

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 1 of 76

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [3- Groton Ford 'C'lassic Set for January 24 at Groton High School](#)
- [4- Getting ready for Wings Night](#)
- [4- Pool Table Recovered](#)
- [5- Rod Kappes Receives Russ Phillips Memorial Award from SDARWS](#)
- [6- Fact Brief: Exploding Trees](#)
- [6- Outage in Spink County](#)
- [6- Ace of Hearts drawing](#)
- [7- Tomorrow on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [8- GDI Fitness Center Ad](#)
- [9- SD SearchLight: State Senate says no to debate on kratom, hemp-derived THC product bans](#)
- [9- SD SearchLight: Gun silencer deregulation advances to SD Senate without opposition](#)
- [10- SD SearchLight: Republicans reassign committees for Rapid City lawmaker after 'unprofessional and juvenile behavior'](#)
- [11- SD SearchLight: Legislation would require elections for schools to exceed property tax limits](#)
- [12- SD SearchLight: US House votes down measure to rein in Trump action against Venezuela](#)
- [13- SD SearchLight: Many Dems refuse to vote to fund ICE as US House passes 4 spending bills](#)
- [15- SD SearchLight: Mike Rounds formally announces campaign for reelection to U.S. Senate](#)
- [15- SD SearchLight: Iowa House sends CO2 eminent domain ban to Senate](#)
- [18- Weather Pages](#)
- [24- Daily Devotional](#)
- [25- Subscription Form](#)
- [26- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [27- News from the Associated Press](#)

Friday, Jan. 23, 2026

NO SCHOOL due to the cold
Girls Wrestling at Pierre Invitational, 4 p.m.
Postponed: Boys Wrestling vs. Deuel/Deubrook Area at Deuel, 6 p.m.
Cancelled: MS BBB at Redfield, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 24, 2026

Basketball Doubleheader vs. Milbank. Boys C/Girls JV at 2 p.m., Boys JV at 3 p.m., Girls Varsity at 4 p.m. and Boys Varsity at 5:15 p.m.
Cancelled: Groton Ford "C" Team Classic at Groton, 10 a.m.
Boys Wrestling at Kingsbury County Invitational (Arlington), 10 a.m.



Sunday, Jan. 25, 2026

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; and at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at 9 a.m. with congregational meeting to follow; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.
United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.
Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.
Carnival of Silver Skates, 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.
Groton Soccer Association Clinics, GHS Arena, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
4th Grade BBB Practice, 2 p.m.
6th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.
Dance Team Practice, 5 p.m.

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

© 2026 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 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.

Weekend Winter Storm

About half the US population is in the path of a winter storm, starting today in Texas and reaching the Northeast by Sunday. A potentially record-breaking cold snap is forecast to follow, with frigid temperatures lingering into next week for millions.

Meteorologists warn damage could rival that of a hurricane, with heavy ice threatening power lines as people contend with subfreezing temperatures. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) was among several governors to proactively declare emergencies yesterday; a Texas power grid failure during a 2021 winter storm caused over 200 deaths. Parts of Oklahoma could see over a foot of snow as the system brings ice and sleet to Jackson, Mississippi, which has no city-owned snowplows. Meanwhile, wind chills could plunge as low as minus 35 degrees in Chicago and Des Moines, Iowa, today, prompting school closures.

A shift in the polar vortex, fueled by relatively warmer Arctic temperatures, is colliding with moisture from off California and the US' southern coast to create these severe conditions.

Trump 'Debanking' Suit

President Donald Trump sued JPMorgan Chase and its CEO, Jamie Dimon, yesterday for at least \$5B in damages. He accused the bank of illegally terminating his accounts for political reasons.

In February 2021, Trump said he was notified that several of his personal and professional accounts would be closed two months later. Trump also accused Dimon of placing his name and businesses on a financial blacklist, resulting in reputational harm. Trump accused the bank of taking these steps for political purposes (the decision would have come weeks after the Jan. 6 storming of the US Capitol). JPMorgan Chase maintains it does not close accounts for political reasons.

Trump issued an executive order in August aimed at directing regulators to target debanking. In December, a government report found nine banks restricted services for exposure to reputational harm, including companies in the oil and gas and adult entertainment industries.

Oscar Nominations

Nominations for the 98th Academy Awards were announced yesterday, led by "Sinners" with a record-breaking 16 nods. The 1930s-set vampire epic, which grossed \$368M globally, is followed by "One Battle After Another" with 13.

They join a best picture lineup that includes "Frankenstein," "Bugonia," "Hamnet," "Marty Supreme," "Sentimental Value," "Train Dreams," "F1," and "The Secret Agent." Warner Bros. led with 30 nominations, with indie studio Neon and Netflix next with 18 each. Best actor contenders include 30-year-old Timothée Chalamet ("Marty Supreme"), one of the youngest men to have received three acting nods, while best actress nominees include 37-year-old Emma Stone ("Bugonia"), the youngest woman with seven. Steven Spielberg ("Hamnet") earned a record 14th best picture nomination as an individual producer. This year also marks the first recognition of casting directors.

The ceremony airs March 15 on ABC and Hulu, with Conan O'Brien hosting for the second time.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 3 of 76

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Over 700 artists and creators, including Scarlett Johansson, Cate Blanchett, and Joseph Gordon-Levitt, join campaign against using human-created, copyrighted works to train AI tools without permission.

The Eagles' 1976 album "Their Greatest Hits 1971-1975" becomes the bestselling album of all time in the US, selling over 40 million units.

Olympic flame passes through Venice on its way to Milan Cortina Winter Olympic Games.

"Heated Rivalry" series stars Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie selected as Olympic torchbearers.

Science & Technology

Google to offer personalized responses via AI-powered search tool by tapping into users' Gmail and Google Photos.

Spotify launches AI-powered playlist generator, enabling users to curate music based on feelings and memories.

Exhaled breath carries markers of disease-linked bacteria in the gut microbiome, opening the door to breath-based diagnosis of asthma and other conditions.

Modern-day kangaroos' ancestors—which could weigh up to roughly 550 pounds—may have been able to hop in short bursts; finding challenges previous studies suggesting their ankles could not withstand hopping.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close up (S&P 500 +0.6%, Dow +0.6%, Nasdaq +1.0%), extending Wednesday's rally after the US reverses European tariff threat over Greenland.

The US and China formally approve deal transferring control of TikTok's US operations to joint venture led by US investors.

Personal consumption expenditures price index rose 2.8% year over year in November, staying above Federal Reserve's 2% target.

US economy grew 4.4% year over year from July through September—the fastest pace in two years, per revised government data.

Cryptocurrency custodian BitGo shares jump 25% intraday before closing up roughly 3% in NYSE debut, valuing the firm around \$2.1B; marks first major crypto initial public offering this year.

Politics & World Affairs

Federal judge refuses to approve Justice Department charges against former CNN journalist Don Lemon for covering immigration-related protests inside a Minnesota church.

Former special counsel Jack Smith says President Donald Trump was responsible for Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol in testimony before the Republican-led House Judiciary Committee.

Homicide rate in the US dropped more than 20% last year, according to a new report, potentially the lowest murder rate since 1900.



Ashley Smith was busy putting liners in the baskets for Wing Night at the Groton American Legion. Wing night this month is tonight and Saturday night. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Pool Table Recovered

Travis Niles and Cory Breske were busy putting a new cover the pool table at the Groton American Legion on Thursday. Niles has been doing this type of work for 30 years and Breske has been for about 10 years. They work for Rite-Way Vending out of Waubay. A typical pool table recover is about an hour and a half, depending on if there are other things that need attention, like the pockets. (Photo

by Paul Kosel)



Rod Kappes Receives Russ Phillips Memorial Award from SDARWS



PIERRE, S.D. (Jan. 13, 2026) — The South Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems (SDARWS) has presented the Russ Phillips Memorial Award to Rod Kappes of BDM Rural Water System during the SDARWS Annual Technical Conference on January 13, 2026, at the Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center in Pierre, South Dakota.

The Russ Phillips Memorial Award honors the legacy of Russ Phillips, whose 24 years of service with the Tripp County Water Users District reflected deep expertise, dedication, and a lasting commitment to water stewardship. The award recognizes an individual whose career demonstrates exceptional leadership, professionalism, and unwavering service to rural water.

Kappes was recognized for a remarkable career with BDM Rural Water System and for demonstrating the type of steady leadership and commitment that defines the spirit of this award.

The SDARWS Annual Technical Conference is the largest rural water conference in South Dakota, hosting more than 650 water operators, managers, and exhibitors over three days in Pierre.



Fact brief: Can trees 'explode' during extreme cold weather?

Extreme cold weather can cause trees to snap and branches to break, but a viral social media post that says trees "explode" in cold weather is misleading.

During periods of extreme cold, sap inside a tree can freeze, which leads to expansion. That pressure can cause tree trunks to break and branches to snap, resulting in a loud noise that can sound like an explosion.

It's called frost cracking, and it's more prevalent on the south or southwest side of vulnerable trees. Maple, birch, poplar and ash are the most at risk.

Another winter weather phenomenon is a "frost quake," or cryoseism. That's when soil or rock fractures due to rapid freezing of water in saturated ground. These are sometimes mistaken for true earthquakes and can cause loud booms or seismic vibrations.

Viral social media posts by Meteorologist Max Velocity warned of an "exploding tree risk" this weekend due to extreme cold.

Outage in Spink County

As of 3:22 this morning, 1,198 customers (36.41 percent of the meters tracked) in Spink County were reported without power, but the outage was short lived as power was restored to all customers by the 4:30 a.m. report.

Spink County, South Dakota - 1,198 out of 3,290 tracked meters (36.41%) are without power in Spink County, South Dakota.

Ace of Hearts

The Ace of Hearts drawing was held Thursday evening with ticket sales for the week being \$900 and the Jackpot just over \$21,238. Renee Pigors' name was drawn. She picked card number 38 and it was the three of spades so she will get \$90.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 7 of 76



Coming Up on
GDILIVE.COM

Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

GDILIVE



A production of the
Groton Daily Independent



For more info: GDILIVE.COM



Sat., Jan. 24, 2026 - Milbank
Double Header Basketball in Groton
Boys C at 2 p.m., JV Boys at 3 p.m.
Girls Varsity: 4:00, Boys Varsity follows

What can \$20 get you?



for
Senior Citizens

or anyone using physical therapy
a gym membership at

15 N Main - Ste. 101

Open 24/7

GDI Living Fitness

Call/Text Paul at 605/397-7460

Call/Text Tina at 605/397-7285

for details



Annual Membership Rates

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

Month-to-Month Rates

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

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



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

State Senate says no to debate on kratom, hemp-derived THC product bans

BY: JOHN HULT

State senators voted against discussions on banning hemp-derived consumables and kratom on Thursday at the South Dakota Capitol in Pierre.

Separate bills to ban the use, possession, sale or consumption of those intoxicating substances advanced out of a Senate committee on Wednesday, but the committee voted to send them to the Senate floor with no recommendation, rather than a recommendation to pass them.

By Senate rules, bills that land on the full chamber's calendar without a recommendation need the support of a majority of senators before they're eligible for a debate, and ultimately for a vote.'

Sen. Kevin Jensen, R-Canton, moved to put the bills on the Senate's calendar for Monday. He said both bills had drawn spirited debate and survived attempts by some committee members to defeat them.

On the bill to ban hemp-derived intoxicants for anyone without a medical marijuana card, Senate Bill 61, Jensen said there are amendments in the works to address its opponents' concerns.

He offered similar comments, without referencing possible amendments, when he moved to place Senate Bill 77's ban on kratom products on the Senate calendar.

"It's a very important bill," Jensen said.

Sen. John Carley, R-Piedmont, the prime sponsor of the bills, pointed out that all members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee had voted to send the bills "to the floor to be considered."

Both moves failed. Senators voted down a debate for the hemp product prohibitions 19-14, with one member excused, and said no to a kratom debate on a vote of 20-13.

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.

Gun silencer deregulation advances to SD Senate without opposition

BY: MEGHAN O'BRIEN

PIERRE — A South Dakota Senate committee unanimously voted Thursday to advance legislation that removes silencers from the state's definition of a controlled weapon.

Unregistered possession of a controlled weapon is a felony, which could result in two years of jail time. "State regulation is unnecessary," said Sen. Casey Crabtree, a Republican from Madison who introduced the legislation and is seeking the Republican nomination for U.S. House. "Gun suppressors are not weapons. They are simply hearing protection."

A suppressor quiets the reports from gunfire, and supporters of deregulation say it's a hearing protection measure for hunters and people in the surrounding area. Opponents of deregulation, including the national organization Everytown for Gun Safety, say silencers make it harder for bystanders or law enforcement to identify and react quickly to gunshots.

Nobody testified against the bill Thursday.

Republican Attorney General Marty Jackley supports the legislation. Listing a silencer as a controlled

weapon, he said, "doesn't promote or help public safety."

There are already protections in place at the federal level, he said.

"It's simply extra government that doesn't achieve any result," Jackley told the committee.

Brian Gosch, a lobbyist who spoke on behalf of the National Rifle Association, said there's also the "good neighbor aspect" to consider.

"If you have a suppressed AR, that's going to be quieter for the neighbors," he said, referring to AR-style rifles. "If we're all out shooting suppressed shotguns in the field, we're going to be able to communicate a lot better like that."

The bill now goes to the full Senate.

Meghan O'Brien is the audio reporter for South Dakota Searchlight where she covers the state government and its impact on South Dakotans. She's previously reported in Nebraska with a focus on health care and rural communities across the state.

Republicans reassign committees for Rapid City lawmaker after 'unprofessional and juvenile behavior'

Action against Rep. Phil Jensen follows argument over seating arrangement

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

PIERRE — A South Dakota state representative was reassigned to different committees recently after tempers flared over a committee's seating arrangement, in an episode one lawmaker described as "unprofessional and juvenile behavior."

Republican leaders removed Rep. Phil Jensen, R-Rapid City, who chairs the Freedom Caucus, from the House Education Committee following his role in an upheaval on Friday stemming from a new seating arrangement created by the committee chair, Rep. Lana Greenfield, R-Doland.

The argument about the seating arrangement delayed the committee by more than 15 minutes, said House Majority Leader Scott Odenbach, R-Spearfish.

Odenbach told members of the media at a leadership press conference Thursday that Jensen and some other members of the House Education Committee planned "an effort to disrupt the committee," which is "unacceptable behavior." Republican leaders pulled the members from the room to "deal with the issue out of sight" of the public.

Jensen was the only lawmaker involved who was reassigned.

Jensen lost his vice chairmanship of the House Education Committee last year for introducing a bill to defund the Huron School District, which he filed in reaction to a tip about the district's bathroom policy regarding transgender students. The 18-year lawmaker served on the education committee in the House or Senate for nearly a decade.

Jensen alleged to South Dakota Searchlight that the Republican legislative leadership has "declared war on conservatives." He said the new seating arrangement isolated conservative legislators from each other. House Speaker Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, "threw" Jensen and other members of the committee "under the bus" by siding with the chair, Jensen alleged.

"The speaker chose to support an out-of-control chairman who instructed committee members last session to stop talking with each other and forbid them from using their phones to communicate on how they were voting on bills," Jensen said in an emailed statement, adding that he and some other members were treated "as children."

In a statement to South Dakota Searchlight, Hansen said he is "responsible for maintaining order" in the Legislature.

"I cannot allow any member to disrupt official proceedings over a seating assignment," Hansen said. "This incident had nothing to do with conservative principles — principles I have consistently led on throughout my time in the Legislature. It was about addressing unprofessional and juvenile behavior, and I handled it appropriately to preserve the integrity of our institution."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 11 of 76

Greenfield, a former teacher, said a "new seating chart for a new year" makes sense.

"It's nice to visit with other people, and sometimes it's good to hear different perspectives," Greenfield said. "As a teacher, it was something I normally did."

Legislative rules allow committee chairs to determine seating charts, Odenbach said. He added that lawmakers who don't agree with the rule should have tried to change the rules at the beginning of the legislative session or discussed the matter with the chair.

"The way you definitely don't do it is try to disrupt the proceedings of the House of Representatives," Odenbach said.

Odenbach said he doesn't "expect anything else like that to happen" this legislative session, which began earlier this month and continues until March.

New committee assignments

House Speaker Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, announced several committee reassignments recently:

Rep. Phil Jensen, R-Rapid City, was reassigned from the Education and Transportation committees to the Local Government and Taxation committees after he argued about seating assignments in the Education Committee.

Rep. Liz May, R-Kyle, was reassigned from the House Appropriations Committee to the Agriculture and Natural Resources and Education committees, which Odenbach said was due to a recent accident on her ranch that limited her ability to devote the extra time required of Appropriations Committee members.

Rep. Julie Auch, R-Yankton, was reassigned from the Agriculture and Natural Resources and Local Government committees to the House Appropriations Committee to replace May.

Rep. Jeff Bathke, R-Mitchell, is deployed overseas as a member of the South Dakota National Guard, so he was removed from the Taxation and Transportation committees.

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

Legislation would require elections for schools to exceed property tax limits

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR

A bill to require a local election after any South Dakota school board decides to exceed property tax limitations advanced on a 4-3 committee vote Thursday at the Capitol in Pierre.

The bill targets decisions by school districts to "opt out" of property tax limitations imposed by the state, in order to raise more revenue. Local residents can already petition a board's opt-out decision to a public vote, but there is no requirement for an election if nobody organizes a petition drive.

Under the bill, a school board could approve an opt-out with a two-thirds vote, but the decision would then go to a mandatory election. The bill also requires boards to spell out not only the number of years an opt-out would run, but the "total maximum dollar amount of taxes payable over the full term."

More legislative news

See all of Searchlight's coverage of the 2026 legislative session.

Read the latest >

Sen. Sue Peterson, R-Sioux Falls, introduced the bill. She said the change is aimed at property tax relief and accountability, telling a legislative committee that current petition signature requirements can be difficult to achieve in larger districts and that voters should have a direct say when districts seek to exceed statutory property tax limits.

Opponents, including the Sioux Falls School District and the School Administrators of South Dakota, said the measure would weaken local decision-making by elected school boards, add election costs and

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 12 of 76

single out schools compared to other local governmental entities. They pointed to current law that allows referendums by petition and noted that opt-outs that reach the ballot usually pass.

"At the end of the day, there is no other group that is required to have an election" for an opt-out, said Heath Larson with the Associated School Boards of South Dakota.

Separately, the committee advanced a bill 7-0 that would expand eligibility for South Dakota's Partners in Education scholarship program by raising the income limit for families entering the program from 150% to 200% of the standard used to qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch. It would also allow students to remain eligible in later years if their household income stays under 250% of the standard.

Since 2016, the program has provided private-school scholarships, supported by insurance company donations in exchange for state tax credits. Last year, lawmakers increased the program's annual tax-credit cap from \$3.5 million to \$5 million.

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

US House votes down measure to rein in Trump action against Venezuela

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House failed Thursday to back a resolution curbing President Donald Trump's military operations abroad, following U.S. intervention to remove Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

Thursday's resolution tied at 215-215. If passed, it would have directed "the President to remove United States Armed Forces from Venezuela, unless explicitly authorized by a declaration of war or specific statutory authorization for use of military force."

Republicans Thomas Massie of Kentucky and Don Bacon of Nebraska voted in favor, along with all Democrats present. The vote was held open for about an hour to allow Texas Republican Wesley Hunt to arrive and cast a vote against the resolution.

Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, earlier this month were taken by the U.S. military to face an indictment in New York City on narco-terrorism and conspiracy charges originally levied in 2020. The couple has pleaded not guilty.

The Jan. 3 military operation in Venezuela was conducted without approval of or notification to Congress.

Prior to the military operation in Venezuela, the Trump administration had conducted a monthslong bombing campaign of small boats in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean. The U.S. strikes have killed more than 115 people whom Trump officials have alleged, without proof, were smuggling drugs to the U.S.

Both chambers have now tried to curb Trump's military actions in Latin America through a war powers resolution, but have not been able to gain enough votes.

The Senate earlier this month was initially successful in a procedural vote on a war powers resolution, but the measure eventually failed after two Republicans who had backed the measure voted against it.

Congress passed a war powers resolution in 1973 to limit the president's authority to wage war overseas after the Nixon administration secretly bombed Vietnam and Cambodia, killing hundreds of thousands of people. Then-President Richard Nixon vetoed the resolution, but Congress overrode the veto.

South Dakota's vote

FROM SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, voted against a resolution that would have directed "the President to remove United States Armed Forces from Venezuela, unless explicitly authorized by a declaration of war or specific statutory authorization for use of military force."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 13 of 76

Senate Majority Leader John Thune and Sen. Mike Rounds, Republicans from South Dakota, voted against advancing a similar measure earlier in the Senate.

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.

Many Dems refuse to vote to fund ICE as US House passes 4 spending bills

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — The House Thursday passed four appropriations bills to fund the government and avert a partial shutdown, but Democrats largely objected to spending on the Department of Homeland Security amid aggressive immigration enforcement in communities across the country.

Democrats have pushed for tougher oversight of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency. In addition, members of the progressive wing of the caucus vowed to not approve any funding for DHS after federal immigration agent Jonathan Ross shot and killed Renee Nicole Good in Minneapolis earlier this month.

The 37-year-old mother's death led to massive community protests and thousands of ICE agents have aggressively descended into Minnesota.

"(Homeland Security Secretary) Kristi Noem and ICE are out of control," House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries said in a statement. "Taxpayer dollars are being misused to brutalize U.S. citizens, including the tragic killing of Renee Nicole Good. This extremism must end."

South Dakota's votes

FROM SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota. (Courtesy of Rep. Johnson's office).jpeg

U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota. (Courtesy of Rep. Johnson's office)

U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, voted in favor of four appropriations bills to fund the government and avert a partial shutdown.

The four bills — Defense; Homeland Security; Labor, Health and Human Services and Education; and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development — are the last remaining appropriations bills needed to avoid a partial government shutdown by Jan. 30.

The Homeland Security funding bill passed 220-207. The remaining bills passed 341-88.

Democrats who joined Republicans in voting for the Homeland Security bill included Reps. Jared Gold of Maine, Henry Cuellar of Texas, Marie Gluesenkamp Perez of Washington state, Tom Suozzi of New York, Don Davis of North Carolina, Laura Gillen of New York and Vicente Gonzalez of Texas.

Republican Thomas Massie of Kentucky voted against the DHS funding bill.

Separately, GOP Rep. Virginia Foxx, chairwoman of the Rules Committee, added a provision to repeal a law that allows members of the U.S. Senate to sue for up to half a million dollars if their phone records were obtained by special counsel Jack Smith during his investigation into President Donald Trump's efforts to subvert the 2020 presidential election. In a rare move, the provision passed unanimously.

Smith was also on Capitol Hill Thursday to testify about his investigation before lawmakers on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

The Senate will take up the appropriations bills when senators return from recess next week.

What does the Homeland Security bill include?

The Homeland Security bill provides \$64.4 billion in funding for fiscal year 2026. It cuts funding for Customs and Border Protection by \$1.3 billion, and maintains flat funding for ICE at \$10 billion.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 14 of 76

The bill attempts to put guardrails around immigration enforcement by allocating \$20 million for body cameras for ICE and CBP officers.

It also requires DHS to provide monthly updates on how the agency is spending the \$190 billion it received from the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," the president's signature tax and spending cuts package signed into law last summer.

The bill also restricts ICE to spending only \$3.8 billion of its fiscal budget on detention. However, the agency will still be able to pull \$75 billion from OBBBA, including for detention.

Most Dems say they can't back any ICE funding

During Thursday's debate of the bill, Republicans supported the Homeland Security bill, and argued that it contains other agencies beside immigration enforcement.

But a majority of Democrats said they could not vote to approve the agency's funding because of ICE's actions.

"I think we should look at the bill in its totality," GOP Appropriations Chair Tom Cole of Oklahoma said. "Encouraging people to believe we have massive bad actors in a particular agency... comparing law enforcement officers to the Gestapo or Nazis, that's not true. The right thing to do is to fund the people who protect America."

Foxx criticized Democrats for their concerns over ICE enforcement tactics. On the House floor, she defended the agency, arguing that "ICE agents are arresting some of the worst criminals imaginable."

"The issue is that ICE is terrorizing communities and attacking people, including U.S. citizens," countered the top Democrat on the Rules Committee, Jim McGovern of Massachusetts. "This is an out-of-control agency at war with communities across the country and they don't give a damn that you are a U.S. citizen."

The top Democrat on the Homeland Security Committee, Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, said he could not support voting for the bill because the Trump administration has weaponized the agency and "DHS has strayed from its core mission."

"Republicans in control of Congress, however, are conducting zero oversight and do nothing but send blank check after blank check to DHS," he said in a statement. "I have consistently supported the DHS workforce over the past two decades and continue to do so, but I cannot – in good conscience – vote to send another dime to CBP and ICE as they terrorize our communities and sully the constitution."

Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro, the top Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, said she will vote against the bill, even though she is proud of several provisions, such as the increase to Federal Emergency Management Agency funding and a pay raise for air traffic controllers.

But, she said, "It is impossible to ignore the impact ICE has had."

"ICE is an agency that has shown itself to be lawless," she said.

Republicans tout body camera provision

GOP Rep. Mark Amodei of Nevada, the chair of the panel that deals with funding for Homeland Security, defended the funding bill, and noted that it provides immigration officers with body cameras. He said funds are also provided in the measure for the Coast Guard and agencies dealing with cybersecurity.

Cuellar of Texas, the top Democrat on that same panel, acknowledged that "this bill is not perfect."

"It's better than the alternative, leaving the department with a blank check," he said. "This bill flat funds ICE but at the same time, we strengthen oversight of ICE."

Minnesota Democratic Rep. Betty McCollum said the ICE enforcement in Minnesota and across the country is one of the "worst cases of civil rights violations by the federal government in recent history."

