

Groton Daily Independent

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Friday, May 1

Senior Menu: Tuna salad, California blend, fruit.
School Breakfast: Egg wraps.
School Lunch: Chicken Fajitas.
Grades 3-5 ELA & Math Testing
High School Track at Sisseton, 11 a.m.
Middle School Track at Oakes, 3 p.m.

Saturday, May 2

Citywide Rummage Sale Day
NEC Girls Fast Pitch Softball Tournament at Redfield, 10 a.m.
Baseball at Redfield vs. Rapid City Central and Redfield Area.



Sunday, May 3

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m. (Senior Sunday/Faith Forever Scholarships Awarded).

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Groton Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.; Cody Swanson Piano Recital, 3 p.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.

JVT Practice, 1 p.m., Arena

Annie, the Musical, 4 p.m., GHS Gym

Groton Daily Independent
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1440

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

Partial Shutdown Ends

The House voted unanimously to approve the Senate's bill to end the 76-day partial government shutdown, sending the bill to President Donald Trump's desk for approval. The move is expected to soon end the longest partial government shutdown in US history.

The bill funds all Department of Homeland Security agencies except for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol. Republicans will now work to supply additional funding to ICE and CBP through the budget reconciliation process, which requires a simple majority, forgoing the need for Democratic support. That process kicked off this week, with House committees directed to draft legislation to deliver \$70B to ICE and CBP through the end of Trump's term.

Democrats have refused to fund ICE and CBP without reforms following the deaths of US citizens in Minnesota. The shutdown saw more than 1,000 TSA agents leave the agency.

Birth of the Weekend

Today marks 100 years since Ford Motor Company became one of the first American companies to officially adopt the five-day, 40-hour workweek for factory workers, a decision that reshaped work-life balance.

Henry Ford's idea to eliminate Saturday from the workweek initially met hesitation from some hourly workers worried about reduced pay. However, his daily wages of \$5 to \$6—roughly double the industry average—helped to ease concerns. Ford reportedly redirected Saturday wages to hire thousands more people for Monday through Friday shifts, reducing unemployment. The move also boosted productivity, reduced turnover, strengthened morale, and gave workers more leisure time, some of which they spent buying and traveling in Ford cars.

The US formally codified the 40-hour workweek in 1940, mandating overtime pay for hourly employees. More recently, momentum has grown around four-day workweeks, with the largest trial yet suggesting they could improve productivity and well-being.

Fastest 2 Minutes in Sports

The 152nd Kentucky Derby will be run tomorrow at Churchill Downs, with 20 3-year-old thoroughbreds set to cover 1.25 miles in the "Run for the Roses." The race carries a \$5M purse, including \$3.1M to the winner. Coverage begins at 2:30 pm ET (NBC and Peacock), with post time set for 6:57 pm ET.

As of this writing, Renegade is the favorite to win at 5-1 after a dominant Arkansas Derby, though he drew the No. 1 post, which has not produced a winner since 1986. Other contenders include Commandment (7-1), Chief Wallabee (9-1), The Puma (8-1), and Japan's unbeaten Danon Bourbon (14-1). This year, 18 of the 20 entrants were born in central Kentucky, though some were trained elsewhere.

First run in 1875—with a roughly \$3K purse—the Derby is the oldest continuously held US sporting event and the Triple Crown's opening leg. Traditions include a hand-sewn 40-pound garland of 465 roses, as well as mint juleps, with over 125,000 served over two days.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund pulls funding from LIV Golf, which announced new leadership and is in talks with outside investors; PGA Tour says it will consider allowing top golfers to return on a case-by-case basis.

Singer-songwriter David Allan Coe, a country music icon known for his rebellious past, dies at age 86. "Tennessee Whiskey" was first recorded by Coe, revived by Chris Stapleton over three decades later; listen to the original.

"Apprentice" reboot reportedly under early discussion at Amazon, with Donald Trump Jr. as potential host. Britney Spears is charged with a DUI, will likely be able to avoid jail time with reckless driving plea deal.

Science & Technology

President Donald Trump taps former Fox News Channel contributor and radiologist Dr. Nicole Saphier as surgeon general after Senate stalls on health entrepreneur and former physician Dr. Casey Means, partly over her stance on vaccines.

Scientist and entrepreneur J. Craig Venter—who raced the government to decode the human genome with faster, cheaper methods and his own DNA—dies at age 79.

