Denmark's central bank; Swiss National Bank Chair Martin Schlegel; Michele Bullock, governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia; Tiff Macklem, governor of the Bank of Canada; Bank of Korea Governor Chang Yong Rhee; and Gabriel Galipolo, governor of the Banco Central do Brasil.

Also attaching their names were François Villeroy de Galhau, board chair of the Bank for International Settlements, and Pablo Hernández de Cos, BIS general manager. The BIS is an international organization of central banks based in Basel, Switzerland.

One prominent central bank not included in the statement was the Bank of Japan. The statement said that more signatures could be added later. Bank of Japan officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

## **The BBC seeks to dismiss Trump's \$10B defamation lawsuit in a Florida court**

By JILL LAWLESS and BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The BBC plans to ask a court to throw out U.S. President Donald Trump's \$10 billion lawsuit against the British broadcaster, court papers show.

Trump filed a lawsuit in December over the way the BBC edited a speech he gave on Jan. 6, 2021. The claim, filed in a Florida federal court, seeks \$5 billion in damages for defamation and \$5 billion for unfair trade practices.

The speech took place before some of Trump's supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol as Congress was poised to certify President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 election that Trump falsely alleged was stolen from him.

The BBC had broadcast the documentary — titled "Trump: A Second Chance?" — days before the 2024 U.S. presidential election. It spliced together three quotes from two sections of the 2021 speech, delivered almost an hour apart, into what appeared to be one quote in which Trump urged supporters to march with him and "fight like hell." Among the parts cut out was a section where Trump said he wanted supporters to demonstrate peacefully.

The broadcaster has apologized to Trump over the edit of the Jan. 6 speech. But the publicly funded BBC rejects claims it defamed him. The furor triggered the resignations of the BBC's top executive and its head of news.

Papers filed Monday in U.S. District Court in Miami say the BBC will file a motion to dismiss the case on March 17 on the basis that the court lacks jurisdiction and Trump failed to state a claim.

The broadcaster's lawyers will argue that the BBC did not create, produce or broadcast the documentary in Florida and that Trump's claim the documentary was available in the U.S. on streaming service BritBox is not true.

It will also argue that Trump has failed to "plausibly allege" the BBC acted with malice in airing the documentary.

Attorney Charles Tobin, for the BBC, said Trump can't prove actual damages because he won reelection by a commanding margin, and carried Florida by 13-point margin, better than his 2016 and 2020 performances. He said the documentary also couldn't have harmed his reputation because it aired after Trump was indicted by a federal grand jury over alleged efforts to overturn the 2020 election, including

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 224 ~ 76 of 76

allegations he "directed the crowd in front of him to go to the Capitol."

The BBC is asking the court to postpone discovery — the pretrial process in which parties must turn over documents and other information — pending a decision on the motion to dismiss. The discovery process could require the BBC to hand over reams of emails and other materials related to its coverage of Trump.

"Engaging in unbounded merits-based discovery while the motion to dismiss is pending will subject defendants to considerable burdens and costs that will be unnecessary if the motion is granted," Tobin wrote.

If the case continues, a 2027 trial date has been proposed.

"As we have made clear previously, we will be defending this case," the BBC said Tuesday in a statement. "We are not going to make further comment on ongoing legal proceedings."

## Today in History: January 14

### Lance Armstrong admits to using performance-enhancing drugs

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Jan. 14, the 14th day of 2026. There are 351 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Jan. 14, 2013, cyclist Lance Armstrong ended a decade of denial by confessing to Oprah Winfrey during a videotaped interview he'd used performance-enhancing drugs to win the Tour de France seven consecutive times. The interview was aired as a two-part special later in the week.

Also on this date:

In 1784, the United States ratified the Treaty of Paris ending the Revolutionary War; Britain followed suit in April.

In 1858, Napoleon III survived an assassination attempt by an Italian revolutionary and accomplices who threw explosives at the emperor's carriage as he and wife Eugénie headed to the opera in Paris. Though bystanders were killed, the emperor and empress were unharmed and the revolutionary was swiftly captured and later executed.

In 1943, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and French Gen. Charles de Gaulle opened a wartime conference in Casablanca, Morocco.

In 1952, NBC's "Today" show premiered, with Dave Garroway as host.

In 1963, Democrat George C. Wallace was sworn in as governor of Alabama with the pledge, "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, and segregation forever!" It was a view he later repudiated.

In 1967, the "Summer of Love" unofficially began with a "Human Be-In" involving tens of thousands of young people at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

In 1970, Diana Ross and the Supremes performed their last concert together, at the Frontier Hotel in Las Vegas.

In 1994, U.S. President Bill Clinton, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk signed the Trilateral Statement, an accord to dismantle the nuclear arsenal of Ukraine.

In 2006, Eminem remarried Kim Mathers in Detroit. He filed for divorce 82 days later.

In 2024, Denmark's prime minister proclaimed Frederik X as king after his mother Queen Margrethe II formally signed her abdication, with massive crowds turning out to rejoice in the throne passing from a beloved monarch to her popular son.

Today's birthdays: Drag racer Don "Big Daddy" Garlits is 94. Actor Faye Dunaway is 85. Actor Holland Taylor is 83. Guitarist-producer T-Bone Burnett is 78. Filmmaker Lawrence Kasdan is 77. Filmmaker Steven Soderbergh is 63. Actor Emily Watson is 59. Rapper-actor LL Cool J is 58. Actor Jason Bateman is 57. Rock musician Dave Grohl is 57. Rock singer-musician Caleb Followill (Kings of Leon) is 44. Actor Zach Gilford is 44. Actor Grant Gustin is 36. Singer Ryan Castro is 32.