"Minnesotans are being racially profiled on a mass scale, assaulted on our streets, kidnapped from our communities," she said.

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.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 15 of 76

Mike Rounds formally announces campaign for reelection to U.S. Senate

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR

Republican U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds formally announced Thursday that he will seek reelection this year, launching a bid for a third six-year term representing South Dakota in Washington, D.C.

In an interview with South Dakota Searchlight, Rounds said "our work is not done yet," pointing to priorities like cutting taxes, improving agricultural markets, preparations tied to the new B-21 bomber's impending arrival at Ellsworth Air Force Base, and continued growth of the underground research laboratory at the former Homestake Mine in the Black Hills.

The 71-year-old Rounds said his focus is on making South Dakota a place where young people "stay and raise their own families." The former two-term governor was sworn in to the U.S. Senate in January 2015 and won reelection in 2020.

Rounds said he is a "Reagan Republican that votes with President Trump 99% of the time."

Recently, that included voting against advancing a war powers resolution that would have stopped President Donald Trump from taking further military action against Venezuela without congressional authorization. Earlier this month, U.S. special forces apprehended Venezuela's president, Nicolás Maduro, and his wife, Cilia Flores, from their bedroom during a surprise overnight raid. The couple was wanted by U.S. authorities on federal drug and conspiracy charges.

"When that war powers act was brought in, and when it was voted on, we did not have any boots on the ground in Venezuela," Rounds said. "And in this particular case, it was our military helping in a law enforcement action down there, specifically with regard to trying to go after drug dealers and folks that were promoting crime in the United States of America.

Rounds added that "South Dakota is safer because of what we're doing down there to stop drugs from trafficking, not just into the United States, but into other countries that then move them on into our country as well."

The 2026 race is drawing challengers. Justin McNeal, a Rapid City businessman, has announced his intention to challenge Rounds in the Republican primary election. Democrat Julian Beaudion, a Sioux Falls businessman and former state trooper, is running for his party's nomination, and independent candidate Brian Bengs of Hot Springs has also announced a bid.

South Dakota's primary election is June 2, and the general election is Nov. 3.

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

Iowa House sends CO2 eminent domain ban to Senate

South Dakota passed similar measure last year

BY: CAMI KOONS

House lawmakers voted 64-28 Wednesday to approve a bill that would block companies from using eminent domain to build carbon sequestration pipelines in Iowa.

The bill now goes to the Senate, where Senate Majority Leader Mike Klimesh has introduced his own bill aimed at addressing the eminent domain issue.

The House passed a similar bill last year, along with a more complex bill aimed at protecting property rights, limiting carbon sequestration pipelines and addressing issues with the Iowa Utilities Commission. Only the second bill was taken up, and ultimately passed, by the Senate before Gov. Kim Reynolds vetoed it.

This year's bill, House File 2104, was expedited by House Republicans who have been open in their opposition to the Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline, which was granted a permit and the right to eminent

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 16 of 76

domain by the Iowa Utilities Commission in 2024.

Opponents of the bill, including Summit Carbon Solutions, have said it will kill the project aimed at transporting carbon dioxide from biorefineries in Iowa and sequestering it underground. The Iowa corn and ethanol industries argue that without the pipeline, they are excluded from needed new markets.

Rep. Steven Holt, R-Denison, led the bill and said the use of government power to seize property "for a private economic development project is not constitutional."

Holt argued that if the government is to take private property, they have to prove that it serves a public purpose.

"The CO2 pipeline project, which, according to its supporters, will be a great benefit to agriculture and to our economy ... but that does not make it a public use project. It is not essential for the functioning of our society, and it serves no public purpose," Holt said.

Rep. Chad Ingels, R-Randalia, who shared that he is a fourth-generation farmer, said a "yes" vote on the bill was "not in the best interest of the public."

He argued that eminent domain has been allowed in Iowa for the construction of drainage ditches, agricultural tile lines and railroads. Eminent domain requires landowners to allow easements on their property for a "just price" set by a county commission.

"Through this process, it looks like previously, private companies have utilized eminent domain for a private gain, while also improving the public good," Ingels said.

Ingels argued that the market access the pipeline project would allow, for Iowa farmers who are in a downturned market, would be a "public good for all of Iowa."

"Having better markets for our products, worldwide markets for our products, is not only in my family's best interest ... It's in the best interest of our state and the young people wanting to come back and farm," Ingels said. "I believe with a yes vote, and if this was signed into law, it would block this project."

Ingels noted that since South Dakota enacted a law similar to HF 2104, the Summit project has not been able to move forward through the state.

The carbon pipeline and eminent domain issue held up legislative proceedings last year when a group of Republican senators refused to vote on key budget items until the Senate held debate on the issue.

Leading up to the start of session, lawmakers said they planned to prioritize the eminent domain issue and called for unity among Republican lawmakers.

Rep. Ross Wilburn, D-Ames, said he would vote against the bill, as he felt it didn't represent a "comprehensive" approach to the issue.

In subcommittee and committee hearings on the bill, Wilburn asked his colleagues what had changed since the year prior when the Senate was against the bill and the governor chose to veto it.

"Governor Reynolds, you missed an opportunity to show leadership and reach out to the minority leaders in the House and the Senate in a bipartisan way to come up with a solution to address property rights and economic development," Wilburn said during floor debate Wednesday.

Wilburn, along with 19 other House Democrats, voted against the bill.

Eight lawmakers were absent or did not vote on the issue.

Rep. Brian Lohse, R-Bondurant, also opposed the bill and said it creates "two, separate regulatory schemes" depending on the contents of a pipeline, and in doing so, "violates the protection clauses of the US and Iowa constitutions."

"If we're going to have regulatory schemes regulating underground pipelines, they have to be applied equally under the equal protection clauses of these constitutions," Lohse said.

On Tuesday, Klimesh introduced two bills related to the pipeline issue. One would allow all hazardous liquid pipeline operators to seek out willing landowners for pipeline easements, outside of their approved route, when there is an unwilling landowner in the path. The other would apply a severance tax on carbon dioxide transported by the pipeline.

Opponents of the pipeline, and proponents of the eminent domain ban, said Klimesh's bills did not give landowners the protections from eminent domain they feel is necessary.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 17 of 76

Holt, in his closing comments, argued that under current law, and with Summit Carbon Solutions' already approved permit from the Iowa Utilities Commission property owners who don't want the pipeline are not protected.

"Those who want the pipeline, they can sign voluntary easements, those who do not, have the constitutionally protected right to refuse — and the government has no right, in this case, to intervene," Holt said. "The precedent we will set, if we allow private property to be seized for a private economic development project will reverberate for decades to come, and could render property rights safeguards in our constitution meaningless for our children and our children's children."

This story was originally produced by Iowa Capital Dispatch, 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.

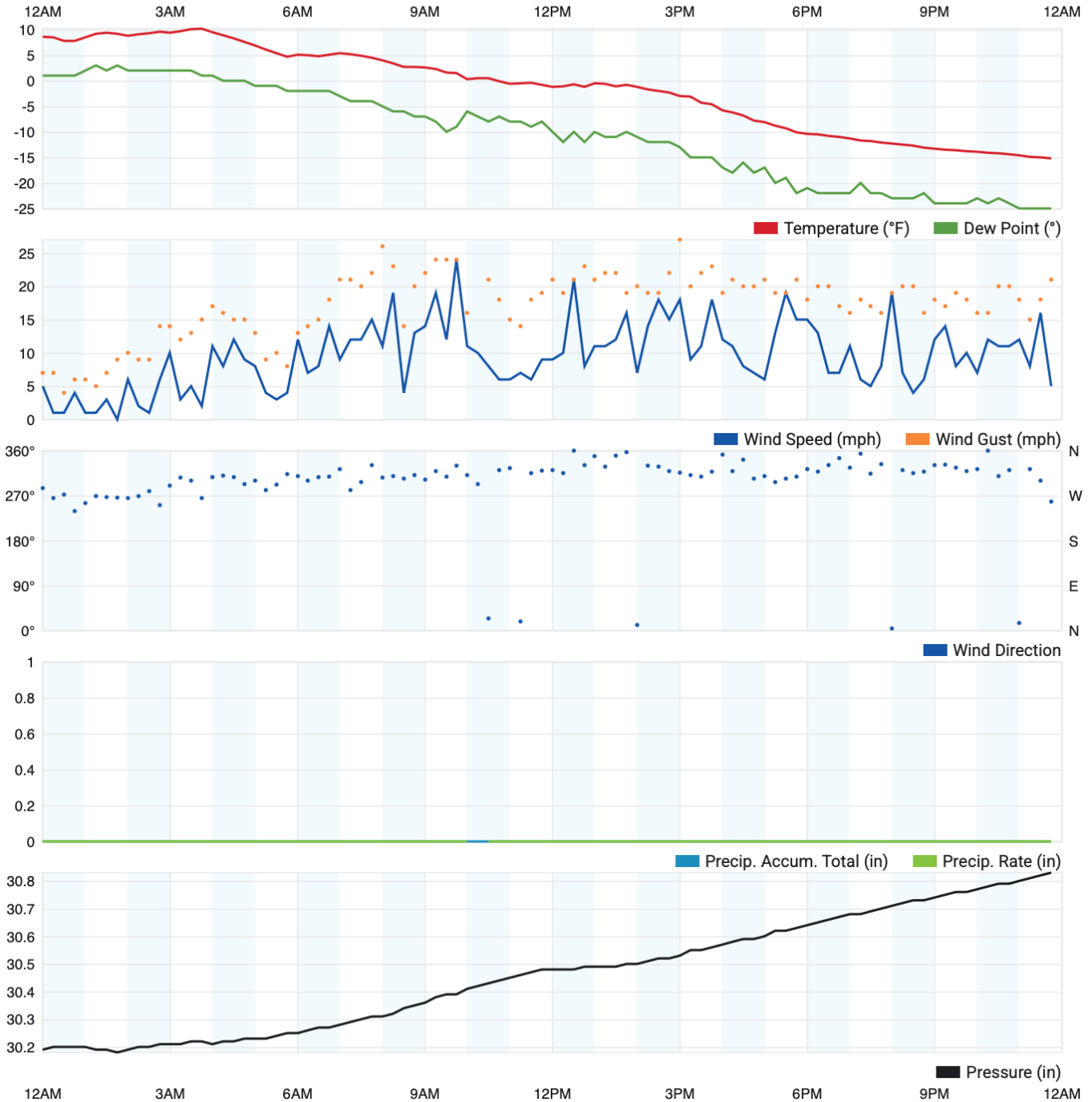
Cami Koons is an Iowa Capital Dispatch reporter covering agriculture and the environment. She previously worked at publications in Kansas and Missouri, covering rural affairs.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 18 of 76

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

January 22, 2026



Broton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 19 of 76

Extreme Cold...

Today

Tonight

Saturday

Saturday Night

Sunday



High: -6 °F

Low: -15 °F

High: 5 °F

Low: -8 °F

High: 1 °F

Cold

Mostly Cloudy

Cold

Mostly Cloudy

Cold



Extreme Cold Through This Afternoon

January 23, 2026

3:55 AM CST

Dangerously cold wind chills this morning, as low as -50° expected.

Key Messages

- An **Extreme Cold Warning** is in effect for portions of central, north central, and northeastern SD through western MN through this afternoon.
 - Dangerously cold wind chills** running as low as -50° this morning.
- A **Cold Weather Advisory** remains in effect for south central SD through this afternoon.
 - Dangerously cold wind chills** running as low as -35° this morning.
- At these temperatures, frostbite can occur on exposed skin in as little as 10 minutes.

What Has Changed?

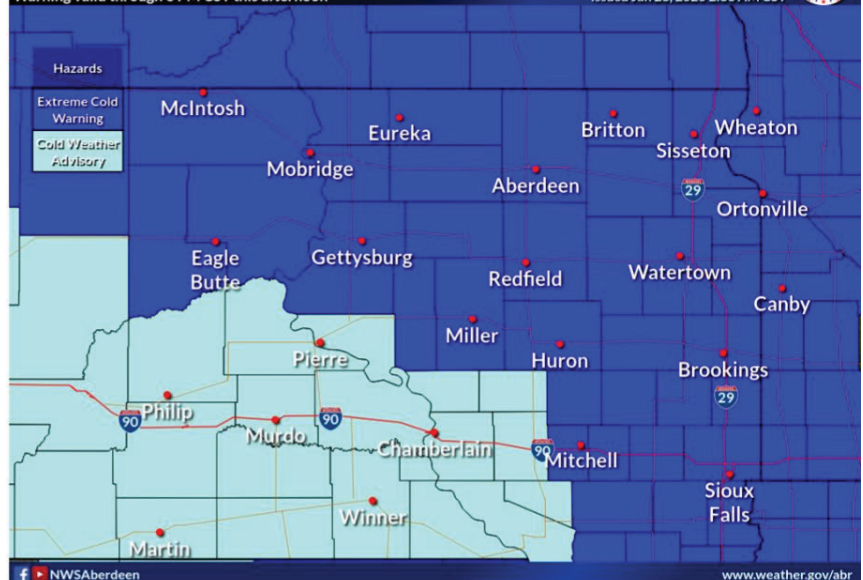
- Forecast Update. All Headlines remain the same.

Extreme Cold Warning

Warning valid through 3 PM CST this afternoon

Weather Forecast Office
Aberdeen, SD

Issued Jan 23, 2026 2:33 AM CST



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

An Extreme Cold Warning remains in effect for portions of central, north central, and northeastern SD into western MN through 3 PM CST this afternoon for dangerously cold wind chills as low as -50 degrees. A Cold Weather Advisory remains in effect for south central SD through 3 PM CST this afternoon for dangerously cold wind chills as low as -35 degrees. At these temperatures, frostbite can occur on exposed skin in as little as 10 minutes.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 20 of 76



Timing of Wind Chills Through This Afternoon

January 23, 2026
4:00 AM CST

Timing

- Arctic air overhead. **Coldest wind chills expected early this morning.**
 - Highlighted in the red box
- Wind chills during the day today will range in the **twenties and thirties below zero for most locations.**

Potential Impacts

- Avoid going outdoors whenever possible. **If you must go outside, dress in layers, including a hat, face mask, and gloves.**
- Frostbite can occur in as little as 10 minutes on exposed skin.

Minimum Wind Chill Forecast (°F)

	1/23 Fri						
	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm
Aberdeen	-40	-37	-34	-25	-16	-9	-10
Britton	-43	-40	-39	-30	-24	-16	-27
Chamberlain	-30	-30	-28	-21	-14	-15	-15
Clark	-44	-40	-38	-34	-26	-14	-25
Eagle Butte	-44	-40	-35	-26	-22	-24	-24
Eureka	-43	-45	-43	-34	-24	-13	-25
Gettysburg	-44	-41	-40	-30	-19	-20	-22
McIntosh	-46	-46	-42	-31	-20	-26	-27
Milbank	-38	-39	-35	-28	-24	-21	-24
Miller	-37	-36	-34	-25	-18	-18	-20
Mobridge	-43	-39	-34	-25	-7	-10	-22
Murdo	-33	-31	-27	-20	-16	-20	-21
Pierre	-34	-26	-24	-19	-11	-15	-15
Redfield	-39	-39	-35	-28	-20	-21	-24
Sisseton	-45	-43	-41	-32	-27	-15	-26
Watertown	-47	-42	-39	-32	-27	-25	-24
Webster	-48	-43	-39	-34	-28	-17	-26
Wheaton	-41	-41	-38	-34	-26	-16	-17

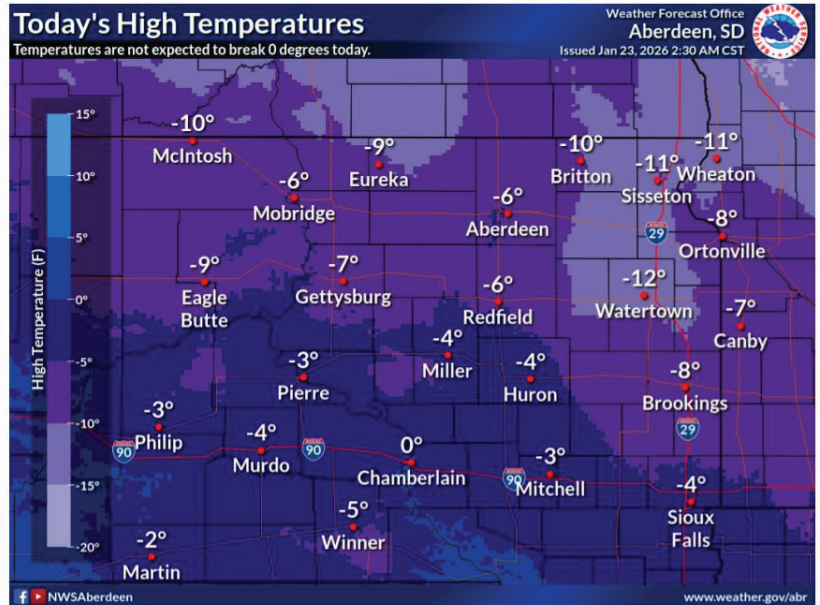


Near-Record Cold Today

January 23, 2026
4:02 AM CST

Forecast High Temperatures will come somewhat close to record cold in some locations.

City	Friday's High	Record Cold High	Record Cold High Year
Aberdeen	-6°	-14°	1936
Watertown	-12°	-10°	1936
Sisseton	-11°	-12°	1936
Mobridge	-6°	-7°	1966
Pierre	-3°	-6°	1966



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

DRESSING FOR COLD WEATHER

adding layers will help keep you warm as the temperature drops

CHILLY


- 1-2 layers
- long layer
- outer layer to keep out wind, rain
- warm shoes water proof

COLD

- 2-3 layers
- warm hat
- gloves
- outer layer to keep out wind, wet snow
- boots water proof
- 1-2 layers

EXTREME COLD

- 3+ layers 1 insulating
- warm hat
- face mask
- outer layer to keep out wind
- gloves
- boots water proof
- 2+ layers

 weather.gov/safety

Groton Daily Independent

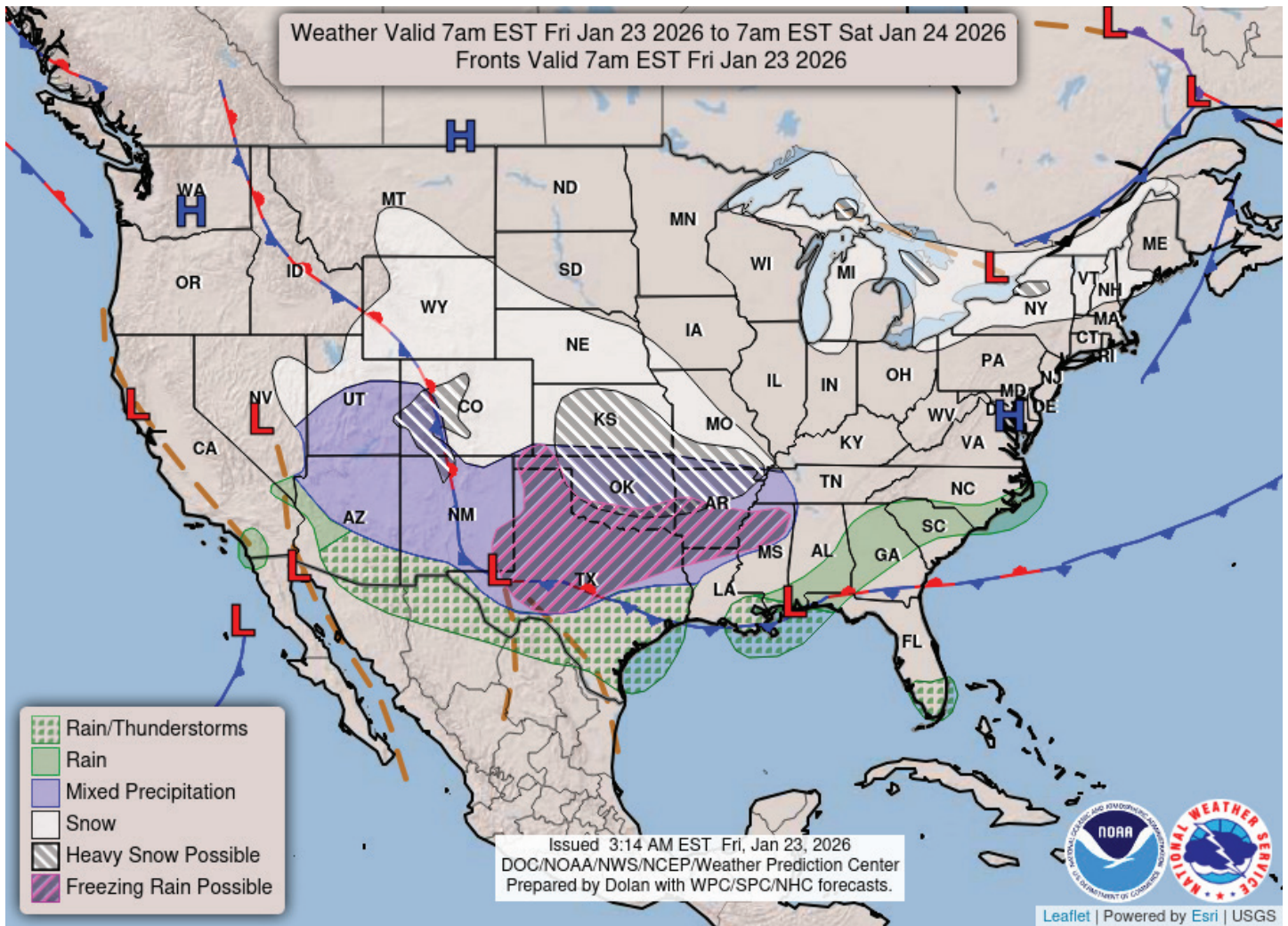
Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 22 of 76

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 10 °F at 3:37 AM
Low Temp: -15 °F at 11:18 PM
Wind: 29 mph at 2:51 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 60 in 1981
Record Low: -34 in 1897
Average High: 24
Average Low: 1
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.42
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.42
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:25 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:01 am



Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 23 of 76

Today in Weather History

January 23, 1969: Intermittent freezing rain on the 20th to the 22nd changed to snow on the 22nd, which continued through the 24th. Snowfall of 2 to 6 inches fell across Minnesota and far northeast South Dakota. Blizzard conditions developed on the 23rd and 24th with 30 to 45 mph winds and temperatures dropping to below zero by the 24th. Most of the traffic was halted, with many roads blocked from snow drifting. Some rural roads had been blocked for 3 to 4 weeks. Stranded motorists were common in the area. Some snowfall amounts included 2 inches at Wilmot and Victor, 3 inches at Milbank and Artichoke Lake, and 4 inches at Clear Lake.

1556: An earthquake in Shaanxi, China, kills an estimated 830,000 people. The estimated 8.0 to 8.3 magnitude earthquake struck in the middle of a densely populated area where many homes were a form of an earth shelter dwelling known as a yaodong. Much is known about this disaster as a scholar named Qin Keda survived the earthquake and recorded the details.

1780 — The coldest day of the coldest month of record in the northeastern U.S. A British Army thermometer in New York City registered a reading of 16 degrees below zero. During that infamous hard winter the harbor was frozen solid for five weeks, and the port was cut off from sea supply. (David Ludlum)

1812: A second major series of earthquakes was felt as part of the New Madrid Shocks of the winter of 1811-1812. Many observers reported that the January 23 shocks were as strong as the main earthquake on December 16th of the preceding year.

1916: Browning, Montana, saw the temperature plummet 100 degrees in 24 hours on January 23-24, from a relatively mild 44 to a bone-chilling 56 degrees below zero.

1969: An F4 tornado cut a 120-mile long path from Jefferson through Copiah, Simpson, Smith, Scott, and Newton Counties in Mississippi, killing 32 and injuring 241 others. Property damage was estimated at \$2 million. An inbound Delta Airlines aircraft reported a hook echo on its scope with this storm.

1971: Alaska, and the US, lowest official temp, -80F (-62.2C), was set at Prospect Creek, a Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline construction camp. Fun fact: the low was initially recorded as -79F but adjusted after thermometer calibration.

1987 — Strong winds ushered bitterly cold air into the north central U.S., and produced snow squalls in the Great Lakes Region. Snowfall totals in northwest Lower Michigan ranged up to 17 inches in Leelanau County. Wind chill temperatures reached 70 degrees below zero at Sault Ste Marie MI and Hibbing MN. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Northeastern Colorado experienced its most severe windstorm in years. A wind gust to 92 mph was recorded at Boulder CO before the anemometer blew away, and in the mountains, a wind gust to 120 mph was reported at Mines Peak. The high winds blew down a partially constructed viaduct east of Boulder, as nine unanchored concrete girders, each weighing forty-five tons, were blown off their supports. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Low pressure brought heavy snow to Wyoming, with 18 inches reported at the Shoshone National Forest, and 17 inches in the Yellowstone Park area. Gunnison CO, with a low of 19 degrees below zero, was the cold spot in the nation for the twelfth day in a row. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — A Pacific cold front brought strong and gusty winds to the northwestern U.S. Winds in southeastern Idaho gusted to 62 mph at Burley. Strong winds also prevailed along the eastern slopes of the northern and central Rockies. Winds in Wyoming gusted to 74 mph in Goshen County. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Blessing Others

Our choice to bless can have far-reaching impact.

Psalms 5:11-12: 11 But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You.

12 For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.

Have you ever sneezed in public? Someone usually says, “Bless you!” Stop and think about what that common expression actually means—literally, it’s a request for divine favor. If we truly want blessing to occur, there are several things we can do.

First, we can bless people by praying for them, and we should be specific when bringing petitions to the Lord. Imagine how others will be encouraged when they see that we cared enough to pray thoughtfully—and God cared enough to fulfill the request.