Distantly related butterflies and moths found to use the same two genes to evolve near-identical wing patterns, suggesting evolution may be more predictable than long assumed.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +1.0%, Dow +1.6%, Nasdaq +0.9%), closing best month for stocks since 2020.

Reddit reports 69% rise in Q1 revenue, beating analyst estimates.

US economy grew 2% year over year from January to March after recovering from last fall's 43-day government shutdown

US debt now exceeds the size of the US economy.

Uber taps Hertz to clean, charge, and fix its robotaxis; Hertz shares close up over 13% on the news.

Chipotle to soon test happy hour tacos to win over customers.

Politics & World Affairs

Camp Mystic halts plans to reopen amid ongoing investigations into last year's deadly floods that killed 25 campers, two counselors.

Myanmar military moves former civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi from prison to house arrest; the Nobel laureate was removed from office in a 2021 coup.

Maine Gov. Janet Mills (D) announces she is suspending her campaign to unseat Sen. Susan Collins (R), clearing the Democratic field for Graham Platner (D).



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Groton Area High School Spring Concert

Directors: Landon Brown, HS Choir and Sharon Schwan, HS Band
Janene Harry, HS Art



HS Band

Symphony of Souls.....Robert W. Smith
Soloists: Novalea Warrington, Flute Natalia Warrington and Aspen Beto, Clarinet
Carlee Johnson, French Horn
Moscow 1941.....Brian Balmages



Piano Solo

Bohemian Rhapsody/Sweet Caroline.....Neil Diamond
Fernando Nava Remigio

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Vocal Solo

If Only.....Adam Anders
Novalea Warrington
Accompanied by her mom, Amy Warrington