Second, we can ask the Lord’s favor on events and situations. Of course, He will respond according to His will. For example, it is appropriate to request that God’s presence be powerfully evident in a church service and that He touch those present.

Third, we can bless God (Psalm 104:1). We do this by expressing praise and thanksgiving for His character and what He’s done in both our life and the lives of people for whom we intercede.

The Lord provides a vast array of good gifts, and the desire for such benefits is normal and universal. In fact, as we yearn for divine blessings, why not apply the golden rule as a motivation to bless others—including God Himself—through prayer and service?

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

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 25 of 76

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

- All prices listed include 6.2% Sales Tax
- Black & White \$52.00/year
 - Colored \$80.00/year
 - Colored \$49.00/6 months
 - E-Weekly* \$35.00/year

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
City _____
State, Zip Code _____
E-mail _____
Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent
P.O. Box 34
Groton, SD 57445-0034
or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent www.397news.com Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- 1 Month \$16.00
- 3 Months..... \$28.00
- 6 Months..... \$38.00
- 9 Months..... \$52.00
- 12 Months..... \$60.00

Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
City _____
State, Zip Code _____
Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____
Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul

Pay with Venmo: @paperpaul Phone Number to Confirm: 7460

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 26 of 76



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.20.26

8 47 50 56 70 12

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$266,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 11 Mins 38 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.21.26

11 30 39 48 51 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$13,560,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 26 Mins 38 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.22.26

8 20 30 42 46 15

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 41 Mins 38 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.21.26

11 15 25 27 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$214,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 41 Mins 39 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.21.26

16 20 28 36 52 12

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 10 Mins 39 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.21.26

11 26 27 53 55 12

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 10 Mins 39 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 27 of 76

News from the **AP** Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Avon 60, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 30
Bennett County 68, Todd County 31
Brandon Valley 84, T F Riggs High School 33
Canton 49, Parker/Marion 29
Centerville 65, Sioux Falls Lutheran 14
Clark-Willow Lake 50, Aberdeen Roncalli 38
Dell Rapids 60, Garretson 22
Elkton-Lake Benton 75, Colman-Egan 36
Freeman 56, Scotland/Menno 31
Hanson 47, Canistota 25
Ipswich 39, Faulkton 37
Irene-Wakonda 54, Alcester-Hudson 45
Kadoka 37, New Underwood 31
Kingsley-Pierson, Iowa 70, Elk Point-Jefferson 57
Lennox 55, West Central 28
Lyman 54, Burke 24
Mahpiya Lúta Red Cloud 43, Spearfish 18
Miller 48, Chamberlain 20
Mitchell 59, Tea 50
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 47, Platte-Geddes 39
Northwestern 44, Leola-Frederick High School 34
Parkston 55, Bon Homme 25
Rapid City Christian 87, Lead-Deadwood 26
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket 52, Highmore-Harrold 43
Santee, Neb. 70, Marty 58
Sioux Falls Christian 72, Vermillion 47
Sioux Falls Jefferson 46, Harrisburg 30
St. Francis Indian 95, Crazy Horse 17
Sturgis Brown High School 49, Custer 31
Sully Buttes 48, Stanley County 32
Tripp-Delmont-Armour 64, Gregory 52
Viborg-Hurley 59, Baltic 58, OT
Waverly-South Shore 57, Langford 40
Winner 44, Belle Fourche 39
281 Conference Tournament=
Fifth Place=
Hitchcock-Tulare 60, Iroquois-Lake Preston 52
Seventh Place=
James Valley Christian School 37, Sunshine Bible Academy 25
Third Place=
Wolsey-Wessington 51, Wessington Springs 43
Panhandle Conference Tournament=
Consolation=
Edgemont 56, Hemingford, Neb. 52, OT
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 28 of 76

Webster vs. Sisseton, ppd.

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

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Brandon Valley 56, T F Riggs High School 38
Clark-Willow Lake 64, Aberdeen Roncalli 28
Dell Rapids 77, Madison 57
Elkton-Lake Benton 60, Colman-Egan 39
Ethan 49, Corsica/Stickney 34
Freeman 70, Scotland/Menno 42
Hanson 61, Canistota 44
Leola-Frederick High School 69, Northwestern 54
Lyman 74, Burke 33
Marty 97, Santee, Neb. 30
Miller 60, Chamberlain 47
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 70, Platte-Geddes 35
North Central 48, Herried-Selby 36
Parker/Marion 76, Canton 59
Parkston 55, Bon Homme 29
Sioux Falls Lutheran 41, Centerville 40
Sioux Valley 57, Deubrook 49
Spearfish 54, Mahpiya Luta Red Cloud 39
Sturgis Brown High School 49, Custer 31
Viborg-Hurley 52, Baltic 51
West Central 45, Lennox 33
281 Conference Tournament=
Seventh Place=
Highmore-Harrod 66, Sunshine Bible Academy 29
Fifth Place=
James Valley Christian School 62, Hitchcock-Tulare 53
Third Place=
Wolsey-Wessington 62, Iroquois-Lake Preston 52
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=
Webster vs. Sisseton, ppd.

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

Janowski puts up 21, St. Thomas takes down South Dakota State 74-69

By The Associated Press undefined

SAINT PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Nick Janowski and Carter Bjerke each scored 21 points as St. Thomas beat South Dakota State 74-69 on Thursday night.

Janowski also contributed six rebounds for the Tommies (16-5, 5-1 Summit League). Bjerke went 8 of 13 from the field (5 for 8 from 3-point range). Nolan Minessale shot 4 of 10 from the field, including 1 for 6 from 3-point range, and went 5 for 6 from the line to finish with 14 points.

The Jackrabbits (10-11, 3-3) were led by Joe Saylor, who recorded 24 points. Matthew Mors added 12 points and three steals. Damon Wilkinson had 10 points and seven rebounds.

_____The Associated Press created this story using technology provided by Data Skrive and data from Sportradar.

Iranian prosecutor denies Trump's claim 800 prisoners were spared execution

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's top prosecutor on Friday called U.S. President Donald Trump's repeated claims that he halted the hangings of 800 detained protesters there "completely false." Meanwhile, the overall death toll from a bloody crackdown on nationwide demonstrations rose to at least 5,002, activists said.

Activists fear many more are dead. They struggle to confirm information as the most comprehensive internet blackout in Iran's history has crossed the two-week mark.

Tensions remain high between the United States and Iran as an American aircraft carrier group moves closer to the Middle East, something Trump likened to an "armada" in comments to journalists late Thursday.

Analysts say a military buildup could give Trump the option to carry out strikes, though so far he's avoided that despite repeated warnings to Tehran. The mass execution of prisoners had been one of his red lines for military force — the other being the killing of peaceful demonstrators.

"While President Trump now appears to have backtracked, likely under pressure from regional leaders and cognizant that airstrikes alone would be insufficient to implode the regime, military assets continue to be moved into the region, indicating kinetic action may still happen," New York-based think tank the Soufan Center said in an analysis Friday.

Prosecutor denies Trump claim

Trump has repeatedly said Iran halted the execution of 800 people detained in the protests, without elaborating on the source of the claim. On Friday, Iran's top prosecutor Mohammad Movahedi strongly denied that in comments carried by the judiciary's Mizan news agency.

"This claim is completely false; no such number exists, nor has the judiciary made any such decision," Movahedi said.

His remarks suggested that Iran's Foreign Ministry, led by Abbas Araghchi, may have offered that figure to Trump. Araghchi has had a direct line to U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff and conducted multiple rounds of negotiations over Iran's nuclear program with him.

"We have a separation of powers, the responsibilities of each institution are clearly defined, and we do not, under any circumstances, take instructions from foreign powers," Movahedi said.

Judiciary officials have called some of those being held "mohareb" — or "enemies of God." That charge carries the death penalty. It had been used along with others to carry out mass executions in 1988 that reportedly killed at least 5,000 people.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Javad Haji Ali Akbari, the Friday prayer leader in Tehran, mocked Trump as a "yellow-faced, yellow-haired and disgraced man" who is "like a dog that only barks."

"That foolish man has resorted to threatening the nation, especially over what he said about Iran's leader," the cleric said in comments aired by Iranian state radio. "If any harm were to occur, all your interests and bases in the region would become clear and precise targets of Iranian forces."

Death toll rises

The latest death toll was given by the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, which reported that 4,716 of the dead were demonstrators, 203 were government-affiliated, 43 were children and 40 were civilians not taking part in the protests. It added that more than 26,800 people had been detained in a widening arrest campaign by authorities.

The group's figures have been accurate in previous unrest in Iran and rely on a network of activists in Iran to verify deaths. That death toll exceeds that of any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades, and recalls the chaos surrounding Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iran's government offered its first death toll Wednesday, saying 3,117 people were killed. It added that 2,427 of the dead in the demonstrations that began Dec. 28 were civilians and security forces, with the rest being "terrorists." In the past, Iran's theocracy has undercounted or not reported fatalities from unrest.

The Associated Press has been unable to independently assess the death toll, in part because of authori-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 30 of 76

ties cutting access to the internet and blocking international calls into the country.

US warships on the move

The American military meanwhile has moved more military assets toward the Mideast, including the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and associated warships traveling with it from the South China Sea.

A U.S. Navy official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military movements, said Thursday that the Lincoln strike group is in the Indian Ocean.

Trump said Thursday aboard Air Force One that the U.S. is moving the ships toward Iran "just in case" he wants to take action.

"We have a massive fleet heading in that direction and maybe we won't have to use it," Trump said.

Trump also mentioned the multiple rounds of talks that American officials had with Iran over its nuclear program prior to Israel launching a 12-day war against the Islamic Republic in June, which saw U.S. warplanes bomb Iranian nuclear sites. He threatened Iran with military action that would make earlier U.S. strikes against its uranium enrichment sites "look like peanuts."

"They should have made a deal before we hit them," Trump said.

The U.K. Defense Ministry separately said that its joint Eurofighter Typhoon fighter jet squadron with Qatar, 12 Squadron, "deployed to the (Persian) Gulf for defensive purposes noting regional tensions."

Iran shows off drones in Israel threat

Iran commemorated "the Day of the Guardian" on Friday, an annual event for its paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, which was key in putting down the nationwide protests.

To mark the day, an Iranian state television channel aired a typically religious talk show Thursday night that instead saw its cleric and prayer singers look at Iranian military drones. They fired up the engines of several of the Shahed drones, one version of which has been used extensively by Russia in its war on Ukraine.

A man identified as a member of the security forces, who wore a surgical mask and sunglasses during the telecast to hide his identity, also made a threat in mangled Hebrew toward Israel, trying to say: "We are closer to you than you think."

Japan will hold an early election next month as Takaichi aims to capitalize on her popularity

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi dissolved the lower house of parliament on Friday, paving the way for an early election on Feb. 8.

The move is an attempt to capitalize on her popularity to help the governing party regain ground after major losses in recent years, but it will delay parliamentary approval for a budget that aims at boosting a struggling economy and addressing soaring prices.

Takaichi, elected in October as Japan's first female leader, has been in office only three months, but she has seen strong approval ratings of about 70%.

Takaichi's Liberal Democratic Party could still face some challenges as it reels from a series of scandals about corruption and the party's past ties to the Unification Church. But it's not clear if the new opposition Centrist Reform Alliance can attract moderate voters, while opposition parties are still too splintered to pose a serious threat to the LDP.

Takaichi is also seeing rising animosity with China, since making remarks on Taiwan. And U.S. President Donald Trump wants her to spend more on weapons, as Washington and Beijing pursue military superiority in the region.

The dissolution of the 465-member lower House of Representatives paves the way for a 12-day campaign that officially starts Tuesday. When Speaker Fukushima Nukaga declared the dissolution, lawmakers stood up, shouted banzai — "long live" — three times and rushed out to prepare for the campaign.

Hopes for a majority

Takaichi's plan for an early election aims to capitalize on her popularity to win a governing majority in

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 31 of 76

the lower House, the more powerful of Japan's two-chamber parliament called the National Diet.

The scandal-tainted LDP and its coalition had a slim majority in the lower House after an election loss in 2024. The coalition lacks a majority in the upper House of Councillors and relies on winning votes from opposition members to pass its agenda.

Opposition leaders criticized Takaichi for delaying passage of a budget needed to fund key economic measures.

"I believe that the only option is for the people, as sovereign citizens, to decide whether Sanae Takaichi should be prime minister," she told a news conference Monday when announcing plans for the election. "I'm staking my career as prime minister" on it.

Takaichi, a hard-line conservative, wants to highlight differences with her centrist predecessor, Shigeru Ishiba.

Takaichi stresses that voters need to judge her fiscal spending moves, further military buildup and tougher immigration policies to make Japan "strong and prosperous."

While an upbeat and decisive image has earned her strong approval ratings and fans of her personal style, the LDP isn't popular as it recovers from a political funds scandal. Many traditional LDP voters have shifted to emerging far-right populist opposition parties, such as the anti-globalist Sanseito.

China, Trump and corruption scandals

Meanwhile, Japan faces escalating tensions with China after Takaichi made remarks suggesting that Japan could become involved if China takes military action against Taiwan, a self-governing island that Beijing claims as its own. A furious China has increased economic and diplomatic retribution.

Takaichi wants to push further a military buildup and spending increases, while Trump has pressured Japan to spend more on defense.

Divided opposition

Takaichi says she needs a mandate to push policies she's agreed on with her new coalition partner, the right-wing Japan Innovation Party, or JIP. They struck a deal in October to pursue goals that include a stronger military, continuing male-only imperial succession, and accelerating the reactivation of offline nuclear reactors.

Takaichi struck a deal with the JIP after the LDP's longtime ally Komeito, a Buddhist-backed centrist party, left the governing bloc over her ideological views and reluctance to pursue anti-corruption measures. With the new partner's help, she secured just enough votes to become prime minister.

Komeito turned to the main liberal-leaning opposition, the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, to form the Centrist Reform Alliance just in time for the election.

"Now is our chance to start the centrist movement," said Yoshihiko Noda, a former prime minister and leader of the Constitutional Democrats.

He said the new alliance seeks to achieve a diverse, gender equal and inclusive society with "people-first politics," speaking at joint news conference with co-leader Tetsuo Saito, head of Komeito.

As divisions and confrontations spread globally and economic disparity widens at home, the new group is promising a "realistic" security policy and efforts to achieve a nuclear weapons-free world.

Opposition groups in Japan are seen as too splintered to win an election, and so far, polling for the alliance isn't promising. But Komeito's ability to turn out votes from the Soka Gakkai sect makes it a force to be reckoned with.

Takaichi's promises

Takaichi is focusing on the economy, looking to attract voters with measures to address rising prices and stagnant wages, as well as support for low-income households.

But the security hawk has also pledged to revise security and defense policies to further strengthen the military, and to eliminate arms export restrictions to allow more sales and develop the Japanese defense industry.

Her party is also vowing tougher immigration rules and restrictions on foreigners living in Japan to address growing anti-foreign sentiment. Earlier this week, the LDP proposed new immigration policies including

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 32 of 76

tougher requirements for foreign property owners and a cap on the number of foreign residents in Japan.

US futures slip and world shares are mixed as Japan keeps its key interest rate unchanged

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

European shares were mixed after Asian markets advanced Friday as calm was restored after a tumultuous week.

U.S. futures turned lower, with the contracts for the S&P 500 and the Dow industrials down 0.1%.

Germany's DAX was little changed at 24,852.07, while the CAC 40 in Paris lost 0.2% to 8,129.68. Britain's FTSE 100 edged 0.1% higher.

In Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 picked up 0.3% to 53,846.87 after the Bank of Japan kept its key interest rate unchanged, as expected. The central bank just raised the policy rate to 0.75% in December. Wrapping up its policy meeting, it also slightly upgraded its estimates for future inflation and economic growth.

The Japanese yen rose against the U.S. dollar, which was trading at 158.15 yen, up from 158.42 yen.

"With underlying inflation price pressures remaining firm, we expect the Bank of Japan to resume its tightening cycle in the coming months," Abhijit Surya of Capital Economics said in a commentary.

Chinese markets also saw moderate gains. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong added 0.5% to 26,749.51, while the Shanghai Composite index was up 0.3%, at 4,136.16.

South Korea's Kospi climbed 0.8% to 4,990.07. The benchmark had topped 5,000 for the first time on Thursday but fell back later in the day.

In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 edged 0.1% higher to 8,860.10.

Taiwan's Taiex jumped 0.7% and the Sensex in India fell 0.9%.

On Thursday, the S&P 500 climbed 0.5%, extending its rally after U.S. President Donald Trump called off tariffs on European countries that he said opposed his calls for U.S. control of Greenland.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 0.6% and the Nasdaq composite gained 0.9% to 23,436.02.

Details were sparse about a deal on Greenland that Trump said he reached with the head of NATO, leaving investors wary of what's to come. It's not signed yet.

It was the latest example of Trump making a big, initial threat, only to pull back after a dramatic reaction in financial markets. The pattern has led to the "TACO" acronym, suggesting that "Trump Always Chickens Out" if markets react strongly enough. Tuesday's drop for the U.S. stock market was the worst since October and large enough that Trump, who often takes credit when Wall Street is doing well, acknowledged "the dip."

JPMorgan Chase rose 0.5% after a lawsuit filed by Trump against the bank caused minor ripples for its stock. Trump accused JPMorgan Chase of closing his accounts for political reasons after he left office in 2021.

Treasury yields held relatively steady, suggesting foreign investors weren't rushing out of the U.S. bond market.

Yields got some support from reports on the U.S. economy's strength that came in better than expected. One said fewer U.S. workers applied for unemployment benefits last week than economists expected in a potential signal that the pace of layoffs remains low. A second suggested the U.S. economy grew at a faster rate during the summer than the government initially estimated.

A third said that inflation in November was close to economists' expectations, while spending by U.S. consumers was a touch better than expected.

Global markets have calmed following an easing of long-term Japanese government bonds, which had spiked early in the week on worries that Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi might make moves that would add heavily to the government's already big debt.

The 40-year Japanese government bond yield slipped back after hitting a record of more than 4%. It was trading at 3.947% early Friday.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 33 of 76

In other dealings early Friday, the price of gold rose 0.1%, remaining close to the \$5,000 level. Silver gained 1.6%. Prices of such precious metals often rise when investors are looking for something safer to own in times of uncertainty.

U.S. benchmark crude oil added 69 cents to \$60.05 per barrel, while Brent crude, the international standard, was up 71 cents at \$64.77 per barrel.

The euro slipped to \$1.1741 from \$1.1755.

TikTok finalizes a deal to form a new American entity

By KAITLYN HUAMANI AP Technology Reporter

TikTok has finalized a deal to create a new American entity, avoiding the looming threat of a ban in the United States that has been in discussion for years on the platform now used by more than 200 million Americans.

The social video platform company signed agreements with major investors including Oracle, Silver Lake and the Emirati investment firm MGX to form the new TikTok U.S. joint venture. The new version will operate under "defined safeguards that protect national security through comprehensive data protections, algorithm security, content moderation and software assurances for U.S. users," the company said in a statement Thursday. American TikTok users can continue using the same app.

President Donald Trump praised the deal in a Truth Social post, thanking Chinese leader Xi Jinping specifically "for working with us and, ultimately, approving the Deal." Trump add that he hopes "that long into the future I will be remembered by those who use and love TikTok."

Adam Presser, who previously worked as TikTok's head of operations and trust and safety, will lead the new venture as its CEO. He will work alongside a seven-member, majority-American board of directors that includes TikTok's CEO Shou Chew.

The deal ends years of uncertainty about the fate of the popular video-sharing platform in the United States. After wide bipartisan majorities in Congress passed — and President Joe Biden signed — a law that would ban TikTok in the U.S. if it did not find a new owner in the place of China's ByteDance, the platform was set to go dark on the law's January 2025 deadline. For a several hours, it did. But on his first day in office, President Donald Trump signed an executive order to keep it running while his administration sought an agreement for the sale of the company.

"China's position on TikTok has been consistent and clear," Guo Jiakun, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson in Beijing, said Friday about the TikTok deal and Trump's Truth Social post, echoing an earlier statement from the Chinese embassy in Washington.

Apart from an emphasis on data protection, with U.S. user data being stored locally in a system run by Oracle, the joint venture will also focus on TikTok's algorithm. The content recommendation formula, which feeds users specific videos tailored to their preferences and interests, will be retrained, tested and updated on U.S. user data, the company said in its announcement.

The algorithm has been a central issue in the security debate over TikTok. China previously maintained the algorithm must remain under Chinese control by law. But the U.S. regulation passed with bipartisan support said any divestment of TikTok must mean the platform cuts ties — specifically the algorithm — with ByteDance. Under the terms of this deal, ByteDance would license the algorithm to the U.S. entity for retraining.

The law prohibits "any cooperation with respect to the operation of a content recommendation algorithm" between ByteDance and a new potential American ownership group, so it is unclear how ByteDance's continued involvement in this arrangement will play out.

"Who controls TikTok in the U.S. has a lot of sway over what Americans see on the app," said Anupam Chander, a professor of law and technology at Georgetown University.

Oracle, Silver Lake and MGX are the three managing investors, each holding a 15% share. Other investors include the investment firm of Michael Dell, the billionaire founder of Dell Technologies. ByteDance retains 19.9% of the joint venture.

Minnesota gears up for anti-immigration enforcement protest Friday despite dangerous cold

By GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A vast network of labor unions, progressive organizations and clergy has been urging Minnesotans to stay away from work, school and stores Friday to protest against immigration enforcement in the state.

"We really, really want I.C.E. to leave Minnesota, and they're not going to leave Minnesota unless there's a ton of pressure on them," said Kate Havelin of Indivisible Twin Cities, one of the more than 100 groups that is mobilizing. "They shouldn't be roaming any streets in our country just the way they are now."

The Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul have seen daily protests since Renee Good was fatally shot by a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer during an operation on Jan. 7. Federal law enforcement officers have surged in the area for weeks and have repeatedly squared off with community members and activists who track their movements online and in streets.

On Thursday, a prominent civil rights attorney and at least two other people involved in an anti-immigration enforcement protest that disrupted a Sunday service at a Minnesota church were arrested.

Vice President JD Vance visited Minneapolis to meet with ICE officials. He said repeatedly that he believed the fraught situation in Minneapolis would improve upon better cooperation from state and local officials, and he encouraged protests to remain peaceful.

Friday's mobilization was planned as the largest coordinated protest action to date, including a march in downtown Minneapolis despite dangerously cold temperatures that the National Weather Service forecast in the single to double digits below zero (-20 to -30 degrees Celsius).

While organizations have asked participants to prepare for the cold, Havelin compared the presence of immigration enforcement to just such winter weather warnings.

"Minnesotans understand that when we're in a snow emergency ... we all have to respond and it makes us do things differently," she said. "And what's happening with ICE in our community, in our state, means that we can't respond as business as usual."

More than a hundred small businesses in the Twin Cities, largely coffee shops and restaurants, said they would close in solidarity or donate part of their profits, organizers said.

Ethnic businesses especially have lost sales during enforcement surges as both workers and customers stay away fearing they would be detained.

But some are deciding to close anyway, preferring to take a stance in solidarity rather than the "unscheduled interruption" of having agents apprehend staff, said Luis Argueta of Unidos MN, a civil rights group.

Many schools were planning to be closed for a variety of reasons. The University of Minnesota, which has about 50,000 students enrolled, said there would be no in-person classes because of the extreme cold warning, and the St. Paul public school district said there would no classes for the same reason. Minneapolis Public Schools were also scheduled to be closed Friday "for a teacher record keeping day."

Clergy planned to join the march as well as hold prayer services and fasting, according to a delegation of representatives of faith traditions ranging from Buddhist to Jewish, Lutheran to Muslim.

Bishop Dwayne Royster, leader of the progressive organization Faith in Action, arrived in Minnesota on Wednesday from Washington, D.C.

"We want ICE out of Minnesota," he said. "We want them out of all the cities around the country where they're exercising extreme overreach."

Royster said at least 50 of his network's faith-based organizers from around the U.S. were joining in the protest.

About 10 faith leaders were planning to travel to Minnesota from Los Angeles while others from the same group planned a solidarity rally in California, said one of the organizers there.

"It was a very harrowing experience," said the Rev. Jennifer Gutierrez of the large enforcement operation in Los Angeles last year. "We believe God is on the side of migrants."

Canada's Carney fires back at Trump after Davos speech

By ROB GILLIES Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney responded to U.S. President Donald Trump comment that “Canada lives because of the United States” on Thursday by saying Canada thrives because of Canadian values.

Carney said Canada can show the world that the future doesn't have to be autocratic after returning from Davos where he gave a speech that garnered widespread attention.

In Davos at the World Economic Forum, Carney condemned coercion by great powers on smaller countries without mentioning Trump's name.

Upon returning home to Canada, Carney responded to Trump directly by referencing Trump's remarks in Davos.

“Canada lives because of the United States,” Trump said. “Remember that, Mark, the next time you make your statements.”

“Canada doesn't live because of the United States. Canada thrives because we are Canadian,” Carney responded Thursday.

Carney said Canada and the U.S. have built a remarkable partnership in the areas of economy, security and rich cultural exchange, but said “we are masters in our home, this is our own country, it's our future, the choice is up to us.”

Trump later revoked his invitation to Carney to join his Board of Peace.

“Dear Prime Minister Carney: Please let this Letter serve to represent that the Board of Peace is withdrawing its invitation to you regarding Canada's joining, what will be, the most prestigious Board of Leaders ever assembled, at any time,” Trump posted on social media.

Carney left Davos before Trump inaugurated his Board of Peace to lead efforts at maintaining a ceasefire in Israel's war with Hamas.

Trump has talked about making Canada the 51st state and posted this week an altered image of a map of the U.S. that includes Canada, Greenland, Venezuela and Cuba as part of its territory.

Trump said in Davos that Canada gets many “freebies” from the U.S. and “should be grateful.” He said Carney's Davos speech showed he “wasn't so grateful.”