Vocal Solo

All I Ask.....Adele Adkins
Addison Hoefft

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HS Choir

Carlee Johnson, Accompanist

Zion's Walls.....Glenn Koponen

The Pasture.....Z. Randall Stroope

Bonse Aba.....Victor C. Johnson

Million Dreams.....Mac Huff

Soloists: Ryder Schelle, Abby Fjeldheim, and Kaedy Bonn



HS Band

Ozzy in Concert.....Paul Murtha

Soloists: Emerlee Jones, Alto Sax

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Treble Choir

Landslide.....Ed Lojeski
Soloist: Natalia Warrington

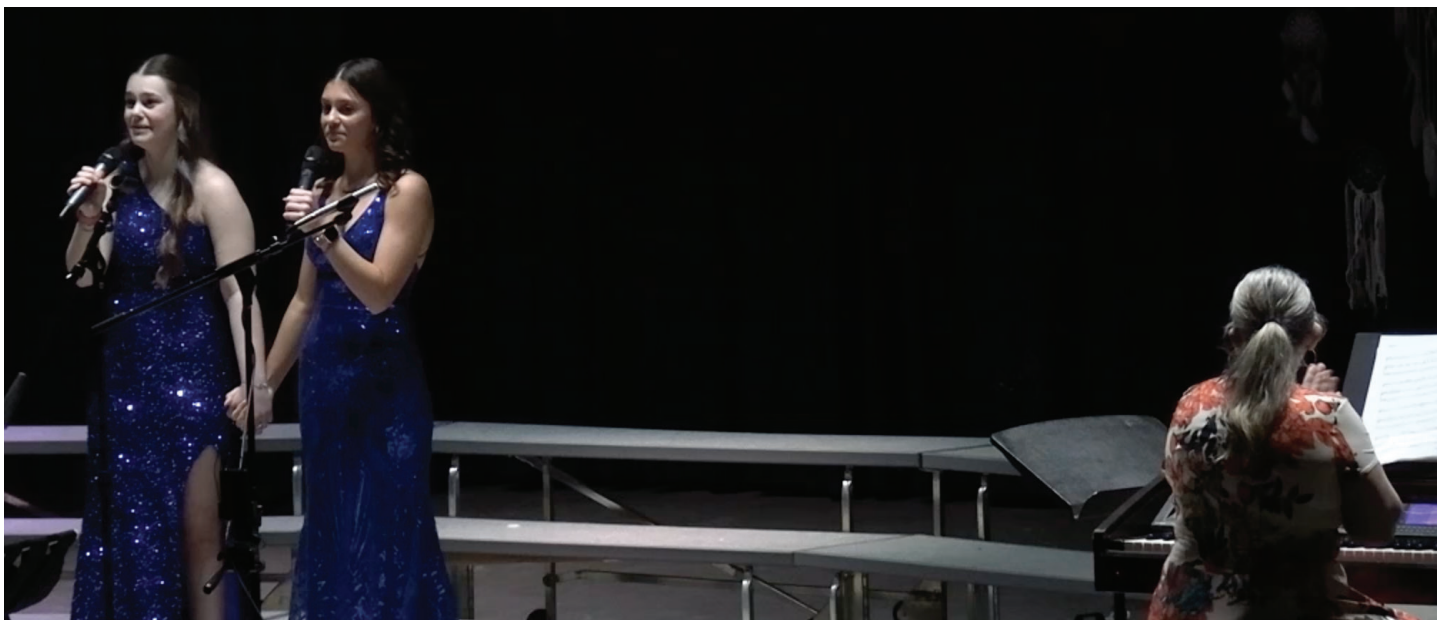


Vocal Solo

Wherever I Go.....Andy Dodd
Natalia Warrington

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Vocal Duet

Space Between.....Andy Dodd
Natalia and Novalea Warrington
Accompanied by their mom, Amy Warrington



HS Band

Skyfall.....Jay Bocook
Selections from The Greatest Showman.....Paul Murtha
Soloists: Jayden Schwan, Trumpet Novalea Warrington, Flute
Emerlee Jones, Alto Sax



Pictured are the members of the girls golf team. Left to right are Claire Schuelke, Halee Harder, Rylie Rose and Carlee Johnson. (Courtesy Photo)

Groton Girls Golf Claims Team Title at Redfield Meet

REDFIELD — The Groton Area girls golf team turned in a dominant performance Thursday, capturing the team title at the Redfield Invitational with a combined score of 439, well ahead of host Redfield's 558. Milbank did not finish as a team.

The Tigers were paced by a strong showing at the top of the leaderboard, where Claire Schuelke and Carlee Johnson shared medalist honors. Both golfers carded rounds of 100 (+26), finishing in a tie for first place and setting the tone for Groton's winning effort.

Groton continued to stack the leaderboard with multiple scorers contributing to the team total. Halee Harder posted a 118 (+44) to place sixth overall, while Rylie Rose added a 121 (+47), finishing eighth.

With four golfers finishing inside the top eight, Groton's depth proved to be the difference on the day, as the Tigers built a commanding margin over the rest of the field.

Redfield was led by Kalli Spotanske, who finished ninth with a 128, followed by Cora Krueger (129) and Jaedyn Banister (130). Milbank's top finisher was Zora Henrich, who placed fourth with a 115.

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Outstanding Male Athlete

Keegen Tracy was awarded "Outstanding Male Athlete 2026" in the Groton Area High School Rob Luecke Track Meet. (Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



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SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

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Opponents seek public vote on SD law using higher sales taxes to drop property taxes

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR

A campaign committee has launched a referendum effort to repeal a new law that would use money from a scheduled statewide sales tax increase to lower property taxes for homeowners.

Lawmakers reduced the sales tax rate from 4.5% to 4.2% in 2023, with the reduction scheduled to sunset next year.

The new law, Senate Bill 245, directs the estimated \$110 million or more in sales tax revenue to a fund that offsets property taxes going toward public education. Additionally, \$56 million in general budget funds will be used to lower property taxes immediately, rather than waiting for new sales tax revenue to come in.

Ned Horsted chairs the referendum committee, South Dakotans for Fair Taxes.

"Everyone in South Dakota pays sales tax for everything that they buy, from groceries for their families to tractors for their farm," he said. "This bill takes a tax increase and puts it into a fund that benefits only South Dakotans with owner-occupied homes. Roughly one-third of South Dakotans are not homeowners and would see no benefit. In fact, with this bill, these people would see their tax dollars go to subsidize the other two-thirds of South Dakotans who are fortunate enough to own their homes."

Horsted called it a "permanent transfer of wealth" that "benefits predominantly older and wealthier people," noting that the more expensive the house, the bigger the break in property taxes.

Dakota Rural Action, a grassroots political organizing group, is listed as an affiliate organization of South Dakota for Fair Taxes.

Meanwhile, another new law, Senate Bill 96, allows counties to implement an additional 0.5% sales tax to decrease property taxes for homeowners in those counties. Horsted said his group is not trying to overturn that law.

"We have 59 days to get 17,508 valid signatures," he said. "Senate Bill 245 impacts our entire state, and with Senate Bill 96, any creation of a sales tax at the county level will be made with local control, where everyday people often have a better shot at influencing their elected leaders."

Sales taxes would rise to 4.5% even if the referendum succeeds — that was written into the 2023 bill. Gov. Larry Rhoden told reporters in Sioux Falls on Thursday that opponents seem to miss that.

"What they're advocating for is just removing property tax relief from the equation," Rhoden said, noting renters are "going to continue to pay that 4.5% with or without" the new law.

"So, what they're supporting is nixing the largest property tax reduction we've ever seen in the history of South Dakota," he said.

Rhoden also reminded reporters that in 2023, as lieutenant governor, he and then-Gov. Kristi Noem advocated for removing the sales tax on groceries, but lawmakers declined and instead passed the temporary sales tax cut.

Horsted said the property tax cut is simply bad policy.

"South Dakotans are tired of hearing about the 'largest tax cut in SD history,' when it's just moving money around," he said. "This is not a tax cut, it is a wealth transfer."

The 90-day clock for collecting signatures began after the legislative session's final day. If the campaign succeeds, voters will decide in November whether to repeal the law.

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

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South Dakota tax collections 'doing well' as end of fiscal year nears

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

South Dakota is on track to meet or exceed its revenue estimates by the end of the fiscal year, the Legislature's lead budget expert said Thursday.

The state is about \$10 million ahead of its year-to-date target, said Jeff Mehlhaff, chief fiscal analyst for the Legislative Research Council's. The state fiscal year ends June 30.

"We're doing well on the three big revenue sources," Mehlhaff told lawmakers Joint Appropriations Committee Thursday, referencing sales tax, contractor's excise taxes and lottery revenue.

The figures Mehlhaff shared are through March. He expects to receive April revenue totals next week.

The contractor's excise tax is the state's third-largest source of revenue, and it's "very close to target," Mehlhaff said. The state estimated that it would collect 2.4% more revenue this fiscal year than it did the year before. As of the end of March, year-to-date collections were up 2.1%.

Lottery revenue, the second-largest source, is within \$43,000 of the state's year-end target, Mehlhaff said.

Sales taxes represent the state's largest revenue source. Sales tax collections are about \$6 million ahead of the state's target

"We have three months left, so we could get even further ahead," Mehlhaff said.

Smaller revenue sources are within range of the state's target estimates.

The committee will get year-end totals at its next meeting on July 20, and hear revenue targets for fiscal year 2027, which begins July 1.

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.

Individual contribution limit doesn't restrain big donors in South Dakota governor race

Maximum is \$4,000, but Johnson and Rhoden campaigns take in far greater donations

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR AND SETH TUPPER

In South Dakota's race for governor, a state law limiting individual campaign contributions is proving to be more of a suggestion than a requirement.

The law caps individual contributions to a candidate for statewide office at \$4,000 per year.

Yet South Dakota's wealthiest man, the banking magnate and philanthropist T. Denny Sanford, has given at least \$50,000 to support Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden.

Meanwhile, one of Rhoden's opponents in the June 2 primary election, U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, has benefited from about 130 individual contributions above the \$4,000 limit. Those include contributions of \$17,000 apiece from the Winklevoss twins, Cameron and Tyler, who famously sued Mark Zuckerberg, alleging he stole their idea to start Facebook.

The two campaigns have used a combination of federal and state fundraising committees to raise and transfer the money in ways that circumvent the individual state contribution limit.

It's all part and parcel of the complicated modern status of campaign finance, explained Brendan Glavin, director of insights for OpenSecrets, a national campaign finance watchdog group.

"While I don't see anything in South Dakota law that would make this illegal, it clearly undermines the idea of contribution limits for candidates," Glavin said.

Here's how it works in the case of the Rhoden campaign. Sanford gave \$50,000 to the federally registered Free American Fund, which is an entity known as a "hybrid political action committee." Other contributions included \$30,000 from James Brown of Colorado.

Hybrid PACs maintain two accounts: one for traditional PAC activity, which is subject to contribution and spending limits, and one for "super PAC" activity. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that because super PACs are prohibited from coordinating with candidates, they can receive and spend unlimited amounts of money.

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The Free American Fund transferred \$85,500 to the state-registered Rhoden for Governor campaign committee. The state does not limit PAC contributions to statewide candidates.

Rhoden spokesperson Ian Fury said, "Governor Rhoden is playing by the same campaign finance rules as everybody else."

"He hasn't been raising money for years, and he isn't independently wealthy to bankroll his own campaign," Fury said.