Trump said Canada wants to participate in “Golden Dome” — a multibillion dollar missile defense system that he says will be operational before his term ends in 2029.

In a speech before a cabinet retreat in Quebec City, Carney said staying true to Canada's values is key to maintaining its sovereignty.

“We can show that another way is possible, that the arc of history isn't destined to be warped toward authoritarianism and exclusion; it can still bend toward progress and justice,” Carney said.

Carney said “Canada must be a beacon — an example to a world at sea.”

Carney said in a time of rising populism and ethnic nationalism, Canada can show how diversity is a strength, not a weakness.

“There are billions of people who aspire to what we have built: a pluralistic society that works,” Carney said.

He said Canada delivers shared prosperity and has a democracy that chooses to protect the vulnerable against the powerful.

“It's a great country for everyone. It is the greatest country in the world to be a regular person. You don't have to be born rich, or to a landed family. You don't have to be a certain color or worship a certain god,” he said.

U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick earlier complained about Carney's speech at the World Economic Forum.

“Give me a break,” Lutnick said on Bloomberg TV. “They have the second best deal in the world and all

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 36 of 76

I got to do is listen to this guy whine and complain.”

Canada has been shielded from the worst impacts of Trump’s tariffs by the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement on trade, known as USMCA, but the agreement is up for a mandatory review this year.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a potential Democratic presidential candidate in 2028, told the forum that multiple leaders in the United States sent him transcripts of Carney’s speech.

“I respect what Carney did because he had courage of convictions. He stood up and I think we need to stand up in America and call this out with clarity,” Newsom said.

“We can lose our republic as we know it. Our country can become unrecognizable.”

Newsom said that fact that Carney came back from China with a deal to introduce low, cost high quality electric vehicles into Canada, not made from Michigan, but from overseas shows how reckless Trump’s foreign policy is.

“It’s a remarkable thing to break down 80-plus years of alliances,” he said.

Immigrants often don’t open the door to ICE, but that may no longer stop officers

By JULIE WATSON and AMY TAXIN Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Since coming to the United States 30 years ago from Mexico, Fernando Perez said U.S. immigration officers have stopped by his home numerous times, but he has never once answered the door.

“There are rules and I know them,” said Perez, speaking in a mix of English and Spanish in a Home Depot parking lot where he has routinely sought work as a day laborer from contractors and people renovating their homes.

Over the decades it has become common knowledge in immigrant communities across the country to not open the door for federal immigration officers unless they show a warrant signed by a judge. The Supreme Court has long held that the Constitution’s Fourth Amendment against unreasonable search and seizure prohibits the government’s forced entry into someone’s home.

As a result, immigration officers have been forced to adapt by making arrests in public, which often requires long hours of surveillance outside homes as they wait to nab someone walking to the street.

But an internal Immigration and Customs Enforcement memo obtained by The Associated Press states immigration officers can forcibly enter people’s homes without a judge’s warrant, marking a dramatic shift that could upend the legal advice given to immigrants for decades.

The shift comes as President Donald Trump’s administration dramatically expands immigration arrests nationwide under a mass deportation campaign that is already reshaping enforcement tactics in cities such as Minneapolis.

Perez said officers in the past would knock, wait and then move on.

“But if they are going to start coming into my home, where I am paying the rent — they are not paying the rent — that’s the last straw,” he said.

Most immigration arrests have been carried out under administrative warrants, documents issued by immigration authorities that authorize an arrest. Traditionally they do not permit officers to enter private spaces without consent. Only warrants signed by independent judges have carried that authority.

It is unclear how broadly the memo’s directive has been applied in immigration enforcement operations. AP witnessed ICE officers ramming through the front door of a Liberian man’s home in Minneapolis on Jan. 11 with only an administrative warrant, wearing heavy tactical gear and with their rifles drawn.

Democratic U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut is demanding congressional hearings on the ICE memo and calling on Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem for an explanation.

“Every American should be terrified by this secret ICE policy authorizing its agents to kick down your door and storm into your home,” Blumenthal said in a news release.

Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens wrote for the court in 1980 that the “physical entry of the home is the chief evil against which the wording of the Fourth Amendment is directed.”

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 37 of 76

The waiting game

For years, people have managed to evade arrest by skipping work and outings for days until agents move on. A senior ICE official once likened the surveillance experience to watching paint dry.

In July, the AP observed as immigration officers saw a Russian man enter his home in Irvine, California. They gave up when he didn't leave after three hours. They waited longer for a Mexican man who never emerged from his house in nearby El Monte, though they caught up with him two days later at a convenience store.

ICE has tried what the agency called "knock and talks" to get people to answer the door by casually asking residents to step outside to answer a few questions, according to a 2020 lawsuit in which a federal judge found the practice illegal. In one case, they told a woman they were probation officers looking for her brother.

More often, immigration officers simply play the waiting game — a pace that is not conducive to Trump fulfilling his promise of mass deportations.

Not answering the door is a key part of know-your-rights trainings

Since shortly after ICE was created in 2003, advocacy groups and immigrant-friendly state and local governments have diligently spread the word that people should not open their doors for immigration officers unless they can show a warrant signed by a judge.

They've held know-your-rights trainings for communities, passed out flyers and posted videos on social media to teach immigrants how to protect themselves.

Ahilan Arulanantham, co-faculty director of the UCLA Law School's Center for Immigration Law and Policy who has held such trainings, called the memo "quite disturbing."

"Know-your-rights trainings have included that information for decades and even people who are only minimally aware of their rights learn that because it's sort of the first and foundational elements of Fourth Amendment law," he said. "They know to ask officers to slide the warrant under the door so they can see if it was signed by a judge or is an administrative warrant."

In the predominantly Latino city of Santa Ana, where ICE agents were seen roaming the streets in recent days, several residents who did not want to give their names said they were well aware of that right. Jesus Delgado, a father of three, said the local elementary school sent out information to parents about what to do if ICE comes to your door.

"They send us bulletins, to not answer the door, to not answer any questions," he said.

Another man said he learned that from TikTok.

Trump's border czar Tom Homan has been highly critical of groups providing the information.

"They call it 'know-your-rights,'" he said last year on CNN. "I call it 'how to escape arrest.'"

Experts warn barging into homes could put all at risk

The memo says immigration officers can forcibly enter homes and arrest immigrants using solely a warrant signed by an immigration official if they have a final order of removal.

Officers must first knock on the door and share who they are and why they're at the residence, and they can only go into the home after 6 a.m. and before 10 p.m. The people inside must be given a "reasonable chance to act lawfully." But if that doesn't work, the memo says, they can use force to go in.

Law enforcement and legal experts warn if more immigration officers barge into homes, everyone could be put at greater risk.

With stand-your-ground laws, people in many states have the right to shoot intruders, which could lead to officers being shot, or agents opening fire on someone coming at them with a baseball bat or other item they grab in the heat of a moment, Arulanantham said. ICE records often contain wrong addresses, which could further lead to confrontations and agents busting into homes of U.S. citizens.

Arulanantham said agents' aggressive tactics have been building since the Supreme Court lifted a lower court's order in September that barred federal agents in the Los Angeles area from indiscriminately stopping people because of their race, language, job or location.

"This would just be another step down that path," he said. "Obviously it will be more significant because

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 38 of 76

it suggests you're not safe even in your own house."

Texas and Oklahoma brace for snow and ice as winter storm barrels toward eastern two-thirds of US

By EMILIE MEGNIEN, JEFFREY COLLINS and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — Texas and Oklahoma braced for heavy snow and ice that could make roadways treacherous Friday in what forecasters predict will be some of the initial effects of a huge, dayslong winter storm threatening catastrophic damage, extensive power outages and bitterly cold weather to the eastern two-thirds of the U.S.

In the Houston area, a utility company had 3,300 employees ready to work the winter storm, while Oklahoma's Department of Transportation pretreated highways and interstates with salt brine. Freezing rain and sleet were also expected in New Mexico as early as Friday.

The massive storm system is expected to bring a crippling ice storm from Texas through parts of the South, potentially around a foot (30 centimeters) of snow from Oklahoma through Washington, D.C., New York and Boston, and then a final punch of bitterly cold air that could drop wind chills to minus 50 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 46 Celsius) in parts of Minnesota and North Dakota.

Forecasters are warning the damage, especially in areas pounded by ice, could rival a hurricane. About 160 million people were under winter storm or cold weather watches or warnings — and in many places both.

Cold air streaming down from Canada caused Chicago Public Schools and Des Moines Public Schools in Iowa to cancel classes Friday. Wind chills predicted to be as low as minus 35 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 37 Celsius) could cause frostbite within 10 minutes, making it too dangerous to walk to school or wait for the bus.

The cold punch coming after means it will take a while to thaw out, an especially dangerous prospect in places where ice and snow weighs down tree branches and power lines and cuts electricity, perhaps for days. Roads and sidewalks could remain icy well into next week.

Ice can add hundreds of pounds to power lines and branches and make them more susceptible to snapping, especially in windy weather.

Freezing temperatures are expected all the way to Florida, forecasters said.

A severe cold snap five years ago took down much of the power grid in Texas, leaving millions without power for days and resulting in hundreds of deaths. Gov. Greg Abbott said Thursday that won't happen again, saying the power system "has never been stronger."

Winter storms can be notoriously tricky to forecast, with forecasters saying the places with the worst weather can't be pinned down until the event starts.

Governors in Georgia and Mississippi have declared states of emergency.

In Huntsville, Alabama, employees from Jomo's Power Equipment, Parts & Service Inc. sold dozens of generators within about a day and ordered an emergency shipment to meet customer demand.

"I'd say 95% of the calls were generator-related or either service or 'Do you have any generators in stock,'" Bryan Hill, the store's manager, said Thursday.

Lindsay Sylvester in Toney, Alabama, stocked up early in the week on bread and other supplies at her home and sent her son, who is in college, bread, gloves, candles and hand warmers.

Sylvester said she went to the store early in the week because she knew supplies would be depleted close to the weekend.

"A couple of people I heard talking about they had gone to Walmart and there was no milk, no bread," she said. "All the necessities were gone."

As a precaution, North Carolina's largest public school system prepared for potentially several days out of physical classrooms next week, telling its teachers to create three days of assignments accessible online or through paper copies.

Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger told residents to prepare for days without power or the ability to leave their neighborhoods. And in a nod to the politics of the time, the newly inaugurated Democrat said people

should not be scared to call 911 in an emergency just because of the immigration crackdowns going on in places like Minnesota.

Arkansas Department of Transportation spokesperson Dave Parker pleaded for people to be patient and stay home if possible once the storm hits.

By Thursday, airlines had canceled hundreds of flights scheduled for Friday and Saturday, including at airports in Dallas, Atlanta, Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Oklahoma.

At a busy grocery store near downtown Dallas, Kennedi Mallard and Frank Green loaded two shopping carts full of supplies into their car. They said there were some bare shelves inside.

"No water, no eggs, no butter, no ground meat," Green said.

Putin meets Trump's envoys as Kremlin says Ukraine settlement hinges on territory

By KAMILA HRABCHUK and KOSTYA MANENKOV Associated Press

Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the settlement in Ukraine with U.S. President Donald Trump's envoys during marathon overnight talks, and the Kremlin insisted that the territorial issue needs to be resolved to reach a peace deal.

The Kremlin meeting, which lasted past 3 a.m. Friday, came hours after Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy sharply criticized his European allies Thursday for what he cast as their slow and fragmented response to Russia's nearly four-year full-scale invasion that he said has left Ukraine at the mercy of Putin amid an ongoing U.S. push for a peace settlement.

Kremlin foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov, who participated in Putin's meeting with Trump's envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, said "it was reaffirmed that reaching a long-term settlement can't be expected without solving the territorial issue," a reference to Moscow's demand that Kyiv withdraws its troops from the areas in the east that Russia illegally annexed but never fully captured.

Zelenskyy said after meeting Thursday with Trump in Davos, Switzerland, that the future status of land in eastern Ukraine currently occupied by Russia is unresolved but that peace proposals are "nearly ready."

On a positive note, Ushakov told reporters that it was agreed that Russian, Ukrainian and U.S. officials will hold talks on security issues related to a prospective peace deal in the United Arab Emirates on Friday.

Ushakov noted that Trump's envoys informed Putin about Trump's meeting with Zelenskyy, as well as earlier discussions they had with Ukrainian and European officials. The Kremlin talks that he described as "frank, constructive" and "fruitful" began when it was just before midnight in Moscow and lasted nearly four hours.

Witkoff and Kushner were joined by Josh Gruenbaum, the head of the Federal Acquisition Service who serves as a senior adviser on Trump's Board of Peace that Russia has been invited to join. While Russia is considering the invitation, Putin reaffirmed his offer to send \$1 billion to the board from Russian assets frozen in the U.S. to help fund rebuilding Gaza.

Asked about Putin's proposal to use Russia's frozen assets for the contribution to the Board of Peace, Trump said he thought it was fine. "If he's using his money, that's great," he said

Trump's meeting with Zelenskyy

Zelenskyy met with Trump behind closed doors for about an hour at the World Economic Forum in Davos, describing the meeting as "productive and meaningful."

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One as he flew back to Washington from Davos, Trump said his meeting with Zelenskyy went well, adding that both Putin and Zelenskyy want to reach a deal and that "everyone's making concessions" to try to end the war.

He said the sticking points in talks remain the same as they've been during talks held during the past six or seven months, noting "boundaries" was a key issue. "The main hold-up is the same things that's been holding it up for the last year," he said.

Russia's bigger army has managed to capture about 20% of Ukraine since hostilities began in 2014 and

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 40 of 76

its full-scale invasion of 2022. But the battlefield gains along the roughly 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line have been costly for Moscow, and the Russian economy is feeling the consequences of the war and international sanctions.

Ukraine is short of money and, despite significantly boosting its own arms manufacturing, still needs Western weaponry. It is also short-handed on the front line. Its defense minister last week reported some 200,000 troop desertions, and draft-dodging by about 2 million Ukrainians.

Zelenskyy blasts European allies

Addressing the World Economic Forum after meeting with Trump, Zelenskyy listed a litany of grievances and criticisms of Europe.

European countries, which see their own future defense at stake in the war on its eastern flank, have provided financial, military and humanitarian support for Kyiv, but not all members of the 27-nation European Union are helping. Ukraine also has been frustrated by political disagreements within Europe over how to deal with Russia, as well as the bloc's at times slow-moving responses.

"Europe looks lost," Zelenskyy said in his speech, urging the continent to become a global force. He contrasted Europe's response with Washington's bold steps in Venezuela and Iran.

The former comic actor referred to the movie "Groundhog Day," in which the main character must relive the same day over and over again.

"Just last year, here in Davos, I ended my speech with the words: Europe needs to know how to defend itself. A year has passed. And nothing has changed. We are still in a situation where I must say the same words again," Zelenskyy said.

He chided Europe for being slow to act on key decisions, spending too little on defense, failing to stop Russia's "shadow fleet" of oil tankers that are breaking international sanctions, and balking at using its frozen assets in Europe to finance Ukraine, among other things.

More talks in the UAE

Zelenskyy said two days of trilateral meetings involving the U.S., Ukraine and Russia are due to begin Friday in the United Arab Emirates.

"Russians have to be ready for compromises because, you know, everybody has to be ready, not only Ukraine, and this is important for us," he said.

Ushakov, the Kremlin aide, confirmed that a Russian delegation will take part in Friday's meeting in the UAE capital of Abu Dhabi. He added that during the Kremlin meeting the U.S. voiced hope that it will "open prospects for advancing on the entire range of issues linked to ending the conflict and reaching a peaceful settlement."

Ushakov said that the Russian delegation will be led by the chief of military intelligence, Adm. Igor Kostyukov. He added that Putin's envoy, Kirill Dmitriev, will hold separate talks on economic issues with Witkoff in Abu Dhabi.

Huge US winter storm to bring crippling snow, sleet and ice from Texas to Boston

By EMILIE MEGNIEN, JEFFREY COLLINS and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — Thousands of power line workers were on standby, flights were canceled and bottled water flew off the shelves Thursday as a huge winter storm that could bring catastrophic damage, widespread power outages and bitterly cold weather barreled toward the eastern two-thirds of the U.S.

The massive storm system is expected to bring a crippling ice storm from Texas through parts of the South, potentially around a foot (30 centimeters) of snow from Oklahoma through Washington, D.C., New York and Boston, and then a final punch of bitterly cold air that could drop wind chills to minus 50 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 46 Celsius) in parts of Minnesota and North Dakota.

Forecasters are warning the damage, especially in areas pounded by ice, could rival a hurricane. About 160 million people were under winter storm or cold weather watches or warnings — and in many places

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 41 of 76

both.

When will it start?

The storm was expected to begin Friday in New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma, with the worst weather moving east into the Deep South before heading up the coast and thumping New England with snow.

Cold air streaming down from Canada caused Chicago Public Schools and Des Moines Public Schools in Iowa to cancel classes Friday. Wind chills predicted to be as low as minus 35 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 37 Celsius) could cause frostbite within 10 minutes, making it too dangerous to walk to school or wait for the bus.

The cold punch coming after means it will take a while to thaw out, an especially dangerous prospect in places where ice and snow weighs down tree branches and power lines and cuts electricity, perhaps for days. Roads and sidewalks could remain icy well into next week.

Ice can add hundreds of pounds to power lines and branches and make them more susceptible to snapping, especially in windy weather.

Freezing temperatures are expected all the way to Florida, forecasters said.

A severe cold snap five years ago took down much of the power grid in Texas, leaving millions without power for days and resulting in hundreds of deaths. Gov. Greg Abbott said Thursday that won't happen again, saying the power system "has never been stronger."

In the Houston area, CenterPoint Energy, which maintains the wires, poles and electrical infrastructure serving more than 2.8 million customers, had 3,300 employees ready to work the winter storm, said Paul Lock, CenterPoint's local government affairs director.

The difficulty of predicting winter storms

Winter storms can be notoriously tricky to forecast — one or two degrees can mean the difference between a catastrophe or a cold rain — and forecasters said the places with the worst weather can't be pinned down until the event starts.

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, like other governors, declared a state of emergency while acknowledging Thursday that some forecasts have disastrous levels of wintery weather in Atlanta while others have the Deep South's largest city mostly spared.

Ahead of the storm, Atlanta resident Jennifer Girard bought some blankets and batteries at a Walmart in nearby Chamblee with her 21-month-old baby.

"I used to live in Florida. We used to do that all the time for hurricane season, so it's not so different," she said.

In the suburbs of Louisville, Kentucky, ice melt and snow shovels sold fast at the family-owned Brownsboro Hardware. Store manager Matthew Isham said the storm "has people on edge."

"I've heard a ton of people saying they don't think they're going to get in or out of their driveway if it does snow like they're saying," Isham said.

As a precaution, North Carolina's largest public school system prepared for potentially several days out of physical classrooms next week. The Wake County school system told its thousands of teachers to create three days of assignments accessible online or through paper copies.

Brine trucks were treating roads from Oklahoma to Tennessee, with more states expected to do the same as the storm gets closer.

Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger told residents to prepare for days without power or the ability to leave their neighborhoods. And in a nod to the politics of the time, the newly inaugurated Democrat said people should not be scared to call 911 in an emergency just because of the immigration crackdowns going on in places like Minnesota.

Arkansas Department of Transportation spokesperson Dave Parker pleaded for people to be patient and stay home if possible once the storm hits, even if it takes days to clear sheets of ice off roads.

Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry implored people, "I beg you, please take this serious," as his team highlighted road preparations and said some 5,000 power line workers are on standby.

Hundreds of flights canceled

Airlines canceled about 250 flights that were scheduled in the U.S. on Friday and another 400 on Satur-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 42 of 76

day. Airports in Dallas, Atlanta, Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Oklahoma, were among those with the highest numbers of flight cancellations, according to the flight tracking site FlightAware.com.

Charles Fowler and his wife, Kimberly, of Louisville, booked a trip to New Orleans to escape the Kentucky cold. The storm could add a wrinkle to their itinerary, flying out Friday morning and returning Sunday, going through Chicago on the way home.

"We may either be staying another night in New Orleans, or we may be staying a night in Chicago," he said.

At a busy grocery store near downtown Dallas, Kennedi Mallard and Frank Green loaded two shopping carts full of supplies into their car. They said there were some bare shelves inside.

"No water, no eggs, no butter, no ground meat," Green said.

Esther Hernandez said she wasn't too worried about the storm, other than taking precautions so that her pipes don't freeze.

"I'm fine. I'm not going anywhere," she said.

In the north Georgia town of Dahlonega, Carrie Gray said she got a jug to store water, charcoal for her grill and logs for a wood stove to stay warm if she loses power. She also snagged a heat lamp so the ducks she keeps outside will be warm.

And in Charleston, West Virginia, organizers said the annual West Virginia Hunting and Fishing Show will go on after more than 150 exhibitors signed up for the sold-out event over the weekend.

With outfitters coming from all over the U.S. as well as Canada and South Africa, the show must go on, said Glen Jarrell, a spokesperson for the West Virginia Trophy Hunters Association, the event's promoter.

"We're not thinking about stopping. We don't care if it's rain, snow or high water," Jarrell said.

Trump rolls out his Board of Peace, but it's not clear how many leaders will join him

By JOSH BOAK, AAMER MADHANI and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE (AP) — President Donald Trump on Thursday inaugurated his Board of Peace to lead efforts at maintaining a ceasefire in Israel's war with Hamas, insisting "everyone wants to be a part" of the body he said could eventually rival the United Nations — despite many U.S. allies opting not to participate.

In a speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Trump sought to create momentum for a project to map out a future of the war-torn Gaza Strip that has been overshadowed this week, first by his threats to seize Greenland, then by a dramatic retreat from that push.

The new peace board was initially envisioned as a small group of world leaders overseeing the ceasefire, with Trump as chairman, but it has morphed into something far more ambitious — and skepticism about its membership and mandate has led some countries usually closest to Washington to take a pass.

Norway and Sweden indicated they wouldn't participate in the board. France declined, citing concerns the board could seek to replace the U.N. Canada was uncommitted.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney had given unusually blunt remarks about the "rupture" in the rules-based order at Davos. On his way home from the forum, Trump hit back.

"Please let this Letter serve to represent that the Board of Peace is withdrawing its invitation to you regarding Canada's joining, what will be, the most prestigious Board of Leaders ever assembled, at any time," he wrote to Carney on social media. "Thank you for your attention to this matter!"

It wasn't immediately clear how many countries have signed on. In Davos, Trump told reporters "we're going to have, I think, over 50" countries join.

But at his launch, Trump was joined by officials from 19 countries. He told the group, ranging from Azerbaijan to Paraguay to Hungary, "You're the most powerful people in the world."

Flying back to Washington, Trump told reporters: "The letter only went out two days ago. We had almost 30 people already." Trump said some leaders have told him they want to join but first require approval from their parliaments, specifically naming Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and Polish President Karol

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 43 of 76

Nawrocki.

The charter for the board has not yet been publicly released. Asked whether the document would allow him to remain chairman beyond his time in office, Trump said he would have the right to stay on if he so chose. "It's in theory, for life — but I'm not sure I want that," Trump said.

There are many questions about how the board will work

Trump has spoken about the board replacing some U.N. functions, but in his Thursday speech he said the two bodies would work together. "This isn't the United States, this is for the world," he said, adding, "I think we can spread it out to other things as we succeed in Gaza."

Trump's event featured Ali Shaath, the head of a new, future technocratic government in Gaza, announcing that the Rafah border crossing will open in both directions next week. But there was no confirmation of that from Israel, which said only that it would consider the matter next week. The Gaza side of the crossing, which runs between Gaza and Egypt, is currently under Israeli military control.

The idea for the Board of Peace was first laid out in Trump's 20-point Gaza ceasefire plan and even was endorsed by the U.N. Security Council.

An Arab diplomat in a European capital said that Middle Eastern governments coordinated their response to Trump's invitation to join the Board of Peace and that it was crafted to limit the acceptance to the Gaza plan as mandated by the U.N. Security Council.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss the matter more freely, the diplomat said the announced acceptance is "preliminary" and that the charter presented by the U.S. administration contradicts in some parts the United Nations' mission. The diplomat also said that other major powers are unlikely to support the board in its current form.

Some countries have raised questions about invitations Trump extended to Russian President Vladimir Putin and other authoritarian leaders. Britain's foreign secretary Yvette Cooper told the BBC that there were "concerns about President Putin being part of something which is talking about peace, when we have still not seen any signs from Putin that there will be a commitment to peace in Ukraine."

As for Putin, he said his country is still consulting with Moscow's "strategic partners" before deciding to commit. The Russian was hosting Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Thursday in Moscow.

The Kremlin said Thursday that Putin planned to discuss his proposal to send \$1 billion to the Board of Peace and use it for humanitarian purposes during his talks with Abbas — if Russia can use assets the U.S. had previously blocked. Asked about that idea by reporters, Trump said, "If he's using his money, that's great."

Peace in Ukraine remains elusive

In Davos, Trump also met privately Thursday for about an hour with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He was circumspect about how it went. "I had a good meeting — but I've had numerous good meetings with President Zelenskyy and it doesn't seem to happen," Trump said.

He expressed some sympathy for Ukrainians struggling without heat in the winter because of Russian attacks on infrastructure, but also frustration that he has not been able to broker a deal to end the war, noting "the same things that have been holding it up for the past year" continue to be sticking points.

Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff and his son-in-law Jared Kushner traveled to Moscow on Thursday for talks with Putin.

Zelenskyy on Thursday said there would be two days of trilateral meetings involving the U.S., Ukraine and Russia in the United Arab Emirates starting Friday.

Trump said Zelenskyy told him in the meeting that he'd like to make a deal.

"There were times when Putin didn't want to make a deal, times when Zelenskyy didn't want to make deal," Trump said. "Now I think they both want to make a deal — but we'll find out."