In the case of the Johnson campaign, individual contributions greater than \$4,000 have gone to the federally registered Dusty Johnson Victory Committee, which is an entity known as a joint fundraising committee. Joint committees are made up of other committees that pool their contribution limits, allowing donors to make a larger contribution that's split among the member committees.

Donations to Johnson's victory committee have included the Winklevoss contributions, a combined \$40,000 from Republican former Lt. Gov. Steve Kirby and his wife, Suzette, and a combined \$20,000 from First Premier Bank CEO Dana Dykhous (who works for Sanford) and his wife, LaDawn.

One of the federal committees that comprises the victory committee, Friends of Dusty Johnson, has transferred \$800,000 to Dusty for Governor, Johnson's state-registered committee. Like Rhoden's state campaign committee, Johnson's state committee can receive unlimited contributions from PACs.

Campaign finance watchdogs have argued that joint fundraising committees can be used to circumvent campaign contribution limits. Saurav Ghosh is the director of federal campaign finance reform at Campaign Legal Center.

"Allowing JFCs to pay for candidate advocacy and campaign activity erodes the legal guardrails that exist to prevent actual and apparent corruption, hold candidates and committees accountable to the public, and prevent big-money donors from drowning out the voices of everyday Americans," Ghosh wrote in a column for the center.

Johnson's campaign sent a statement from him acknowledging that "South Dakota's campaign finance laws need a total overhaul."

"There are too many loopholes and there is too little transparency," he said. "In my first session as governor, I'll work with the legislature to fix those problems."

When asked why his campaign is using those loopholes, he said, "I certainly think we should raise the standard here in South Dakota, but until that happens, my campaign will continue to follow the rules and guidelines as they are currently written."

Because state and federal campaign finance reporting deadlines vary, it's difficult to know how much each candidate has raised and spent at any given moment. Johnson has clearly raised the most money, with balances in his various state and federal accounts adding up to about \$7 million as of the most recent reporting deadlines. His state campaign committee had spent about \$650,000 by the end of last year.

Rhoden's state committee brought a balance of about \$91,000 into last year, raised about \$490,000 and spent about \$71,000, ending the year with a balance of about \$512,000.

Republican candidate for governor Toby Doeden of Aberdeen raised \$2.1 million last year, primarily from a \$2 million loan he made to his own campaign committee. He spent \$2 million and had \$41,000 left at the end of the year.

Doeden said critics and competitors are pushing a narrative that he is attempting to buy the governor's race and that he couldn't raise money. He said he could have raised a substantial amount of money from his supporters, but chose to self-fund.

Republican candidate for governor Jon Hansen, the speaker of the state House, reported raising \$189,000 by the end of last year, spending \$135,000, and ending with \$54,000 on hand.

The only other candidate for governor, Democrat Dan Ahlers, announced his candidacy earlier this year and won't have to file his first campaign finance report until the next deadline for state committees, May 18.

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.

Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

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Three shutdowns later, Trump signs bill that finishes funding the government

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump signed a bill Thursday that will fund almost every agency in the Department of Homeland Security for the next five months, ending the shutdown that began in mid-February.

The House approved the bill, which doesn't include additional spending on Immigration and Customs Enforcement or the Border Patrol, on a voice vote earlier in the day.

The DHS shutdown, the third funding lapse in the last year, stalled paychecks for federal employees throughout much of the department, including those at the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Transportation Security Administration.

Trump enacting the DHS appropriations bill finally marks an end to the annual government funding process that was supposed to be wrapped up before the end of September.

Connecticut Democratic Rep. Rosa DeLauro, ranking member on the Appropriations Committee, said during brief floor debate it was "about damn time" Republican leaders brought the bill to the floor.

DeLauro said that "from the outset" Democrats wanted to negotiate with Republicans to address "armed, masked agents marauding our streets and terrorizing people in our communities."

"It has been the Republicans (who) have been intransigent and not willing to do that," she said. "But there we go. Today we're going to do it. It could have been done 76 days ago. I'll take it today."

Texas Republican Rep. Chip Roy said separating out funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Border Patrol from the DHS funding bill "is offensive to the men and women who serve" in those agencies.

"While we are all unified in funding the rest of DHS, we are absolutely horrified that we are blowing up the appropriations process to target those brave men and women who are doing the Lord's work to keep us safe from cartels, from dangerous actors and from illegal aliens across the streets of America that have been endangering the American people," he said.

Republicans plan to use the complex budget reconciliation process to fund ICE and the Border Patrol for the rest of Trump's term without negotiating any new guardrails on immigration agents.