Iran looms large

Trump's push for peace comes after he threatened military action this month against Iran as it carried out a violent crackdown against some of the largest street protests in years, killing thousands of people.

Trump, for the time being, has signaled he won't carry out any new strikes on Iran after he said he

received assurances that the Islamic government would not carry out the planned hangings of more than 800 protesters.

He said Thursday that the U.S. is moving a fleet of ships toward Iran "just in case" it wants to take action against the country over its crackdown.

And he said he was keeping in place a threat to slap 25% tariffs on countries doing business with Iran. "We're doing that," he said. The White House has not yet provided details on that tariff plan, which Trump had announced more than a week ago.

Sundance kicks off its last year in Utah with powerful premieres and tributes to Robert Redford

By LINDSEY BAHR and HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

PARK CITY, Utah (AP) — Robert Redford liked to say that everybody has a story. He's not the only person who said it, but he is one of the few who did something to celebrate it, his daughter, Amy Redford, said Wednesday evening ahead of the Sundance Film Festival's opening day.

Thanks to her father's vision, the Sundance Institute he founded and its year-round programs have helped shape and nurture American independent film for the past 40 years. This year's Sundance Film Festival is a grand goodbye party: It's the first without Redford following his death in September, and the last in Utah before the festival relocates to Boulder, Colorado.

"This is a festival of new beginnings and endings," his daughter said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I'm going to look around and drink it up and enjoy it and just not take anything for granted."

Robert Redford's legacy and Sundance's decades-long history in Utah are key themes of the 2026 festival, which began Thursday morning with over a dozen films premiering throughout the day.

Screenings were preceded by a short video tribute to Redford, which was repeatedly met with roaring applause. Many volunteers wore buttons that read "Thank you Bob!" Later in the festival will be a screening of his first truly independent film, the 1969 sports drama "Downhill Racer."

With the dust settled from Oscar nominations, the festival is in full swing with the world premieres of Amir Bar-Lev's documentary "The Last First: Winter K2" about the changing culture of extreme mountain climbing, Rachel Lambert's tender drama "Carousel," starring Chris Pine and Jenny Slate, and Judd Apatow's portrait of comedian Maria Bamford's mental health journey on the opening day list.

Also premiering Thursday was David Alvarado's "American Pachuco: The Legend of Luis Valdez" about the legacy of the playwright and director, and Joanna Natasegara's "The Disciple," which delves into the stranger-than-fiction story of how Dutch-Moroccan record producer Cilvaringz found his way into the inner circle of the Wu-Tang Clan. "Too Many Cooks" creator Casper Kelly was also debuting his midnight movie "Buddy," starring Cristin Milioti, about escaping a children's television show.

"Tuner" director Daniel Roher teared up on stage as he introduced his film and dedicated the screening to Rob and Michele Reiner. The last time he saw the couple before their deaths was at his baby shower. He said Rob Reiner was an amazing mentor who gave him notes on the script about a piano tuner (Leo Woodall) who uses his keen ear to crack safes. The film premiered at Telluride in September before screening at Sundance.

Asked what she wanted to highlight about her father's legacy, Amy Redford noted his commitment to environmental stewardship in Utah and beyond. One film that she said exemplifies that commitment is "The Lake," a documentary following the fight to save Utah's Great Salt Lake as water levels have dropped dangerously low, exposing a lake bed rife with arsenic and other cancer-causing sediments.

At the Thursday premiere, Utah filmmaker Abby Ellis described a local ecosystem on the brink of disaster but reminded viewers that all hope isn't lost.

"Ultimately, the lake doesn't respond directly to money or podcasts or even films. It responds to water," said Ben Abbott, an ecologist featured in the documentary. "And so the question that's open is, are we able to translate the feeling that we have right now of solidarity and hope into water?"

That opening day overlapped with Oscar nominations was not entirely disconnected from Sundance. All

the documentary nominees premiered at last year's festival, and several 2025 Sundance premieres had nominations in different categories including "Train Dreams," "If I Had Legs I'd Kick You" and "The Ugly Stepsister."

Also, three of the five best director nominees — Paul Thomas Anderson, Chloé Zhao and Ryan Coogler — came up through the Sundance Institute's lab programs, mentored by Michelle Satter.

Even as the festival prepares to head to its new home, the institute will continue to host its development labs for screenwriters and directors in Utah at the Sundance Mountain Resort, about 34 miles (54 kilometers) south of Park City.

The Sundance Film Festival runs through Feb. 1.

Anti-ICE protest at Minnesota church leads to arrests but no charges for journalist Don Lemon

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER, GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO and JACK BROOK Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A prominent civil rights attorney and at least two other people involved in an anti-immigration enforcement protest that disrupted a service at a Minnesota church have been arrested, Trump administration officials said Thursday, even as a judge rebuffed related charges against journalist Don Lemon.

Vice President JD Vance, speaking in Minneapolis, urged state and local law enforcement to collaborate with federal officials and said protesters must stop getting in their way.

Attorney General Pam Bondi posted online that Nekima Levy Armstrong had been arrested. On Sunday, protesters entered the Cities Church in St. Paul, where an U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement official serves as a pastor. Bondi later posted that a second person had been arrested, and FBI Director Kash Patel announced a third.

The Justice Department quickly opened a civil rights investigation after the group interrupted services by chanting "ICE out" and "Justice for Renee Good," referring to the 37-year-old mother of three who was fatally shot by an ICE officer in Minneapolis earlier this month.

"Listen loud and clear: WE DO NOT TOLERATE ATTACKS ON PLACES OF WORSHIP," the attorney general wrote on X.

Cities Church belongs to the Southern Baptist Convention and lists one of its pastors as David Easterwood, who leads an ICE field office. Many Baptist churches have pastors who also work other jobs.

Church lawyers praise the arrests

Prominent leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention have argued that compassion for migrant families cannot justify violating a sacred space during worship.

Attorneys representing the church hailed the arrests.

"The U.S. Department of Justice acted decisively by arresting those who coordinated and carried out the terrible crime," Doug Wardlow, director of litigation for True North Legal, said in a statement.

The St. Paul-based nonprofit law firm has taken on religious freedom cases, including filing an amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court supporting a Christian counselor who challenged bans on LGBTQ+ "conversion therapy" for kids as a violation of her First Amendment rights.

Levy Armstrong, an attorney and longtime activist, had called for the pastor affiliated with ICE to resign, saying his dual role poses a "fundamental moral conflict."

"You cannot lead a congregation while directing an agency whose actions have cost lives and inflicted fear in our communities," she said Tuesday. "When officials protect armed agents, repeatedly refuse meaningful investigation into killings like Renee Good's, and signal they may pursue peaceful protesters and journalists, that is not justice — it is intimidation."

Vance wants local law enforcement to assist federal officers

State and local elected officials have opposed the crackdown that has become a major focus of Department of Homeland Security sweeps.

Vance arrived in the state less than a month after Renee Good was killed. He has called Good's death

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 46 of 76

a "tragedy of her own making."

Before his Minnesota visit, Vance warned the church protesters: "Those people are going to be sent to prison so long as we have the power to do so."

Later in Minneapolis, he urged state and city law enforcement to help federal immigration officers.

"We're doing everything that we can to lower the temperature," Vance said, adding that he wants "state and local officials to meet us halfway."

Greg Bovino, a U.S. Border Patrol official, said Minneapolis police failed to help federal agents Wednesday who were surrounded by protesters at a gas station. Minneapolis police responded later that they hadn't received any requests from federal agents for assistance on Wednesday.

Protesters appear in court

Levy Armstrong has helped lead protests after the high-profile police-involved killings of Black Americans, including George Floyd, Philando Castile and Jamar Clark. She is a former president of the NAACP's Minneapolis branch.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem posted a photo on X of Levy Armstrong with her arms behind her back next to a person wearing a badge. Noem said she faces a charge under a statute that bars threatening or intimidating someone exercising a right.

Patel posted on X that Chauntyll Louisa Allen, the second person Bondi said was arrested, is charged under a law that prohibits physically obstructing or using the threat of force to intimidate or interfere with a person seeking to participate in a service at a house of worship. Patel said William Kelly has also been arrested.

Levy Armstrong, Kelly and Allen have all been booked about 35 miles (56 kilometers) north of Minneapolis in Sherburne County Jail, where people in federal custody are usually held.

A message seeking comment was sent to Allen's and Kelly's attorney.

Saint Paul Public Schools, where Allen is a board of education member, said it is aware of her arrest but will not comment on pending legal matters.

Allen and Levy Armstrong are part of a community of Black Minnesota activists.

Kelly has defended the protest and criticized the church for associating with a pastor who works for ICE.

In court Thursday, federal magistrate judge Doug Micko granted the women bond and restricted them from traveling outside Minnesota or from going near the church. The government said it would appeal and the women remained in federal custody Thursday afternoon.

Levy Armstrong's attorney, Jordan Kushner, said he offered for her to turn herself in peacefully, but the Trump administration insisted on arresting her.

"They wanted a spectacle," Levy Armstrong's husband, Marques Armstrong, said, recalling around 50 agents came to detain her.

Arrests follow a DOJ civil rights investigation

The Justice Department investigated the church protest swiftly, but found no basis for a civil rights investigation into Good's death.

Administration officials have said the officer acted in self-defense and that the driver of the Honda was engaging in "an act of domestic terrorism" when she pulled toward him. Past administrations, however, have moved quickly to probe shootings of civilians by law enforcement officials.

The Justice Department has separately opened an investigation into whether Minnesota officials impeded or obstructed federal immigration enforcement through their public statements. Prosecutors this week sent subpoenas to the offices of Gov. Tim Walz, Attorney General Keith Ellison, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, St. Paul Mayor Kaohly Her and officials in Ramsey and Hennepin counties, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Judge rejects charges against Lemon

A magistrate judge rejected federal prosecutors' bid to charge journalist Don Lemon related to the church protest, said Kushner, Levy Armstrong's attorney.

Lemon has said he was at the church as a journalist and not a protester.

"Once the protest started in the church we did an act of journalism which was report on it and talk to the people involved, including the pastor, members of the church and members of the organization," Lemon said in a video posted on social media. "That's it. That's called journalism."

Lemon's attorney, Abbe Lowell, said in a statement that the judge's action confirms Lemon's work as a reporter was protected by the First Amendment.

It wasn't immediately clear what the Justice Department would do after the judge's decision. Authorities could return to a magistrate judge to again seek a criminal complaint or an indictment against Lemon before a grand jury.

CNN, which fired Lemon in 2023, first reported the ruling.

Federal officers detain a 5-year-old boy who a school official says was used as 'bait'

By HALLIE GOLDEN and SARAH RAZA Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A 5-year-old boy arriving home from preschool in Minnesota was taken by federal agents along with his father to a detention facility in Texas, school officials and the family's lawyer said, making him the fourth student from his Minneapolis suburb to be detained by immigration officers in recent weeks.

Federal agents took Liam Conejo Ramos from a running car in the family's driveway Tuesday afternoon, Columbia Heights Public Schools Superintendent Zena Stenvik told reporters Wednesday. The officers told him to knock on the door to his home to see if other people were inside, "essentially using a 5-year-old as bait," she said.

The father told the child's mother, who was inside the home and has not been named, not to open the door, Stenvik told reporters Thursday.

School officials said the agents wouldn't leave Liam with another adult who lives at the home or an official from the school district. But on Thursday, Department of Homeland Security spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin said in an online post that the father asked for the child to stay with him and that they are together at an immigration lockup in Dilley, Texas.

The family, who came to the U.S. in 2024, has an active asylum case and had not been ordered to leave the country, Stenvik said.

"Why detain a 5-year-old?" she asked. "You cannot tell me that this child is going to be classified as a violent criminal."

McLaughlin said in a statement Wednesday that "ICE did NOT target a child." She said Immigration and Customs Enforcement was arresting the child's father, Adrian Alexander Conejo Arias, who McLaughlin said is from Ecuador and in the U.S. illegally. He fled on foot, "abandoning his child," she said.

"For the child's safety, one of our ICE officers remained with the child while the other officers apprehended Conejo Arias," McLaughlin said, adding that parents are given the choice to be removed with their children or have them placed with a person of their choosing.

Minnesota has become a major focus of federal immigration sweeps. Greg Bovino, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection official who has been the face of the crackdowns, said immigration officers have made about 3,000 arrests in Minnesota in the last six weeks.

Others offered to take the child

Stenvik suggested that the father did not run. She said another adult who lives at the home was outside when the father and son were taken, but agents wouldn't leave Liam with that person.

Mary Granlund, school board chair for Columbia Heights Public Schools, told reporters Thursday that she had told agents she would take the child before they left with him.

Rachel James, a Columbia Heights city council member who lives nearby the family, said she saw another neighbor from across the street tell the agents they had papers authorizing them to take care of Liam on behalf of the parents. The agents ignored them, James said.

The family's lawyer, Marc Prokosch, said Thursday that he assumes Liam and his father are in a family

holding cell but that they have not been able to have "direct contact" with them.

"We're looking at our legal options to see if we can free them either through some legal mechanisms or through moral pressure," he said at a news conference.

Vice President JD Vance met with Minneapolis leaders Thursday and said he heard the "terrible story" but later learned the boy was only detained, not arrested.

"Well, what are they supposed to do? Are they supposed to let a 5-year-old child freeze to death? Are they not supposed to arrest an illegal alien in the United States of America?" said Vance, noting that he's the parent of a 5-year-old.

Vance wasn't asked about why immigration officers allegedly wouldn't leave the boy with the other adult who lives at the home and offered to take him.

Conditions at the Dilley lockup

Families are reporting that children are malnourished, extremely ill, and suffering profoundly from prolonged detention at the Dilley lockup, where conditions are worse than ever, said Leecia Welch, chief legal counselor at Children's Rights. Welch visited the facility last week as part of a lawsuit over the welfare of immigrant children in federal custody.

"The number of children had skyrocketed and significant numbers of children had been detained for over 100 days," Welch said. The administration in December acknowledged that about 400 children had faced extended detention.

"Nearly every child we spoke to was sick," Welch said.

Students kept home after their classmates were detained

Columbia Heights Public Schools has five schools and about 3,400 students from pre-K to 12th grade, according to its website. Most come from immigrant families, Stenvik said.

Before Liam, A 17-year-old was taken Tuesday while heading to school, and a 10-year-old and a 17-year-old have also been taken, Stenvik said. Attendance has dropped over the past two weeks, including one day where about one-third of the students were out from school, she said.

"Over the last few weeks, ICE agents have been roaming our neighborhoods, circling our schools, following our buses, coming into our parking lot multiple times and taking our kids," said Stenvik, adding that this is causing "trauma."

Ella Sullivan, Liam's teacher, described him as "kind and loving."

"His classmates miss him," she said. "And all I want is for him to be safe and back here."

Smith defends his Trump investigations at a House hearing. 'No one should be above the law,' he says

By ERIC TUCKER, MARY CLARE JALONICK, LISA MASCARO and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith defended his investigations of President Donald Trump at a congressional hearing Thursday in which he insisted that he had acted without regard to politics and had no second thoughts about the criminal charges he brought.

"No one should be above the law in our country, and the law required that he be held to account. So that is what I did," Smith said of Trump.

Smith testified behind closed doors last month but returned to the House Judiciary Committee for a public hearing that provided the prosecutor with a forum to address Congress and the country more generally about the breadth of evidence he collected during investigations that shadowed Trump during the 2024 presidential campaign and resulted in indictments. The hourslong hearing immediately split along partisan lines as Republican lawmakers sought to undermine the former Justice Department official while Democrats tried to elicit damaging testimony about Trump's conduct and accused their GOP counterparts of attempting to rewrite history.

"It was always about politics," said Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio, the committee's Republican chairman.

"Maybe for them," retorted Democratic Rep. Jamie Raskin, referring to Republicans. "But, for us, it's all

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 49 of 76

about the rule of law.”

The hearing was on the mind of Trump himself as he traveled back from the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, with the president posting on his Truth Social account that “Deranged Jack Smith should be prosecuted for his actions” and asserting without any evidence that the prosecutor had committed perjury.

Smith told lawmakers that he stood behind his decisions as special counsel to bring charges against Trump in separate cases that accused the Republican of conspiring to overturn the 2020 presidential election after he lost to Democrat Joe Biden and hoarding classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, after he left the White House.

“Our investigation developed proof beyond a reasonable doubt that President Trump engaged in criminal activity,” Smith said. “If asked whether to prosecute a former president based on the same facts today, I would do so regardless of whether that president was a Republican or a Democrat.”

Republicans and Smith spar over phone records

Republicans from the outset sought to portray Smith as an overly aggressive, hard-charging prosecutor who had to be “reined in” by higher-ups and the courts as he investigated Trump. They seized on revelations that the Smith team had subpoenaed the phone records of a group of Republican lawmakers.

The records revealed the incoming and outgoing phone numbers as well as the duration of the calls but not the content of the communications, but Rep. Brandon Gill, a Texas Republican, said the episode showed how Smith had “walked all over the Constitution.”

Smith has repeatedly justified the move as necessary to document any contact that Trump or surrogates may have had with lawmakers on Jan. 6, 2021 —the day Trump’s supporters stormed the Capitol — as he beseeched them to halt the certification of the election results.

“My office didn’t spy on anyone,” Smith said, explaining that collecting phone records is a common prosecutorial tactic and was essential in this instance to help prosecutors understand the scope of the conspiracy.

Smith describes a wide-ranging conspiracy on 2020

Under questioning, Smith described what he said was a wide-ranging conspiracy to overturn the results of the election and recounted how the Republican refused to listen to advisers who told him that the contest had in fact not been stolen. After he was charged, Smith said, Trump tried to silence and intimidate potential witnesses against him.

Smith said one reason he felt confident in the strength of the case that prosecutors had prepared to take to trial was the extent to which it relied on Republican supporters of Trump.

“Some of the most powerful witnesses were witnesses who, in fact, were fellow Republicans who had voted for Donald Trump, who had campaigned for him and who wanted him to win the election,” Smith said.

Smith was appointed in 2022 by Biden’s Justice Department to oversee investigations into Trump, who has denied any wrongdoing. Both investigations produced indictments against Trump, but the cases were abandoned by Smith and his team after Trump won back the White House because of longstanding Justice Department legal opinions that say sitting presidents cannot be indicted.

The hearing unfolded against the backdrop of an ongoing Trump administration retribution campaign targeting the investigators who scrutinized the Republican president and amid mounting alarm that the Justice Department’s institutional independence is eroding under the sway of the president.

In a nod to those concerns, Smith said, “My belief is that if we do not hold the most powerful people in our society to the same standards — the rule of law — it can be catastrophic because, if they don’t have to follow the law, it’s very easy for people to understand why they don’t have to follow the law.”

Rep. Becca Balint, a Vermont Democrat, also asked Smith at one point if he was concerned the Trump administration would try to prosecute him.

Smith responded: “I believe they will do everything in their power to do that because they’ve been ordered to by the president.”

GOP says Smith wanted to wreck Trump’s White House bid

Republicans, for their part, repeatedly denounced Smith, with Rep. Kevin Kiley of California accusing him

of seeking "maximum litigation advantage at every turn" and "circumventing constitutional limitations to the point that you had to be reined in again and again throughout the process."

Another Republican lawmaker, Rep. Ben Cline of Virginia, challenged Smith on his team's requested court order to restrict Trump from making incendiary comments about prosecutors, potential witnesses and other people involved in the case. Smith said the order was necessary because of Trump's efforts to intimidate witnesses, but Cline asserted that it was meant to silence Trump in the heat of the presidential campaign.

And Jordan, the committee chairman, advanced a frequent Trump talking point that the investigation was driven by a desire to derail Trump's candidacy.

"We should never forget what took place, what they did to the guy we, the people, elected twice," Jordan said.

Smith vigorously rejected those suggestions and said the evidence placed Trump's actions squarely at the heart of a criminal conspiracy to undo the 2020 election.

"Our investigation revealed that Donald Trump is the person who caused Jan. 6, it was foreseeable to him and that he sought to exploit the violence," he said.

People in Gaza dig through garbage for things to burn to keep warm — a far cry from Trump's vision

By TOQA EZZIDIN and JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Desperate Palestinians at a garbage dump in a Gaza neighborhood dug with their bare hands for plastic items to burn to fend off the cold and damp winter in the enclave, battered by two years of the Israel-Hamas war.

The scene in the Muwasi area of the city of Khan Younis contrasted starkly with the vision of the territory projected by world leaders gathered in Davos, Switzerland, where they inaugurated U.S. President Donald Trump's Board of Peace that will oversee Gaza.

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Trump claimed that "record levels" of humanitarian aid had entered Gaza since the October start of a U.S.-brokered ceasefire deal. His son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and envoy Steve Witkoff triumphantly touted the devastated territory's development potential.

Palestinians doubt that Board of Peace will end misery

In Gaza, months into the truce, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians still languish in displacement camps, sheltering in tents and war-ravaged buildings, unable to protect them from the chilly nighttime temperatures.

Despite the ceasefire, there are still recurring deadly strikes. Israeli tank shelling on Thursday killed four Palestinians east of Gaza City, according to Mohamed Abu Selmiya, director of the Shifa Hospital, where the bodies were taken. The Israeli military did not immediately comment.

Some in Gaza expressed skepticism about Trump's Board of Peace and whether it will change their grim lives.

"This committee includes Israelis. I don't understand, as citizens, how can we understand this situation?" Rami Ghalban, who was displaced from Khan Younis, said Thursday. "The Israelis that inflicted suffering upon us."

But grappling with what's ahead seemed futile for others.

"We are in a position where there are no alternatives," said Fathi Abu Sultan. "Our situation is miserable."

Aid flow into Gaza has significantly increased since the ceasefire, but residents say fuel and firewood are in short supply. Prices are exorbitant and searching for firewood is dangerous. Two 13-year-old boys were shot and killed by Israeli forces on Wednesday as they tried to collect firewood, hospital officials said.

United Nations partners managing displacement camps say they now are able to provide support to about 40% of the existing 970 sites across the Gaza Strip because of capacity and funding constraints, U.N. spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said Thursday.

They continue to distribute tents, mattresses, sleeping bags, blankets, warm clothes, cooking utensils as well as solar lights, Dujarric said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 51 of 76

Survival in Gaza means digging through garbage

For Sanaa Salah, who lives in a tent with her husband and six kids, starting a fire is a critical daily chore so they can cook and keep warm. Her family has barely has enough clothes to keep them warm.

She said the family cannot afford to buy firewood or gas, and that they are aware of the dangers of burning plastic but have no other choice.

"Life is very hard," she said as her family members threw plastic and paper into a fire to keep it burning. "We cannot even have a cup of tea."

"This is our life," she said. "We do not sleep at night from the cold."

Firewood is too expensive, said Aziz Akel. His family has no income and they can't pay the 7 or 8 shekels (about \$2.5) it would cost.

"My house is gone and my kids were wounded," he said.

His daughter, Lina Akel, said he leaves the family's tent early each morning to look for plastic in the garbage to burn — "the basics of life."

Deaths of 3 Palestinian journalists adds to grim toll

Dozens of Palestinians gathered Thursday to mourn three Palestinian journalists — including a frequent contributor to Agence France-Presse — killed the day before when an Israeli strike hit their vehicle, according to Gaza health officials.

The Israeli military said the strike came after it spotted suspects who were operating a drone that posed a threat to its troops.

The journalists were filming near a displacement camp in central Gaza, managed by an Egyptian government committee, said Mohammed Mansour, the committee's spokesperson.

One of them, Abdul Raouf Shaat, a regular contributor to AFP, was not on assignment for the news agency at the time, it said. A statement from AFP demanded a full investigation.

Mourners wept over the journalists' bodies, which were in body bags and had press vests placed on their chests.

News organizations rely largely on Palestinian journalists and residents in Gaza to show what is happening on the ground because Israel has barred international journalists from entering to cover the war, aside from rare guided tours.

More than 470 people have been killed by Israeli fire in Gaza since the ceasefire began in October, according to Gaza's health ministry. At least 77 have been killed by Israeli gunfire near a ceasefire line that splits the territory between Israeli-held areas and most of Gaza's Palestinian population, the ministry says.

The ministry, which is part of the Hamas-led government, maintains detailed casualty records that are seen as generally reliable by U.N. agencies and independent experts.

Opening of key border crossing is one next steps in Gaza

While Trump tries to build support for his Board of Peace by mapping out a future for Gaza, more details about what's ahead emerged Thursday.

Ali Shaath, the head of a new, future technocratic government in Gaza, said the Rafah border crossing will open in both directions next week on the Gaza-Egypt border. Israel said in early December it would open the Gaza side of the crossing but has yet to do so.

Reopening the crossing would make it easier for Palestinians in Gaza to seek medical treatment or visit family in Egypt.

Russian President Vladimir Putin wants to send \$1 billion to the Board of Peace for humanitarian purposes in Gaza if the U.S. unblocks the money. He met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Moscow.

"We believe that only forming and proper functioning of the Palestinian state can lead to a final settlement of the Middle East conflict," Putin said.

Ukraine's Zelenskyy says his repeated warnings to Europe feel like 'Groundhog Day'

By KAMILA HRABCHUK and KOSTYA MANENKOV Associated Press

DAVOS, Switzerland (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy blasted his European allies Thursday for what he portrayed as the continent's slow, fragmented and inadequate response to Russia's invasion nearly four years ago and its continued international aggression.

Addressing the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Zelenskyy listed a litany of grievances and criticisms of Europe that he said have left Ukraine at the mercy of Russian President Vladimir Putin amid an ongoing U.S. push for a peace settlement.

"Europe looks lost," Zelenskyy said in his speech, urging the continent to become a global force. He contrasted Europe's response with Washington's bold steps in Venezuela and Iran.

The former comic actor referred to the movie "Groundhog Day," in which the main character must relive the same day over and over again.

"Just last year, here in Davos, I ended my speech with the words: Europe needs to know how to defend itself. A year has passed. And nothing has changed. We are still in a situation where I must say the same words again," Zelenskyy said.

He said that Ukrainians, too, seem caught in that reality in the war, "repeating the same thing for weeks, months and, of course, for years. And yet that is exactly how we live now. It's our life."

European countries, which see their own future defense at stake in the war on its eastern flank, have provided financial, military and humanitarian support for Kyiv, but not all members of the 27-nation European Union are helping. Ukraine also has been frustrated by political disagreements within Europe over how to deal with Russia, as well as the bloc's at times slow-moving responses.

A meeting with Trump

His speech came after he met behind closed doors for about an hour in Davos with U.S. President Donald Trump, who described the talks as "very good." Zelenskyy called them "productive and meaningful."

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One as he flew back to Washington from Davos, Trump said his meeting with Zelenskyy went well, adding that the Ukrainian president told him he wants to make a deal to end the war.

"I had a good meeting, but I've had numerous good meetings with President Zelenskyy and it doesn't seem to happen," he said.

Trump noted that both Putin and Zelenskyy want to reach a deal and that "everyone's making concessions" to try to end the war.

He said the sticking points in talks remain the same as they've been during talks held during the past six or seven months, noting "boundaries" was a key issue. "The main hold-up is the same things that's been holding it up for the last year," he said.

Trump said he and Zelenskyy talked about how Ukrainians were surviving the cold winter without heat.

"It's really tough for the people of Ukraine," Trump said, noting that it was "amazing" how residents have been able to persevere through the winter facing relentless Russian strikes. "It's no way to live," he said.

Russia's bigger army has managed to capture about 20% of Ukraine since hostilities began in 2014 and its full-scale invasion of 2022. But the battlefield gains along the roughly 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line have been costly for Moscow, and the Russian economy is feeling the consequences of the war and international sanctions.

Ukraine is short of money and, despite significantly boosting its own arms manufacturing, still needs Western weaponry. It is also short-handed on the front line. Its defense minister last week reported some 200,000 troop desertions and draft-dodging by about 2 million Ukrainians.

Zelenskyy is also striving to keep the world's attention focused on Ukraine despite other conflicts.

Zelenskyy cites inaction on key decisions

He chided Europe for being slow to act on key decisions, spending too little on defense, failing to stop Russia's "shadow fleet" of oil tankers that are breaking international sanctions, and balking at using its

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 53 of 76

frozen assets in Europe to finance Ukraine, among other things.

Europe, he said, "still feels more like a geography, history, a tradition, not a real political force, not a great power."

"Some Europeans are really strong, it's true, but many say we must stand strong, and they always want someone else to tell them how long they need to stand strong, preferably until the next election," he said.

The Trump administration is pushing for a peace settlement, with its envoys shuttling between Kyiv and Moscow in a flurry of negotiations that some worry could force Ukraine into an unfavorable deal.

A meeting in Moscow

Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff and his son-in-law Jared Kushner arrived in Moscow late Thursday and sat for talks with Putin for more than 3 hours, according to the Kremlin.

One major issue remains to be resolved in negotiations, Witkoff said at Davos, without saying what it was. Zelenskyy said the future status of land in eastern Ukraine currently occupied by Russia is unresolved but that peace proposals are "nearly ready."

Postwar security guarantees, should a deal be reached, are agreed between the U.S. and Ukraine, although they would require each country's ratification, he said.

Zelenskyy said two days of trilateral meetings involving the U.S., Ukraine and Russia are due to begin Friday in the United Arab Emirates.

"Russians have to be ready for compromises because, you know, everybody has to be ready, not only Ukraine, and this is important for us," he said.

Trump and Zelenskyy have had a fraught relationship, and the American president has at times also rebuked Putin.

Zelenskyy said he thanked Trump for providing U.S.-made Patriot air defense systems that can help stop Russian missiles that are repeatedly hitting Ukraine's power grid, causing hardship for civilians denied light, heating and running water. He said he asked Trump for more of them.

After Trump cut support for Ukraine, other NATO countries began buying weapons from the U.S. to donate to Kyiv under a special financial arrangement.

Takeaways from Jack Smith on his case against Trump, 'so many witnesses' and the threats ahead

By LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK, ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press WASHINGTON (AP) — Former special counsel Jack Smith testified Thursday about his investigation of President Donald Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election, detailing how the defeated president "sought to prey" on his supporters and "looked for ways to stay in power," culminating in the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol attack.

It was Smith's first public hearing since he left the department last year, and the nearly five-hour session at the House Judiciary Committee delved into far-flung details — from former White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson's blockbuster testimony before the Jan. 6 committee to the gag order slapped on Trump during the investigation over his efforts to intimidate witnesses.

"Our investigation revealed that Donald Trump is the person who caused Jan. 6, it was foreseeable to him, and that he sought to exploit the violence," Smith testified.

Trump, during the hearing, was live-posting his rage against Smith — suggesting the former career prosecutor should himself be prosecuted. In the room sat militant Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes, and a tense encounter erupted between one audience member and police who had defended the Capitol, reminding how Jan. 6 still divides the Congress, and the country.

Smith said he believes Trump officials now will do "everything in their power" to prosecute him, but he said he would "not be intimidated" by attacks from the president, adding that investigators gathered proof that Trump committed "serious crimes."

"I'm not going to pretend that didn't happen because he's threatening me," Smith said.

Once Trump won reelection in 2024, Smith abandoned the cases against him, adhering to Justice De-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 54 of 76

partment protocol against prosecuting a sitting president. Trump faced a four-count indictment in the conspiracy to overthrow the election and, separately, Smith's team indicted Trump over holding classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago home.

Throughout the session, Republicans highlighted new developments as they seek to sow doubt on Smith's now defunct-case against Trump, while Democrats warned that Trump's allies are trying to rewrite history after the defeated president sent his supporters to the Capitol to fight for his failed election against Democrat Joe Biden.

Far from done, Smith is expected to be called before the Senate, which is planning its own hearing, and he has been unable to discuss the documents case that lawmakers want to probe. Trump-appointed U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon halted the release of a report by Smith's team on that case with an injunction that is set to expire next month, but lawyers for Trump have asked to leave it permanently under seal.

One star witness under scrutiny, but Smith says there are 'so many' more

Republicans have fixated for years on countering the gripping testimony that former White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson gave to the Jan. 6 committee, trying to prove her wrong.

The young aide recounted having been told that day about Trump lunging for the steering wheel in the presidential limousine as he demanded to join supporters at the Capitol. It's a story that others said did not happen.

"Mr. Smith, is Cassidy Hutchinson a liar?" asked Republican Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio, the committee chairman.

Smith explained that Hutchinson's testimony was "second hand," and as his team interviewed other witnesses, and the Secret Service agent in the car at the time "did not confirm what happened."

Jordan pressed whether Smith would have brought Hutchinson forward to testify anyway, and Smith said he had not made "any final determinations."

Smith said, "We had a large choice of witnesses."

"That says it all," Jordan declared. "You were still considering putting her on the witness stand because you had to get President Trump."

In fact, Smith said, one of the "central challenges" of the case was to present it in a concise way, "because we did have so many witnesses" — state officials, Trump campaign workers and advisers — to testify.

"Some of the most powerful witnesses were witnesses who, in fact, were fellow Republicans who had voted for Donald Trump, who had campaigned for him and who wanted him to win the election," Smith said.

Smith defends his work, and subpoenas for lawmaker phone records

A career prosecutor who worked for Republican and Democratic administrations, and worked on a range of cases, including war crimes overseas, Smith has presented himself as a straight arrow whose work stands for itself.

"I am not a politician and I have no partisan loyalties," Smith said. "Throughout my public service, my approach has always been the same — follow the facts and the law without fear or favor."

Republicans sought to portray Smith as a hard-charging prosecutor who had to be "reined in" by higher-ups as he pursued Trump ahead of the former president's possible run for a second term.

They singled out the collecting of phone toll records of members of Congress, including the House speaker at the time, former GOP Rep. Kevin McCarthy.

During one particularly sharp exchange, Republican Rep. Brandon Gill of Texas said Smith used nondisclosure agreements to "hide" subpoenas from the subjects, and the public.

Smith explained that collecting the phone records was a "common practice" and investigators wanted to understand the "scope of the conspiracy" to overturn the 2020 election.

"My office didn't spy on anyone," he said.

Smith said he sought the nondisclosure agreements because of witness intimidation in the case. He cited Trump's comments at the time, particularly the warning that he would be "coming after" those who cross him.

"I had grave concerns about obstruction of justice in this investigation, specifically with regards to Donald Trump," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 55 of 76

Smith said it's not incumbent on a prosecutor "to wait until someone gets killed before they move for an order to protect the proceedings."

Threats to democracy — and to Smith himself — linger

One Democrat, Rep. Pramila Jayapal of Washington, asked how he would describe the toll on American democracy if the nation does not hold a president accountable for fraudulent actions, particularly in elections.

"If we do not hold the most powerful people in our society to the same standards, the rule of law, it can be catastrophic," he said.

"It can endanger our election process, it can endanger election workers and ultimately, our democracy."

"The attack on this Capitol on Jan. 6," Smith said, echoing an appeals court ruling, "it was an attack on the structure of our democracy."

Democratic Rep. Joe Neguse of Colorado asked Smith if he was aware that Trump was live-posting social media comments during the hearing.

"No," Smith said.

The congressman began reading what the president had posted.

"Jack Smith is a deranged animal, who shouldn't be allowed to practice Law," Neguse read. "Hopefully the Attorney General is looking at what he's done."

Smith looked on.

"We have a word for this," the congressman said. "It's called weaponization. It's called corruption."

Democrats repeatedly asked if Smith had ever been approached by Biden's Justice Department to investigate or prosecute Trump. Smith said he had not.

In his own words, Smith lays out the case

Smith presented his case against Trump, publicly and in previous private testimony, in ways that have not wavered.

"President Trump was charged because the evidence established that he willfully broke the law," Smith said in opening remarks.

"Rather than accept his defeat in the 2020 election, President Trump engaged in a criminal scheme to overturn the results and prevent the lawful transfer of power."

Smith said, "If asked whether to prosecute a former president based on the same facts today, I would do so."

"No one should be above the law in this country."

Still, the special counsel said he stopped short of filing a charge of insurrection against Trump. That was pursued in the House impeachment of Trump in the aftermath of Jan. 6, though the president was acquitted of the sole count of incitement of an insurrection by the Senate.

He said the case had "proof beyond a reasonable doubt that President Trump engaged in criminal activity," and remained confident had it gone to trial.

Asked about Trump's decision to pardon some 1,500 people convicted in the Jan. 6 attack, including those who assaulted police officers, Smith had almost no answer.

"I don't get it," he said. "I never will."

Georgia Republican Burt Jones and his allies continue to slam his opponent over elections

By CHARLOTTE KRAMON Associated Press/Report for America

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia Lt. Gov. Burt Jones, a Republican gubernatorial candidate, is attacking his primary opponent Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger over the 2020 election again, this time wielding his legislative powers.

State senators on Thursday slammed Raffensperger for not complying with a U.S. Department of Justice request for detailed voter data that includes names, dates of birth, residential addresses, driver's license numbers and partial Social Security numbers. Raffensperger has said that would violate state law and

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 56 of 76

infringe on Georgians' privacy. He did not attend the meeting, citing active litigation. Georgia is among 23 states the Justice Department has sued to get that information.

But Jones emphasized an incorrect claim that there were 315,000 wrongly certified Fulton County ballots from 2020 when he demanded Raffensperger appear at the Senate Ethics Committee meeting. That appeared to be an attempt to galvanize Jones' right-wing supporters. Jones is a close ally of President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly and falsely claimed the 2020 election was stolen from him.

Spotlighting the 2020 election baffled some Republicans who say most Georgians have moved on.

Ricky Hess, chair of north Georgia's Paulding County Republicans, said in a text that voters care about election transparency but are "ready to move on from relitigating 2020" and are more worried about affordability, education and public safety.

"Candidates who make 2020 the centerpiece risk sounding stuck," Hess wrote. "Candidates who talk about practical steps that build confidence and then focus on today's issues will connect with more people."

In a January 2021 phone call, the president pressured Raffensperger to help "find" enough votes to overturn Democrat Joe Biden's win in the state's 2020 presidential election.

Jones already has Trump's endorsement and the support of election skeptics, said Jason Shepherd, a Republican in Georgia who resigned from party office over disagreements with Trump supporters. It's the rest of the voters he needs to win over, and Shepherd said most trust that Georgia's elections are secure.

Fulton County back in the spotlight

Jones was one of 16 Georgia Republicans who declared themselves electors in 2020 even though Biden had won the state. He also backed a call for a special session to declare Trump the winner. Raffensperger and Attorney General Chris Carr, Jones' top rivals for the Republican nomination, spurned Trump's efforts. Raffensperger and Carr will appeal to more moderate Republicans, but Raffensperger is expected to pull ahead of Carr.

Outcry over the false claim that the Fulton County ballots were wrongly certified went viral in right-wing media last year. In announcing the Ethics Committee meeting, Jones said Fulton County admitted that "315,000 ballots were not properly signed by poll workers." Ballots in Georgia are never signed. It was the tabulator tapes from scanners used to count votes during early in-person voting for the 2020 general election that poll workers failed to sign, Ann Brumbaugh, an attorney for the county, acknowledged during a State Election Board meeting last month.

She added the county has new leadership overseeing elections and implemented new training and procedures for checking tabulator tapes.

Raffensperger called what happened a "clerical error." The Brennan Center's director of elections and security Gowri Ramachandran agreed with that assessment. Signing tabulation tapes is not how votes get counted, and the error doesn't invalidate election results, she said.

"There is nothing in the election code overturning it for not following a procedural rule, especially invalidating every single early vote cast in Georgia's largest county," said a spokesperson for Raffensperger.

Jones said in the announcement that Raffensperger's office needs oversight.

"I will not allow the Secretary and his allies in the press to let him escape accountability by downplaying this utter failure as a mere 'clerical error,'" Jones said.

During his campaign, Raffensperger has said Georgia's elections are nationally recognized as secure. In a letter to the Ethics Committee's chairman, Raffensperger's office said they provided the DOJ with Georgia's voter list and complied to the extent that Georgia law allows. His office filed a motion to dismiss the lawsuit Wednesday.

"If you and your colleagues wish to weaken the legal protections for Georgia voters' private information and make millions of Georgians vulnerable to identity theft, you can certainly change the law, but that is not something that the Secretary of State's office would support," the letter says.

At the meeting, Republican state Sen. Randy Robertson, who filed the resolution, argued Raffensperger could legally share the information.

"He continuously fails to show up and answer the questions and that is the absolute truth," said Robertson. Why run 2020 again?

Since Trump often laments the 2020 election with a focus on Fulton County, where he was indicted over attempts to overturn the results, it's not surprising that Jones wants to keep it on voters' radar, said Georgia State University political science professor Dr. Jennifer McCoy. However, Jones will have to appeal to a broad swath of voters in the general election.

State GOP Chairman Josh McKoon said election security is a "key concern" among Republican primary voters and candidates will continue to talk about it.

Shepherd said he's surprised that a "bureaucratic error" is galvanizing the party's MAGA wing as much as it is. Garland Favorito, a conservative activist known for espousing conspiracy theories and challenging the state's 2020 results, said Fulton County's error is just one example of what he describes as Raffensperger's lack of transparency.

Republicans like Jones "think that if they can win all the straw polls at the Republican Party barbecues, they'll probably win the nomination, when typically speaking, it's the opposite," said Shepherd.

Vance's message in Minneapolis: Local officials must cooperate with the immigration crackdown

By MICHELLE L. PRICE, JULIE CARR SMYTH and STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Insisting that he was in Minnesota to calm tensions, Vice President JD Vance on Thursday blamed "far-left people" and state and local law enforcement officials for the chaos that has unfolded during the White House's aggressive deportation campaign.

The Republican vice president said, "We're doing everything that we can to lower the temperature," adding that Minnesota leaders should "meet us halfway."

The Justice Department is investigating top Democrats in the state, including Gov. Tim Walz and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, over whether they have obstructed or impeded immigration enforcement through their public criticism of the administration. Walz and Frey have described the investigation as an attempt to bully the political opposition.

Federal officers stood in a row behind Vance as he spoke, and there were two U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement vehicles emblazoned with the slogan "Defend the Homeland."

His visit follows weeks of aggressive rhetoric from the White House, including President Donald Trump, who has threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act — and send in military forces — to crack down on unrest. Asked about that option, Vance said, "Right now, we don't think that we need that."

Trump dispatched thousands of federal agents to Minnesota earlier this month after reports of child care fraud by Somali immigrants. Minneapolis-area officials, including Frey, as well as the police, religious leaders and the business community, have pushed back. And outrage grew after an agent fatally shot Renee Good, a U.S. citizen and mother of three, during a confrontation this month.

Walz said the federal government was to blame for the turmoil.

"Take the show of force off the streets and partner with the state on targeted enforcement of violent offenders instead of random, aggressive confrontation," he wrote on social media.

Frey, speaking from city hall, accused immigration officials of racial profiling, an accusation that Vance had rejected during his visit.

"They are detaining people that have done nothing wrong," Frey said. "They are going after people exclusively based on the fact that they look like they are Somali or Latino, and no reason beyond that."

He said the enforcement measures in the city and an influx of some 3,000 federal officers seemed designed as political retaliation, as opposed to getting criminals off the street.

"This is more about, tragically, terrorizing people than it is about safety, than it is even about immigration," Frey said.

Vance defends actions by ICE agents

Vance has played a leading role in defending the agent who killed Good, and he previously said her death was "a tragedy of her own making." On Thursday, he repeated claims that Good "rammed" an agent with her car, an account that has been disputed based on videos of the incident.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 58 of 76

Minnesota faith leaders, backed by labor unions and hundreds of Minneapolis-area businesses, are planning a day of protests on Friday. Nearly 600 local businesses have announced plans to shut down, while hundreds of "solidarity events" are expected across the country, according to MoveOn spokesperson Britt Jacovich.

Vance defended ICE agents who detained a 5-year-old boy as he was arriving home from preschool.

"When they went to arrest his illegal alien father, the father ran," Vance said. "So the story is that ICE detained a 5-year-old. Well, what are they supposed to do?"

The boy, who was taken by federal agents along with his father to a detention facility in Texas, was the fourth student from his Minneapolis suburb to be detained by immigration officers in recent weeks.

Asked about reporting that federal authorities are asserting sweeping power to forcibly enter people's homes without a judge's warrant, Vance said warrants would still be part of immigration enforcement. But Vance did not specify which kind of warrant he was referring to.

"Nobody is talking about doing immigration enforcement without a warrant," Vance said. "We're never going to enter somebody's house without some kind of warrant, unless of course somebody is firing at an officer and they have to protect themselves."

The Associated Press reported on Wednesday that federal immigration officers were asserting sweeping power to forcibly enter houses without a judicial warrant, according to an internal ICE memo, in what is a reversal of long-standing guidance meant to respect constitutional limits on government searches.

Instead, the officers can use administrative warrants. Those are issued by ICE officials, as opposed to warrants signed off on by an independent judge.

Vance visited Ohio earlier in the day

During a stop in Toledo, Ohio, on Thursday morning, Vance acknowledged that immigration agents have made mistakes, while declining to be specific.

"Of course there have been mistakes made, because you're always going to have mistakes made in law enforcement," he said when asked about Trump's comments earlier this week that ICE "is going to make mistakes sometimes."

But Vance said the blame didn't lie with the federal government.

"The number one way where we could lower the mistakes that are happening, at least with our immigration enforcement, is to have local jurisdictions that are cooperating with us," he said.

Vance also praised the arrest of protesters who disrupted a church service in Minnesota on Sunday and said he expects more prosecutions to come. The protesters entered the church chanting "ICE out" and "Justice for Renee Good."

"They're scaring little kids who are there to worship God on a Sunday morning," Vance said. He added, "Just as you have the right to protest, they have a right to worship God as they choose. And when you interrupt that, that is a violation of the law."

Vance took the opportunity to criticize hometown Democratic Rep. Marcy Kaptur while he was in her Toledo-centered district. A crowded slate of Republicans — including former ICE Deputy Director Madison Sheahan — is vying to take on the longest-serving woman in Congress this fall.

Vance's stop in Ohio was focused primarily on bolstering the administration's positive economic message on the heels of Trump's appearance at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, and he showed support for Republicans such as gubernatorial contender Vivek Ramaswamy and U.S. Sen. Jon Husted.

Convincing voters that the nation is in rosy financial shape has been a persistent challenge for Trump during the first year of his second term. Polling has shown that the public is unconvinced that the economy is in good condition and majorities disapprove of Trump's handling of foreign policy.

Vance urged voters to be patient with the economy, saying Trump had inherited a bad situation from Democratic President Joe Biden.

"You don't turn the Titanic around overnight," Vance said. "It takes time to fix what is broken."

House Republicans barely defeat Venezuela war powers resolution to check Trump's military actions

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House rejected a Democratic-backed resolution Thursday that would have prevented President Donald Trump from sending U.S. military forces to Venezuela after a tied vote on the legislation fell just short of the majority needed for passage.

The tied vote was the latest sign of Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson's tenuous hold on the majority, as well as some of the growing pushback in the GOP-controlled Congress to Trump's aggressions in the Western Hemisphere. A Senate vote on a similar resolution was also tied last week until Vice President JD Vance broke the deadlock.

To defeat the resolution Thursday, Republican leaders had to hold the vote open for more than 20 minutes while Republican Rep. Wesley Hunt, who had been out of Washington all week campaigning for a Senate seat in Texas, rushed back to Capitol Hill to cast the decisive vote.

On the House floor, Democrats responded with shouts that Republican leaders were violating the chamber's procedural rules. Two Republicans — Reps. Don Bacon of Nebraska and Thomas Massie of Kentucky — voted with all Democrats for the legislation.

The war powers resolution would have directed Trump to remove U.S. troops from Venezuela. The Trump administration told senators last week that there are no U.S. troops on the ground in the South American nation and committed to getting congressional approval before launching major military operations there.

But Democrats argued that the resolution is necessary after the U.S. raid to capture Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro and since Trump has stated plans to control the country's oil industry for years to come.

The response to Trump's foreign policy

Thursday's vote was the latest test in Congress of how much leeway Republicans will give a president who campaigned on removing the U.S. from foreign entanglements but has increasingly reached for military options to impose his will in the Western Hemisphere. So far, almost all Republicans have declined to put checks on Trump through the war powers votes.

Rep. Brian Mast, the Republican chair of the House Armed Services Committee, accused Democrats of bringing the war powers resolution to a vote out of "spite" for Trump.

"It's about the fact that you don't want President Trump to arrest Maduro, and you will condemn him no matter what he does, even though he brought Maduro to justice with possibly the most successful law enforcement operation in history," Mast added.

Still, Democrats stridently argued that Congress needs to assert its role in determining when the president can use wartime powers. They have been able to force a series of votes in both the House and Senate as Trump, in recent months, ramped up his campaign against Maduro and set his sights on other conflicts overseas.

"Donald Trump is reducing the United States to a regional bully with fewer allies and more enemies," Rep. Gregory Meeks, the top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said during a floor debate. "This isn't making America great again. It's making us isolated and weak."

Last week, Senate Republicans were only able to narrowly dismiss the Venezuela war powers resolution after the Trump administration persuaded two Republicans to back away from their earlier support. As part of that effort, Secretary of State Marco Rubio committed to a briefing next week before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Yet Trump's insistence that the U.S. will possess Greenland over the objections of Denmark, a NATO ally, has alarmed some Republicans on Capitol Hill. They have mounted some of the most outspoken objections to almost anything the president has done since taking office.

Trump this week backed away from military and tariff threats against European allies as he announced that his administration was working with NATO on a "framework of a future deal" on Arctic security.

But Bacon still expressed frustration with Trump's aggressive foreign policy and voted for the war powers resolution even though it only applies to Venezuela.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 60 of 76

"I'm tired of all the threats," he said.

Trump's recent military actions — and threats to do more — have reignited a decades-old debate in Congress over the War Powers Act, a law passed in the early 1970s by lawmakers looking to claw back their authority over military actions.

The war powers debate

The War Powers Resolution was passed in the Vietnam War era as the U.S. sent troops to conflicts throughout Asia. It attempted to force presidents to work with Congress to deploy troops if there hasn't already been a formal declaration of war.

Under the legislation, lawmakers can also force votes on legislation that directs the president to remove U.S. forces from hostilities.

Presidents have long tested the limits of those parameters, and Democrats argue that Trump in his second term has pushed those limits farther than ever.

The Trump administration left Congress in the dark ahead of the surprise raid to capture Maduro. It has also used an evolving set of legal justifications to blow up alleged drug boats and seize sanctioned oil tankers near Venezuela.

Democrats question who gets to benefit from Venezuelan oil licenses

As the Trump administration oversees the sale of Venezuela's petroleum worldwide, Senate Democrats are also questioning who is benefiting from the contracts.

In one of the first transactions, the U.S. granted Vitol, the world's largest independent oil broker, a license worth roughly \$250 million. A senior partner at Vitol, John Addison, gave roughly \$6 million to Trump-aligned political action committees during the presidential election, according to donation records compiled by OpenSecrets.

"Congress and the American people deserve full transparency regarding any financial commitments, promises, deals, or other arrangements related to Venezuela that could favor donors to the President's campaign and political operation," 13 Democratic senators wrote to White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles Thursday in a letter led by Democratic Sen. Adam Schiff of California.

The White House has said it is safeguarding the South American country's oil for the benefit of both the people of Venezuela and the U.S.

Former Iowa superintendent pleads guilty to falsely claiming US citizenship

By HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The former superintendent of Iowa's largest school district pleaded guilty Thursday, and admitted to falsely claiming to be a U.S. citizen on a federal form and illegally possessing firearms.

Ian Roberts, a native of Guyana in South America, had initially pleaded not guilty to both counts, which together carry a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, and a trial was scheduled to begin in early March. Roberts affirmed Thursday that he's aware his guilty pleas could have an impact on his immigration case and that he could face immediate deportation after he serves his sentence.

Roberts ascended as an exuberant and inspiring leader over a two-decade career in urban education. For two years, he was superintendent of the Des Moines public school district, which serves 30,000 students.

Just weeks into a new school year, Roberts was detained by federal immigration officers. The Sept. 26 arrest stunned community members and drew national attention to his history of criminal charges and falsified credentials.

On Thursday, Roberts walked into the courtroom with his wrists and feet cuffed. He addressed U.S. Magistrate Judge Helen C. Adams cordially and simply as he acknowledged he understood his rights and the details of his plea agreement, which he had in front of him. Roberts put on eyeglasses to follow along.

"It is my signature, your honor," he said of the signed agreement, and later confirmed it was "my decision" to sign it.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 61 of 76

As part of Roberts' plea agreement, prosecutors in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Iowa agreed to not pursue additional charges against Roberts or others related to these counts, according to the filing. Prosecutors also agreed to recommend some leniency, but Roberts' sentence is ultimately up to U.S. District Judge Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger. That hearing is scheduled for May 29.

Alfredo Parrish, one of Roberts' attorneys, told reporters after the hearing that Roberts "wanted to accept responsibility and that's what he did," though Parrish said personally that the moment was "not one of the happiest" in his long legal career.

In a targeted U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement operation, Roberts was pulled over in his school-issued Jeep Cherokee and allegedly fled from federal agents. They later found the car abandoned near a wooded area and located Roberts with the help of state troopers. Authorities said a loaded handgun was wrapped in a towel under the seat and there was \$3,000 in cash in the car.

A federal grand jury in October returned a two-count indictment. According to the plea agreement, Roberts admits he knowingly and intentionally made a "false attestation" that he was a U.S. citizen on the Employment Eligibility Verification form, known as an I-9, that he submitted in Des Moines. Roberts answered: "Yes, your honor" when asked by the federal judge if that statement on the I-9 was, in fact, false.

That carries a punishment of up to five years in prison and a fine.

Roberts also faces a federal weapons charge, punishable by up to 15 years in prison and a fine. In addition to the one in his vehicle when he was arrested, a second pistol, a rifle and a shotgun were found during a search of Roberts' home, authorities said.

Roberts will forfeit the weapons, according to the agreement.

Roberts completed the I-9 form when he was hired in 2023 and submitted a Social Security card and driver's license as verifying documents, according to the district. He also stated he was a U.S. citizen in his application to the state board of educational examiners, which issued Roberts a professional administrator license in 2023.

Phil Roeder, a spokesperson for Des Moines Public Schools, declined to comment on Roberts' legal proceedings. The district's focus "remains on serving the educational needs of students," he said in a statement.

Roberts was subject to a notice to appear before an immigration judge in October 2020, just months before his work authorization was set to expire, and a final removal order in 2024, authorities said. District officials said they were not aware of the immigration issues.

Parrish has said his client was under the impression from a prior attorney that his immigration case was "resolved successfully." During Thursday's hearing, Parrish mentioned that advice of prior counsel as one of the lines of defense he had discussed with Roberts.

Parrish also said they had discussed arguing to dismiss the firearms charge, citing ongoing court cases addressing Second Amendment rights and telling reporters later that it's an area of the law "in flux." Parrish said during the hearing that one argument in Roberts' favor could have been possession of firearms for self defense, saying Roberts had gotten threats as superintendent that he had reported to law enforcement.

Parrish told reporters Thursday that the sentencing hearing "will be most important," adding that he will address factors that are likely to impact the court's decision.

Trump administration tells agencies to compile data on money sent to Democratic states

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

President Donald Trump's budget office this week ordered most government agencies to compile data on the federal money that is sent to 14 mostly Democratic-controlled states and the District of Columbia in what it describes as a tool to "reduce the improper and fraudulent use of those funds."

The order comes a week after Trump said he intended to cut off federal funding that goes to states that are home to "sanctuary cities" that resist his immigration policies. He said that would start Feb. 1 but hasn't unveiled further details.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 62 of 76

A memo to federal departments and agencies did not explain why those states were targeted. All but one — Virginia — were either included last year on the administration's list of sanctuary places or were home to at least one jurisdiction that was. In Virginia, one of Democratic Gov. Abigail Spanberger's first acts after taking office Saturday was to rescind a directive by Republican former Gov. Glenn Youngkin that required law enforcement cooperation with immigration officials.

There is no strict definition for sanctuary policies or sanctuary cities, but the terms generally describe limited cooperation with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The memo, while unusual, stops far short of suspending money.

"This is a data-gathering exercise only," it said. "It does not involve withholding funds."

Trump said at a White House news conference Tuesday — the same day the memo went to federal departments — that he still intended to cut off funding.

"We're not going to pay them anymore. They are sanctuary for criminals," he said. "They can sue us and maybe they'll win, but we're not giving money to sanctuary cities anymore."

Latest way Trump has targeted Democratic-controlled states

The memo, obtained by The Associated Press, directs federal agencies to submit information by Jan. 28 to the president's budget office.

It asks for a swath of information about money flowing to California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and the District of Columbia. All but Minnesota are controlled by Democratic legislatures and all but Vermont have Democratic governors.

The list of targets includes all fully Democratic-controlled states except Hawaii, Maryland and New Mexico. And it includes all the states with nearly all the sanctuary jurisdictions. But it does not include some other states that are home to cities or counties on the list: Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, New Mexico and Pennsylvania.

Trump's administration has been focused deeply in recent weeks on the idea that federal money is being used fraudulently in blue states.

Earlier this month, the administration tried to put on hold funds for child care subsidies and other aid for low-income families in California, Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota and New York, citing the possibility of fraud. A judge paused that effort.

Request is for information on most government funding streams

The memo applies to all federal departments and agencies except the Department of Defense, which the administration now refers to as the Department of War, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

It asks for details about grants, loans and other federal funds provided to the states and local governments in those states, along with institutions of higher education and nonprofits in the states.

The agencies are being told not to report on the use of at least some money that goes directly to individuals, such as federal student aid.

FACT FOCUS: White House shares altered image showing arrest of civil rights attorney in Minnesota

By MELISSA GOLDIN Associated Press

The Trump administration on Thursday misrepresented the arrest of a prominent civil rights attorney for her role in an anti-immigration enforcement protest that disrupted a service at a Minnesota church.

On its official X page, the White House shared an image of Nekima Levy Armstrong that showed her in tears with, her arms behind her back, standing in front of someone wearing a badge around their neck.

The problem? Levy Armstrong wasn't actually crying. The image was manipulated to make the moment more dramatic than it actually was.

Here's a closer look at the facts.

CLAIM: An image shows civil rights attorney Nekima Levy Armstrong crying while being arrested in Minnesota.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 63 of 76

THE FACTS: This is false. The original image, which shows Levy Armstrong with a neutral expression, was altered to make her appear emotional.

Jordan Kushner, an attorney for Levy Armstrong, said he was present at his client's arrest and said any videos and photos put out by the administration showing her crying were manipulated images.

"It is just so outrageous that the White House would make up stories about someone to try and discredit them," Kushner said. "She was completely calm and composed and rational. There was no one crying. So this is just outrageous defamation."

He added that video Levy Armstrong's husband shot "dismantles what they claim" and that the video would be released soon.

Amid growing questions about the image, White House Deputy Communications Director Kaelan Dorr wrote on X Thursday afternoon: "YET AGAIN to the people who feel the need to reflexively defend perpetrators of heinous crimes in our country I share with you this message: Enforcement of the law will continue. The memes will continue. Thank you for your attention to this matter."

Attorney General Pam Bondi announced Levy Armstrong's arrest in an X post at 9:28 a.m. EST. Less than an hour later, at 10:21 a.m. EST, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem posted the original photo of Levy Armstrong, also on X. The White House then shared the manipulated image at 10:54 a.m. EST.

Certain details in both images are the same, indicating they are not simply photos taken at different times. For example, the badge worn by the person behind Levy Armstrong is in the same position, as are the lights shining through the curtain to the left of Levy Armstrong's head.

Neither the White House nor Homeland Security immediately responded to requests for additional comment.

FACT FOCUS: White House shares altered image showing arrest of civil rights attorney in Minnesota

By MELISSA GOLDIN Associated Press

The Trump administration on Thursday misrepresented the arrest of a prominent civil rights attorney for her role in an anti-immigration enforcement protest that disrupted a service at a Minnesota church.

On its official X page, the White House shared an image of Nekima Levy Armstrong that showed her in tears with, her arms behind her back, standing in front of someone wearing a badge around their neck.

The problem? Levy Armstrong wasn't actually crying. The image was manipulated to make the moment more dramatic than it actually was.

Here's a closer look at the facts.

CLAIM: An image shows civil rights attorney Nekima Levy Armstrong crying while being arrested in Minnesota.

THE FACTS: This is false. The original image, which shows Levy Armstrong with a neutral expression, was altered to make her appear emotional.

Jordan Kushner, an attorney for Levy Armstrong, said he was present at his client's arrest and said any videos and photos put out by the administration showing her crying were manipulated images.

"It is just so outrageous that the White House would make up stories about someone to try and discredit them," Kushner said. "She was completely calm and composed and rational. There was no one crying. So this is just outrageous defamation."

He added that video Levy Armstrong's husband shot "dismantles what they claim" and that the video would be released soon.

Amid growing questions about the image, White House Deputy Communications Director Kaelan Dorr wrote on X Thursday afternoon: "YET AGAIN to the people who feel the need to reflexively defend perpetrators of heinous crimes in our country I share with you this message: Enforcement of the law will continue. The memes will continue. Thank you for your attention to this matter."

Attorney General Pam Bondi announced Levy Armstrong's arrest in an X post at 9:28 a.m. EST. Less than an hour later, at 10:21 a.m. EST, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem posted the original photo

of Levy Armstrong, also on X. The White House then shared the manipulated image at 10:54 a.m. EST. Certain details in both images are the same, indicating they are not simply photos taken at different times. For example, the badge worn by the person behind Levy Armstrong is in the same position, as are the lights shining through the curtain to the left of Levy Armstrong's head.

Neither the White House nor Homeland Security immediately responded to requests for additional comment.

DiCaprio to AP on Oscar nomination: 'It's about trying to be in films that are memorable'

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Leonardo DiCaprio picked up his sixth lead actor Oscar nomination Thursday morning for carrying the American masterpiece "One Battle After Another" as the overwhelmed single dad and flustered revolutionary Bob Ferguson.

Ten years after he won best actor for "The Revenant," it's a statistic that puts him in a rarefied group that includes Daniel Day-Lewis. Including his supporting nomination for "What's Eating Gilbert Grape," he's now among a group of only eight actors, male or female, to have achieved that milestone. Overall, he has eight nominations to his name, including a best picture credit for "The Wolf of Wall Street."

But for DiCaprio, a consummate director's actor who spoke to The Associated Press by phone Thursday morning, the most important thing isn't even necessarily the accolades but being part of a film that's as timeless as "One Battle After Another."

"I love what I do," DiCaprio said in a phone interview. "At the end of the day it's about trying to be in films that are memorable. This is a great addition to have your peers sort of recognize it."

In Bob Ferguson, DiCaprio got one of his greatest roles in an already illustrious career. It's a performance that's not easy to define but that spotlighted his grasp on his craft to maximum effect, allowing him to be funny, emotional, intimate and utterly authentic, whether he's yelling about not remembering a passcode, reading his daughter's friend the riot act or even just wordlessly looking at Sean Penn's antagonist Colonel Steven J. Lockjaw with all the fear in the world for his daughter in his eyes.

It's not often that Oscar nominated performances also become cultural touchstones, but this Halloween there were more than a few men and women donning Bob's plaid bathrobe, black beanie and blockers on the streets around the country.

"It's fantastic," DiCaprio said. "A film like this, a film that had so much thought put into it for 20 plus years in Paul Thomas Anderson's mind, a film that's so topical and pertinent, a film that I got to work with so many of my heroes, a director who's my hero? ... It flows freely off the tongue to be able to promote and talk about it. It's a piece of art that you're proud of and I couldn't be more proud to be in this film."

It's one he hopes audiences revisit time and time again, finding new interpretations, new ways of looking and their characters and their intentions. The film received 13 nominations overall, second only to "Sinners," including best picture, best director and supporting actor nominations for Benicio Del Toro and Penn.

One of the bigger snubs of the day, though, was DiCaprio's co-star Chase Infiniti, an integral part of the film as his daughter Willa who was not nominated for lead actress. DiCaprio said he'd just spoken to her and that she had "an amazing attitude" about it.

"She was the fabric of this movie. She was the heart and soul. There would be no 'One Battle After Another' without the performance that she gave," DiCaprio said. "A young actress coming in to fill a role that was her first film and carrying the entire emotional weight of this movie was a near-impossible task. She should be so proud of herself and we're all so proud of her."

Between the "One Battle After Another" and "Sinners" nominations, it was a big morning for Warner Bros., a studio whose future is uncertain, with many wondering if films like "One Battle" would be made under Netflix, or if talent like Anderson or DiCaprio would be part of it. DiCaprio demurred on commenting specifically on the pending acquisition, instead championing original filmmaking and theatrical moviegoing.

"To me what matters is great ideas and original filmmaking. I think there's this tide of change that is going

to happen no matter how we feel about it," DiCaprio said. "There's nothing like the theatrical experience to immerse you and have the rest of the world disappear and feel part of something else, something bigger, something different. That's the magic of movies. That's why I think it's our greatest art form and I hope the theatrical experience remains alive, but that's up to audiences and their appreciation of that art form."

DiCaprio might have a tendency to be turned into memes sometimes, whether it's that image of him walking in "Inception" or even animatedly talking to someone at the Golden Globes about "KPop Demon Hunters." (Laughing, he told the AP that he was talking to a friend who will remain anonymous).

Perhaps it's because he saves it all for the screen and for great filmmakers, whether it's Anderson, Martin Scorsese or Christopher Nolan. In a dark theater, 30 feet tall and impossible to look away from, all the noise evaporates.

Trump sues JPMorgan for \$5 billion, alleges the bank closed his accounts for political reasons

By KEN SWEET AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump sued banking giant JPMorgan Chase and its CEO Jamie Dimon for \$5 billion on Thursday over allegations that JPMorgan stopped providing banking services to him and his businesses for political reasons after he left office in January 2021.

The lawsuit, filed in Miami-Dade County court in Florida, alleges that JPMorgan abruptly closed multiple accounts in February 2021 with just 60 days notice and no explanation. By doing so, Trump claims JPMorgan and Dimon cut the president and his businesses off from millions of dollars, disrupted their operations and forced Trump and the businesses to urgently open bank accounts elsewhere.

"JPMC debanked (Trump and his businesses) because it believed that the political tide at the moment favored doing so," the lawsuit alleges.

In the lawsuit, Trump alleges he tried to raise the issue personally with Dimon after the bank started to close his accounts, and that Dimon assured Trump he would figure out what was happening. The lawsuit alleges Dimon failed to follow up with Trump. Further, Trump's lawyers allege that JPMorgan placed the president and his companies on a reputational "blacklist" that both JPMorgan and other banks use to keep clients from opening accounts with them in the future.

In a statement, JPMorgan said it believes the suit has no merit.

Trump threatened to sue JPMorgan Chase last week at a time of heightened tensions between the White House and Wall Street. The president said he wanted to cap interest rates on credit cards at 10% to help lower costs for consumers. Chase is one of the largest issuers of credit cards in the country and a bank official told reporters that it would fight any effort by the White House or Congress to implement a rate cap on credit cards. Bank industry executives have also bristled at Trump's attacks on the independence of the Federal Reserve.

Debanking occurs when a bank closes the accounts of a customer or refuses to do business with a customer in the form of loans or other services. Once a relatively obscure issue in finance, debanking has become a politically charged issue in recent years, with conservative politicians arguing that banks have discriminated against them and their affiliated interests.

Debanking first became a national issue when conservatives accused the Obama administration of pressuring banks to stop extending services to gun stores and payday lenders under "Operation Choke Point."

Trump and other conservative figures have alleged that banks cut them off from their accounts under the umbrella term of "reputational risk" after the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol. Since Trump came back into office, the president's banking regulators have moved to stop any banks from using "reputational risk" as a reason for denying service to customers.

"JPMC's conduct ... is a key indicator of a systemic, subversive industry practice that aims to coerce the public to shift and re-align their political views," Trump's lawyers wrote in the lawsuit.

Trump accuses the bank of trade libel and accuses Dimon himself of violating Florida's Unfair and Deceptive Trade Practices Act.

In its statement, JPMorgan said that it “regrets” that Trump sued the bank but insisted it did not close the accounts for political reasons.

“JPMC does not close accounts for political or religious reasons,” a bank spokesperson said. “We do close accounts because they create legal or regulatory risk for the company.”

This is not the first lawsuit Trump has filed against a big bank alleging that he was debanked. The Trump Organization sued credit card giant Capital One in March 2025 for similar reasons and allegations. That lawsuit is still winding its way through the court system,

What to know about FDA’s review of new Zyn advertising proposal

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans who smoke may soon be hearing a lot more about Zyn, the flavored nicotine pouches that have generated billions in sales while going viral on social media.

The Food and Drug Administration convened a public meeting Thursday to consider whether Philip Morris International should be allowed to advertise its pouches as a less-harmful alternative for adults who smoke cigarettes.

Government documents and presentations made at the meeting suggest FDA regulators are leaning toward approving the company’s request.

But a panel of independent experts asked pointed questions about the company’s research, the risks of underage use and whether the new marketing language would really steer smokers away from cigarettes. Nevertheless, they said the proposed risk statement is likely accurate.

“There are very few things that are legally available and worse for you than cigarettes, so it’s a pretty low bar to be safer than cigarettes,” said Lisa Postow, a panel member and scientist at the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

The FDA is not bound to follow the panel’s guidance and will make the final decision on whether to approve the marketing claims. There is no deadline for a decision.

Zyn contains nicotine powder and comes in 10 flavors, including mint, coffee and citrus. Nicotine pouches have been a rare source of growth in the tobacco industry, where companies have struggled to replace shrinking revenue from cigarettes, chewing tobacco and other legacy products.

Here’s what to know about Zyn’s review before the FDA:

Why is FDA reviewing Zyn now?

Philip Morris asked the agency to approve new marketing language for Zyn, emphasizing its relative health benefits when compared with cigarettes.

Specifically, the company wants to say that using Zyn reduces the risk of “mouth cancer, heart disease, lung cancer, stroke” and other smoking-related diseases. Adding that language to Zyn promotional materials would further cement the brand in the U.S., where it dominates sales of nicotine pouches.

Last January, the FDA authorized Zyn to remain on the market after years of federal review, saying company data showed the small pouches are less harmful than cigarettes and other traditional tobacco products. Zyn was the first nicotine pouch to win FDA authorization.

If FDA signs off on the “reduced risk” claims, Philip Morris would be able to use the language in ads, mailing materials and online posts.

“Adults who smoke need accurate information about different tobacco products and the relative risks associated with them,” said Keagan Lenihan, a Philip Morris vice president.

What’s the evidence?

FDA scientists appeared to back the company’s proposal, saying “the totality of the evidence” supports the statement that Zyn reduces the risk of various smoking-related illnesses.

But the outside experts noted that Philip Morris did not conduct long-term studies of Zyn users or whether reading messages about lower risks led more smokers to switch.

“Whether or not the claim is going to accelerate that switching, there is no data here to answer that question,” said Cristine Delnevo of the Rutgers Institute for Nicotine and Tobacco Studies, who led the panel.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 67 of 76

Philip Morris already sells a similar oral tobacco product, snus, a type of tobacco pouch popular in Sweden and other Scandinavian countries. Studies in those countries have consistently shown lower rates of lung cancer, mouth cancer and related diseases among snus users when compared with smokers.

The FDA approved a reduced-risk claim for the company's snus in 2019 and panelists noted that there has been little uptake of those products by U.S. smokers. But Philip Morris executives said the language could have an impact over time.

"The more you communicate to adult smokers with this type of claim it will hopefully only increase switching to Zyn," Lenihan said.

What about underage use?

In addition to considering potential benefits for smokers, the FDA is required to review the potential harms to young people and nonsmokers.

Representatives from anti-tobacco groups pointed to worrying signs: Videos from "Zynfluencers" and other young people using the pouches have racked up tens of millions of views on social media platforms in recent years.

Andrew Tardiff of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids noted that Philip Morris did not test how its marketing messages might influence teenagers.

"Zyn has features that enhance its appeal to young people. It's sold in a variety of flavors. It's easy to conceal. And it can be used discretely," Tardiff said, citing similarities to Juul, the e-cigarette widely blamed for sparking the recent trend in teenage vaping.

Tardiff and other speakers also said that teenagers could be attracted by a Zyn rewards program that allows purchasers to accrue points that can be exchanged for electronics, gift cards and apparel.

Despite such factors, FDA staffers note that teenage use of nicotine pouches remains relatively low at 2.4% of high school students, according 2024 federal survey data.

How popular is Zyn?

Less than 1% of U.S. adults use nicotine pouches, but the products make up the fastest-growing segment of the tobacco market.

Within the category, Zyn is the overwhelming U.S. leader. Last year, it had more than \$3.24 billion in sales, or more than two-thirds of the market, according to Nielsen data analyzed by Goldman Sachs.

How big winter storms create snow, sleet and freezing rain

By CALEIGH WELLS Associated Press

When big winter storms move in, they can bring nasty weather that ranges from snow to sleet and freezing rain — or maybe extreme and dangerous cold.

Here's a look at some weather conditions and how they vary from place to place.

How snow might become ice or sleet on the ground

To stick, snow needs consistent cold air all the way from where flakes form in the clouds to the ground. If it's below freezing the whole way, the snowflakes never melt, so nothing turns to ice.

"The further north, the deeper that Arctic layer is, the more likely to support snow," said MIT research scientist Judah Cohen.

Farther south, the atmosphere may include a sandwich of warm air between cold layers. That's how sleet and freezing rain happen.

"The snowflakes form, they fall and then they meet a warm layer, a layer above freezing, and they will melt. But then there's another layer near the surface that's below freezing again, so they will refreeze before they hit the ground," Cohen said.

Sleet requires the lowest layer to be cold enough that raindrops refreeze when they hit the ground, creating bouncy ice pellets. If that lower cold layer is shallow, the rain doesn't have enough time to freeze in the air. So it hits the ground as raindrops that freeze when they make contact.

Then there's graupel, which is a rarer mix between snow and sleet. Not quite fluffy, and not quite hard.

"It's snow that has tried to melt on its way down, but not quite melted," said David Robinson, New Jersey state climatologist at Rutgers University. "It's out of that six-point crystalline shape and has begun to look

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 68 of 76

more like a cotton ball. So it hasn't gotten to the point of full melt that it could then refreeze as sleet."

There's also hail, which Robinson said some people mistakenly use to describe sleet. But real hail probably isn't happening in a winter storm. That usually happens in the summer because it requires warmer air that's closer to the surface. That creates an updraft that allows rain to move up, freeze, fall, and move up again, forming layers of ice similar to the layers of an onion.

Different precipitation, different hazards

Snow can be dangerous — sufficient to send cars skidding into ditches and be life-threatening in whiteout conditions. But at least it can be plowed.

The ice in sleet makes it much more difficult to move.

But the most devastating moisture is freezing rain, Cohen said, because it turns roads into skating rinks and can be so heavy it has the power to bring down power lines.

And then there's extreme cold.

When the National Weather Service deems expected temperatures and wind chills are low enough to be dangerous, they issue alerts.

A cold weather advisory means dangerous weather is likely. An extreme cold watch means life-threatening weather is possible. An extreme cold warning means life-threatening weather is likely.

Trump administration halts use of human fetal tissue in NIH-funded research

By The Associated Press undefined

The Trump administration announced Thursday that human fetal tissue derived from abortions can no longer be used in research funded by the National Institutes of Health.

The policy, long urged by anti-abortion groups, expands restrictions issued during President Donald Trump's first term.

The government has funded research involving fetal tissue for decades, under both Republican and Democratic administrations. The tissue, which otherwise would be thrown away, has been critical for certain research, including ways to fight HIV and cancer. Opponents of fetal tissue use say there are now alternatives, although many scientists say there aren't always adequate substitutes.

In a statement Thursday, NIH Director Jay Bhattacharya acknowledged the agency "has long maintained policies governing the responsible and limited use of human fetal tissue in biomedical research."

Its use has declined since 2019. The \$47 billion agency counted just 77 projects funded in 2024 that included fetal tissue.

The first Trump administration ended the use of fetal tissue on NIH's campus and set up additional hurdles for non-government scientists seeking NIH funding, restrictions that were subsequently lifted by the Biden administration. Thursday's new policy covers all NIH-funded research.

NIH documents say the policy doesn't end the use of "cell lines" created years ago from fetal cells. Those are cloned copies of cells, such as embryonic stem cells, adapted to grow continuously in labs. Bhattacharya's statement said NIH will soon seek comment about potential ways "to reduce or potentially replace reliance on human embryonic stem cells."

The AP NFL MVP finalists are Allen, Lawrence, Maye, McCaffrey and Stafford

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Christian McCaffrey has become only the second player to be a finalist for three AP NFL awards in the same year, as he joins Josh Allen, Trevor Lawrence, Drake Maye and Matthew Stafford in the running for The Associated Press 2025 NFL Most Valuable Player award.

McCaffrey and Maye are also finalists for Offensive Player of the Year. McCaffrey and Lawrence are among the finalists for Comeback Player of the Year.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 69 of 76

The winners will be announced at "NFL Honors" on Feb. 5. A nationwide panel of 50 media members who regularly cover the league completed voting before the playoffs began. Votes were tabulated by the accounting firm of Lutz and Carr.

Voters selected a top 5 for the eight AP NFL awards. First-place votes were worth 10 points. Second-through fifth-place votes were worth 5, 3, 2 and 1 points.

Here are the finalists, in alphabetical order, for the eight AP NFL awards:

Most Valuable Player

Allen, the reigning MVP, threw for 3,668 yards, 25 touchdowns and 10 interceptions, posting a 102.2 passer rating while leading Buffalo to its seventh straight playoff appearance. He also ran for 14 TDs. The Bills were knocked out of the playoffs by Denver in the divisional round and fired coach Sean McDermott.

Lawrence helped Jacksonville win 13 games and the AFC South title. He had 4,007 yards passing, 29 TDs and 12 picks. The Jaguars were eliminated by the Bills in the wild-card round.

McCaffrey, an All-Purpose All-Pro, ran for 1,202 yards and 10 TDs and caught 102 passes for 924 yards and seven TDs. He played a key role in helping the injury-depleted San Francisco 49ers win 12 games. He's a finalist for three awards this year, a feat last accomplished by Joe Burrow.

Maye had 4,394 yards passing, 31 TDs and eight picks to lead the New England Patriots to an AFC East title and an appearance in the AFC championship game on Sunday. Maye led the NFL in passer rating (113.5) and completion percentage (72).

Stafford led the NFL with 4,707 yards passing and 46 TDs. He threw eight picks and finished second to Maye with a 109.2 passer rating. Stafford was first-team All-Pro for the first time in his 17-year career.

Last year, Lamar Jackson was the first-team All-Pro QB but was edged out by Allen for MVP.

Coach of the Year

Liam Coen led the Jaguars to a 13-4 record and a division title in his first season, a nine-win turnaround for the franchise.

Ben Johnson guided the Chicago Bears to an 11-5 record and their first NFC North championship in seven seasons.

Mike Macdonald led the Seattle Seahawks to a 14-3 record and the NFC's No. 1 seed. The Seahawks host the Rams in the NFC championship game on Sunday.

Kyle Shanahan guided the 49ers to 12 wins despite a slew of injuries to key players, including losing defensive stars Nick Bosa and Fred Warner for the season.

Mike Vrabel, the 2021 AP NFL Coach of the Year, took the Patriots from worst to first, a 10-win turnaround in his first season with the team.

Assistant Coach of the Year

Eagles defensive coordinator Vic Fangio, Vikings defensive coordinator Brian Flores, Broncos defensive coordinator Vance Joseph, Seahawks offensive coordinator Klint Kubiak and Patriots offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels are the finalists.

Comeback Player of the Year

Lawrence, McCaffrey, Patriots wide receiver Stefon Diggs, Lions edge rusher Aidan Hutchinson and Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott are the finalists.

Defensive Player of the Year

All-Pro edge rusher Will Anderson Jr. had 12 sacks for the Houston Texans and was a major part of the NFL's No. 1 ranked defense.

Broncos edge rusher Nik Bonitto had 14 sacks for the league's second-ranked defense.

Browns edge rusher Myles Garrett, a unanimous choice for All-Pro, set a single-season record with 23 sacks and had 33 tackles for loss. He was the 2023 AP Defensive Player of the Year.

Lions edge rusher Hutchinson had 14 1/2 sacks.

All-Pro edge rusher Micah Parsons had 12 1/2 sacks in 13 1/2 games before tearing his ACL in his first season in Green Bay.

Offensive Player of the Year

Puka Nacua, Bijan Robinson and Jaxon Smith-Njigba join Maye and McCaffrey as finalists.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 70 of 76

Nacua and Smith-Njigba were unanimous selections for All-Pro.

Nacua led the NFL with 129 catches for 1,715 yards and 10 TDs for the Rams. Smith-Njigba caught 119 passes and led the league with 1,793 yards receiving and had 10 TDs.

Robinson, who was All-Pro running back, led the NFL with 2,298 yards from scrimmage. He ran for 1,478 yards and seven TDs and caught 79 passes for 820 yards and four scores.

Defensive Rookie of the Year

Giants edge rusher Abdul Carter, Seahawks defensive back Nick Emmanwori, Falcons edge rusher James Pearce Jr., Browns linebacker Carson Schwesinger and Falcons safety Xavier Watts are the finalists.

Offensive Rookie of the Year

Giants quarterback Jaxson Dart, Buccaneers wide receiver Emeka Egbuka, Patriots running back TreVeyon Henderson, Panthers wide receiver Tetairoa McMillan and Saints quarterback Tyler Shough are the finalists.

Study shows how earthquake monitors can track space junk through sonic booms

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — As more and more space junk comes crashing down, a new study shows how earthquake monitors can better track incoming objects by tuning into their sonic booms.

Scientists reported Thursday that seismic readings from sonic booms that were generated when a discarded module from a Chinese crew capsule reentered over Southern California in 2024 allowed them to place the object's path nearly 20 miles (30 kilometers) farther south than radar had predicted from orbit.

Using this method to track uncontrolled objects plummeting at supersonic speeds, they said, could help recovery teams reach any surviving pieces more quickly — crucial if the debris is dangerous.

"The problem at the moment is we can track stuff very well in space," said Johns Hopkins University's Benjamin Fernando, the lead researcher. "But once it gets to the point that it's actually breaking up in the atmosphere, it becomes very difficult to track."

His team's findings, published in the journal *Science*, focus on just one debris event. But the researchers already have used publicly available data from seismic networks to track a few dozen other reentries, including debris from three failed SpaceX Starship test flights in Texas.

A growing concern among scientists and others is that falling space debris could strike a plane in flight.

"There are thousands, tens of thousands, more satellites in orbit than there were 10 years ago," including SpaceX's Starlinks and other companies' internet satellites, said Fernando. "Unfortunately, we don't really have anything other than the word of the company to say that when they break up, they completely burn up in the atmosphere."

Fernando, who normally studies quakes on the moon and Mars, teamed up with Imperial College London's Constantinos Charalambous the day after the Chinese debris streaked across the California sky in 2024. Over time, they gathered data from more than 120 seismometers that captured the sonic booms from the reentry, using that data to plot the object's suspected path.

China's out-of-control module had been abandoned in a decaying orbit ever since it was cut loose from the Shenzhou-15 capsule returning three Chinese astronauts from their country's space station in 2023. The 1.5-ton (1.36-metric tonne) module — more than 3 feet (1 meter) in size — broke into countless smaller pieces as it plummeted through the atmosphere, resulting in multiple sonic booms. Besides attempting to trace the object's fall, the seismic readings provided a sense of the cascading breakup, Fernando said.

Fernando acknowledged it's impossible to know how close his team's predictions are to the actual path since no debris was reported on the ground.

The goal is to ascertain, within minutes or even seconds, the speed and direction of the incoming space junk as well as its fragmentation. In remote areas like the South Pacific, nuclear blast monitoring stations could potentially track the sonic booms to fine-tune the paths of descent. That's where NASA plans to ditch the International Space Station in five years. SpaceX is working on the deorbiting vehicle to ensure a controlled entry.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 71 of 76

Fernando is looking to eventually publish a catalog of seismically tracked, entering space objects, while improving future calculations by factoring in the wind's effect on falling debris.

In a companion article in Science, Los Alamos National Laboratory's Chris Carr, who was not involved in the study, said further research is needed to reduce the time between an object's final plunge and the determination of its course.

For now, Carr said this new method "unlocks the rapid identification of debris fall-out zones, which is key information as Earth's orbit is anticipated to become increasingly crowded with satellites, leading to a greater influx of space debris."

Complete list of 2026 Oscar nominees

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — This year's class of Oscar nominees has been announced. Ryan Coogler's "Sinners" led all films Thursday with 16 nominations to the 98th Academy Awards, setting a record for the most in Oscar history. Paul Thomas Anderson's "One Battle After Another" was second in the tally with 13 nominations.

Here is a full list of nominees for the 98th annual Academy Awards, which will be presented March 15 in Los Angeles:

Best picture

"Bugonia"; "F1"; "Frankenstein"; "Hamnet"; "Marty Supreme"; "One Battle After Another"; "The Secret Agent"; "Sentimental Value"; "Sinners"; "Train Dreams."

Best Actress

Jessie Buckley, "Hamnet"; Rose Byrne, "If I Had Legs I'd Kick You"; Renate Reinsve, "Sentimental Value"; Emma Stone, "Bugonia"; Kate Hudson, "Song Sung Blue."

Best Actor

Timothée Chalamet, "Marty Supreme"; Leonardo DiCaprio, "One Battle After Another"; Ethan Hawke, "Blue Moon"; Michael B. Jordan, "Sinners"; Wagner Moura, "The Secret Agent."

Best Supporting Actress

Elle Fanning, "Sentimental Value"; Inga Ibsdotter Liljeaas, "Sentimental Value"; Amy Madigan, "Weapons"; Wunmi Mosaku, "Sinners"; Teyana Taylor, "One Battle After Another."

Best Supporting Actor

Jacob Elordi, "Frankenstein"; Sean Penn, "One Battle After Another"; Stellan Skarsgård, "Sentimental Value"; Benicio del Toro, "One Battle After Another" Delroy Lindo, "Sinners."

Director

Paul Thomas Anderson, "One Battle After Another"; Ryan Coogler, "Sinners"; Chloé Zhao, "Hamnet"; Josh Safdie, "Marty Supreme"; Joachim Trier, "Sentimental Value."

Original Song

"Golden" from "Kpop Demon Hunters"; "Train Dreams" from "Train Dreams"; "Dear Me" from "Diane Warren: Relentless"; "I Lied To You" from "Sinners"; "Sweet Dreams Of Joy" from "Viva Verdi!"

Original Score

"Bugonia," Jerskin Fendrix; "Frankenstein," Alexandre Desplat; "Hamnet," Max Richter; "One Battle After Another," Jonny Greenwood; "Sinners," Ludvig Göransson.

Animated Film

"Arco"; "Elio"; "KPop Demon Hunters"; "Little Amélie or the Character of Rain"; "Zootopia 2."

International Film

"The Secret Agent," Brazil; "It Was Just an Accident," France; "Sentimental Value," Norway; "Sirât," Spain; "The Voice of Hind Rajab," Tunisia.

Documentary Feature

"The Perfect Neighbor"; "The Alabama Solution"; "Come See Me in the Good Light"; "Cutting Through Rocks"; "Mr. Nobody Against Putin."

Casting

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 72 of 76

"Hamnet"; "Marty Supreme"; "One Battle After Another"; "The Secret Agent"; "Sinners."

Best Sound

"F1"; "Frankenstein"; "One Battle after Another"; "Sinners"; "Sirāt."

Cinematography

"Frankenstein"; "Marty Supreme"; "One Battle After Another"; "Sinners"; "Train Dreams."

Original Screenplay

"Blue Moon," Robert Kaplow; "It Was Just an Accident," Jafar Panahi, with script collaborators Nader Saivar, Shadmehr Rastin, Mehdi Mahmoudian; "Marty Supreme," Ronald Bronstein and Josh Safdie; "Sentimental Value," Eskil Vogt and Joachim Trier; "Sinners," Ryan Coogler.

Adapted Screenplay

"Bugonia"; Will Tracy; "Frankenstein," Guillermo del Toro; "Hamnet," Chloé Zhao and Maggie O'Farrell; "One Battle After Another," Paul Thomas Anderson; "Train Dreams," Clint Bailey and Greg Kwedar.

Live Action Short Film

"Butcher's Stain"; "A Friend of Dorothy"; "Jane Austen's Period Drama"; "The Singers"; "Two People Exchanging Saliva."

Animated Short Film

"Butterfly"; "Forevergreen"; "The Girl Who Cried Pearls"; "Retirement Plan"; "The Three Sisters."

Documentary Short Film

"All the Empty Rooms"; "Armed Only with a Camera: The Life and Death of Brent Renaud"; "Children No More: Were and Are Gone"; "The Devil Is Busy"; "Perfectly a Strangeness."

Visual Effects

"Avatar: Fire and Ash"; "F1"; "Jurassic World Rebirth"; "The Lost Bus"; "Sinners."

Production Design

"Frankenstein"; "Hamnet"; "Marty Supreme"; "One Battle After Another"; "Sinners."

Film Editing

"F1"; "Marty Supreme"; "One Battle After Another"; "Sentimental Value"; "Sinners."

Makeup and Hairstyling

"Frankenstein"; "Kokuho"; "Sinners"; "The Smashing Machine"; "The Ugly Stepsister."

Costume Design

"Avatar: Fire and Ash"; "Frankenstein"; "Hamnet"; "Marty Supreme"; "Sinners."

Prices ticked up in November as Americans keep spending, a key inflation measure shows

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge ticked up in November in the latest sign that prices remain stubbornly elevated, while consumers spent at a healthy pace.

Consumer prices rose 2.8% in November from a year earlier, the Commerce Department said Thursday, up from a 2.7% annual pace in October. Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core prices also increased 2.8% in November from a year ago, slightly higher than October's 2.7%.

Consumer spending climbed 0.5% in November from the previous month, the report also showed, a solid increase that hits at an economy growing at a healthy pace in the final three months of last year.

The figures point to a mostly strong economy with inflation still elevated, but down sharply from a four-decade peak in June 2022. Hiring has slowed to a crawl, however, leaving job-seekers frustrated even as the unemployment rate stays low. Thursday's figures suggest that the Federal Reserve will be less likely to reduce its key interest rate when it meets next week, a tact typically used if it is worried about a stumbling economy.

"Today's data should reassure the Fed that the economy remains on a solid footing, despite a cooler labor market," said James McCann, an economist at Edward Jones. "Indeed, there looks to be little urgency to

cut rates at next week's meeting, and the central bank could stay on hold for longer should growth remain robust into 2026 and inflation continue to run at above target rates."

On a monthly basis prices, were milder: Both overall inflation and core inflation moved up just 0.2% in November from October. At that pace, over time inflation would move closer to the Federal Reserve's target of 2%. Thursday's data was delayed by the six-week government shutdown last fall.

The solid figures on consumer spending follow a separate report Thursday which showed that the economy expanded at a healthy 4.4% annual rate in the July-September quarter, the fastest growth in two years. Thursday's data points to continued solid growth in the final quarter of 2025.

Trump's European threats could cause lasting damage to US standing in the world

By STEVEN SLOAN and MATT BROWN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Barely a month into his presidency, Joe Biden had a message for Europe.

"America is back," Biden told the Munich Security Conference in 2021. "The transatlantic alliance is back."

It was a promise Biden delivered often as he sought to cast the disruptions of his predecessor, Donald Trump, as an anomaly. But nearly five years later, Biden's assurances have proven short-lived.

In his second term, Trump has cast aside alliances forged over seven decades with Europe that helped lead to the reunification of Germany and the collapse of the Soviet Union. He has hectoring leaders, making demands and leveling accusations more commonly associated with enemies. In the process, he has rocked the stability that has sustained the relationships and left countries to chart a course without U.S. leadership.

The most stark example of this shift has been Trump's threat to take over Greenland, dismissing the nation as a large "piece of ice" as he demanded that Denmark cede control to the U.S., a move that could have caused NATO to rupture.

He called Denmark, which had the highest per capita death toll among coalition forces in Afghanistan, "ungrateful" for U.S. protection during World War II. He posted private text messages that showed European leaders trying to court him. Trump shared images of him planting the U.S. flag in Greenland and, in an extraordinary speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, said Europe was "not heading in the right direction." At one point, he said that "sometimes you need a dictator."

Then, hours later, he announced a "framework of a future deal" on Arctic security. Following a long pattern, however, he offered scant details.

An uncertain standing for the US in the world

Though Trump has for now backed away from his most potent threats to obtain Greenland, the episode has left America's standing in the world uncertain.

NATO leaders already were responding to Trump's threats by signaling strategies that don't include the U.S. That could make it much harder for the next president — whether they are a Democrat or Republican — to attempt the same type of reputational repair that Biden sought.

"To an extent, things can be improved," said Jon Finer, who was Biden's deputy national security adviser and is now a distinguished senior fellow at the Center for American Progress. "But they will never be the same in large part because I think any country that is behaving rationally in terms of its relationship with the United States will realize that we can only be counted on in four year increments, if at all."

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, who parried Trump's gambit to make Canada the 51st state, has already set out on a more independent path. In Davos, Carney was candid that the notion of the long-standing rules-based order was an "illusion."

"Let me be direct: We are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition," Carney said as he called on so-called middle powers to "act together."

Unable to reach a deal with Trump to cut tariffs, Carney was in Beijing last week meeting with President Xi Jinping and brokering a deal that cut levies on Chinese electric cars in return for lower tariffs on

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 74 of 76

certain agricultural and food products including Canadian canola, lobsters and crab. While there, he said ties between Ottawa and Washington were "much more multifaceted" than with Beijing, but added "the way our relationship has progressed in recent months with China, it is more predictable."

Over the weekend, the European Union and the Mercosur bloc of South American countries formally signed a long-sought free trade agreement, which European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen portrayed as a bulwark against the Trump administration. EU lawmakers narrowly voted on Wednesday to hold up the deal for now.

European leaders were unsparing

Ahead of Trump's appearance in Davos, European leaders were unsparing, using language that until recently would have been unthinkable in relation to a dispute with the U.S. French President Emmanuel Macron cautioned against colonial adventures, warning of "a shift towards a world without rules."

Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever said "so many red lines have been crossed," adding, "being a happy vassal is one thing. Being a miserable slave is something else. If you back down now, you're going to lose your dignity."

This moment was also notable for the criticism of Trump from longtime allies on the right. In the UK, Nigel Farage said in an interview with U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson that he understood the security issues Trump was raising in the Arctic. But he added that Trump's approach amounted to the "biggest fracture" in the transatlantic relationship in decades.

"To have a U.S. president threatening tariffs unless we agree that he can take over Greenland, by some means, without it seems even getting the consent of the people of Greenland, I mean, this is a very hostile act," Farage told Johnson.

Jordan Bardella, president of Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally party in France and a European Parliament lawmaker, posted that the EU should suspend last year's tariff deal with the U.S., describing Trump's threats as "commercial blackmail."

Trump mostly has support from GOP in Congress

Congressional Republicans so far have largely supported Trump — or stayed silent.

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Brian Mast likened the dispute to "a hard conversation" and questioned the long-term consequences. Trump used his 2025 State of the Union address to express a desire to reclaim the Panama Canal.

"If you went back exactly one year, you might say, 'man the tensions with Panama were the worst they'd ever been,'" said Mast, a Florida Republican. "Panama came in last week, things were the best that they'd ever been because we had some really tough conversations with each other that we needed to have."

The most pointed concerns from inside the GOP have largely come from those who aren't running for reelection this year, including Rep. Don Bacon of Nebraska, who said on Wednesday that "all of this has been totally unnecessary."

"Threatening Greenland with force was absurd," he said.

For their part, Democrats have encouraged a more robust response — both from Europe and in the U.S. California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a potential Democratic presidential candidate in 2028, was in Davos this week and blasted Europeans for focusing on diplomatic efforts ahead of Trump's appearance.

"Diplomacy with Donald Trump?" he said. "He's a T-Rex. You mate with him or he devours you."

In an interview, Rep. Gregory Meeks, the top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said it "may take some time" for a future president to rebuild trust with allies. But he argued a full recovery in global relationships may require a more lasting shift in U.S. politics.

Allies will "continue to hold their breath until you have two consecutive elections when we know we have a president that is going to stick by our institutions," he said. "Everybody's just looking at us now as a nation and trying to see where we will be."

Consumer spending pushes US economy up 4.4% in third quarter, fastest in two years

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Powered by strong consumer spending, the U.S. economy grew at the fastest pace in two years from July through September, the government said Thursday in a slight upgrade of its first estimate.

America's gross domestic product — the nation's output of goods and services — rose at a 4.4% annual pace in the third quarter, the Commerce Department reported Thursday, up from 3.8% in the April-June quarter and from the 4.3% growth the department initially estimated. The economy hasn't grown faster since third-quarter 2023.

Consumer spending, which accounts for 70% of U.S. GDP, grew at a healthy 3.5% pace. Spending on services such as healthcare rose 3.6% versus a 3% uptick on goods spending, including an increase of just 1.6% on so-called durable goods such as cars that are meant to last at least three years. A surge in exports and a drop in imports also contributed to robust third-quarter growth.

Business investment (excluding homebuilding) rose at a 3.2% clip, partly reflecting bets on artificial intelligence.

The economy has remained resilient despite uncertainty caused by President Donald Trump's economic policies, particularly his double-digit taxes on imports from almost every country on Earth.

Despite the strong growth numbers, many Americans are dissatisfied with the state of the economy and especially the high cost of living.

The gap between how consumers say they feel and the strong spending numbers might reflect what is known as a "K-shaped economy." Wealthier Americans are spending more, their incomes boosted by market gains and growing investments, while lower-income households struggle with stagnant pay and high prices.

The job market also looks a lot weaker than the overall economy. Employers have added a lackluster 28,000 jobs a month since March. In the 2021-2023 hiring boom that followed COVID-19 lockdowns, by contrast, they were creating 400,000 jobs a month. Still, the unemployment rate remains low at 4.4%, suggesting a no-hire, no-fire labor market with companies hesitant to bring on new employees but reluctant to let go of the ones they have.

"The United States is experiencing a jobless boom where strong growth is powered by AI investments and consumption by wealthier families, but there is almost no hiring," said Heather Long, chief economist at Navy Federal Credit Union. "It's an uneasy situation for many middle-class families. One of the big questions for 2026 is whether the middle class will start to feel the uplift from the boom."

Gunman at large in Australia after leaving 3 dead and 1 wounded

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — A gunman was at large after a shooting in a town in Australia's New South Wales state on Thursday left three people dead and another wounded, police said.

Emergency services were called to two locations at Lake Cargelligo, a town of around 1,500 people, after 4 p.m. Two couples, a man and woman, had been shot in each location within minutes, Police Assistant Commissioner Andy Holland said.

Both women and a man died. Another man was taken to hospital in serious but stable condition, he said.

Police knew the identity of a suspect, but did not know his relationship with the victims, who were all Lake Cargelligo locals, Holland said. The suspect's name has not been released.

The victims were the suspect's former partner, two of her relatives and her new partner, Sydney's The Daily Telegraph newspaper reported, citing unnamed police sources.

State police were working to locate the suspect and had sent resources from neighboring districts to the town, including heavily armed tactical police, Holland said. The town had been cordoned off to prevent

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, January 23, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 233 ~ 76 of 76

the suspect's escape.

Police used geo-targeted text messages to urge the public to avoid the area and for local residents to stay inside. The Commercial Hotel, a local pub, was closed by 6 p.m.

"The offender is believed to have fled in a vehicle," Holland told reporters. "The offender is mobile, hence ... we're asking people in those areas to remain inside their premises for their own safety."

Local state parliament lawmaker Roy Butler, described the shooting as "tragic news" for the town, which is a 600-kilometer (370-mile) drive west of Sydney.

"It's a terrible situation, and it's still live, so we don't have much information. My thoughts are with the victims and their families," Butler said.

The shooting came on a National Day of Mourning as Australia remembers the 15 people shot dead in Sydney at a Hannukah celebration on Dec. 14.

Authorities say the two alleged Sydney gunmen were inspired by the Islamic State group to carry out Australia's worst mass shooting since 1996.

The Australian Parliament on Tuesday passed new gun restrictions in response to the tragedy.

Today in History: January 23, the Baker Massacre in Montana

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, Jan. 23, the 23rd day of 2026. There are 342 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Jan. 23, 1870, approximately 200 Piegan Blackfoot tribe members, mostly women, children and older adults, were killed by U.S. Army troops under the command of Major Eugene Mortimer Baker in Montana, in what became known as the Baker Massacre.

Also on this date:

In 1368, China's Ming dynasty, which lasted nearly three centuries, began as Zhu Yuanzhang (zhoo whan-zahng) was formally acclaimed Hongwu Emperor, following the collapse of the Yuan dynasty.

In 1789, Georgetown University was established in present-day Washington, D.C.

In 1849, Elizabeth Blackwell became the first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States.

In 1964, the 24th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified, prohibiting poll taxes in federal elections.

In 1973, President Richard Nixon announced an accord had been reached to end the Vietnam War, and would be formally signed four days later in Paris.

In 1986, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inducted its first members, including Chuck Berry, Little Richard and Elvis Presley.

In 1997, Madeleine Albright was sworn in as the United States' first female secretary of state.

In 2002, Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl was kidnapped by extremists in Pakistan while researching Islamic militant groups, leading to the beheading of the American journalist weeks later in captivity.

In 2018, at age 33, LeBron James became the youngest NBA player to reach the 30,000 career-point milestone.

In 2020, Democratic House prosecutors presented arguments before skeptical Senate jurors at Donald Trump's first impeachment trial over his dealings with Ukraine, accusing him of abuse of power. (The Republican-led Senate would later vote to acquit Trump, and he would also be acquitted at another impeachment trial in 2021 following the U.S. Capitol riot).

Today's birthdays: Football Hall of Famer Jerry Kramer is 90. Jazz musician Gary Burton is 83. Actor Richard Dean Anderson is 76. Retired airline pilot Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger ('Miracle on the Hudson' landing) is 75. Rock singer Robin Zander (Cheap Trick) is 73. Princess Caroline of Monaco is 69. Singer Anita Baker is 68. Actor Mariska Hargitay is 62. Hockey Hall of Famer Brendan Shanahan is 57. CBS News senior correspondent Norah O'Donnell is 52. Actor Tiffani Thiessen is 52. Actor Jack Reynor is 34. Singer and actress Rachel Crow is 28.