One shutdown after another

Instead of completing the dozen annual government funding bills before their Oct. 1 deadline, lawmakers' stark differences over funding and policy led to a trio of shutdowns that stalled paychecks for federal employees and wreaked havoc on hundreds of programs.

The first shutdown, which affected much of the federal government, lasted 43 days as Democrats tried unsuccessfully to extend the enhanced tax credits for people who purchase their health insurance from the Affordable Care Act marketplace.

A partial shutdown lasting four days ended in early February when lawmakers approved a stopgap spending bill for the Department of Homeland Security alongside the remaining full-year appropriations bills for other departments.

But lawmakers failed to reach a bipartisan agreement to place constraints on federal immigration agents before the temporary funding bill for DHS expired on Feb. 14, leading to a third shutdown for the department.

Senate Democrats demanded several restrictions on immigration agents after federal officers shot and killed two U.S. citizens in Minneapolis in January. While Republicans control both chambers of Congress, most bills cannot move through the Senate without the support of at least 60 lawmakers.

After nearly six weeks, Senate Republican leaders agreed to remove funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Border Patrol from the DHS appropriations bill, unanimously sending it to the House for approval in late March.

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House hangup

Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., said at the time a plan to use the complex budget reconciliation process to provide three years of funding for ICE and Border Patrol wasn't acceptable. He refused to put the Senate-passed bill on the House floor for a vote.

The Senate tried again in early April, sending an identical bill to the House, which Johnson declined to schedule a vote on until Thursday.

The House vote on the DHS appropriations bill happened less than a day after Republicans in that chamber voted to adopt the budget resolution that unlocks the reconciliation process. Republican senators approved the tax and spending blueprint earlier this month.

Congress' budget resolution isn't a bill and doesn't need to go to the president for his signature in order to take effect. It doesn't actually fund anything, but is designed to help lawmakers plan tax and spending policy for the next decade.

GOP lawmakers intend to use the reconciliation process the budget resolution provides to approve a bill in the coming weeks that will provide up to \$140 billion for ICE and Border Patrol. That avoids the need to place any new constraints on federal immigration officers in order to get Democrats' votes to limit Senate debate.

Members of Congress will, however, still need to find agreement on funding for the rest of government ahead of the next fiscal year, which will begin on Oct. 1.

Another impasse will mean another shutdown, just weeks before the November midterm elections.

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

US House passes 'skinny' farm bill that keeps big GOP cuts to food assistance

BY: JACOB FISCHLER

The U.S. House approved, 224-200, a five-year farm bill Thursday as members of Congress attempt to update major agriculture and nutrition policy after three years of extensions.

The bill would authorize subsidy and nutrition assistance programs through fiscal 2031. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated an earlier version of the bill would not meaningfully affect discretionary federal spending over an 11-year window, and would add \$162 million in mandatory spending over the next six years.

Most Democrats opposed the bill, but 14 voted in favor. Three Republicans voted against. Six members did not vote.

The Democrats in favor were: Sanford Bishop of Georgia, Jim Costa and Adam Gray of California, Henry Cuellar and Vicente Gonzalez of Texas, Sharice Davids of Kansas, Donald Davis of North Carolina, Marcy Kaptur of Ohio, Kristen McDonald Rivet of Michigan, Marie Gluesenkamp Perez and Kim Schrier of Washington, Josh Riley of New York, Darren Soto of Florida and Gabe Vasquez of New Mexico.

The Republicans who voted against were: Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania, Andrew Garbarino of New York and Harriet Hageman of Wyoming.

Few policy changes

Because Republicans' massive spending and tax cuts law last year made major changes to some U.S. Department of Agriculture programs, mainly the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program that helped about 1 in 8 Americans afford groceries in 2024, the farm bill passed Thursday was a "skinny" version and relatively short on major policy updates.

The bill would still have to pass the Senate, which has not yet introduced its version.

Arkansas Republican Sen. John Boozman, who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee, cheered House

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passage Thursday and said a Senate text would be released "in the coming weeks."

"This is an important step toward updating long-overdue policies that support our farm families and strengthen rural communities," he said of the House vote in a statement. "We've put more farm in the farm bill through the Working Families Tax Cuts (the GOP spending and tax cuts bill), and this legislation builds on that success."

New authorizations needed

Farm bills are typically written to last five years. But Congress last approved a version in 2018. Extensions of the 2018 version were enacted in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

House Agriculture Chairman Glenn "GT" Thompson, a Pennsylvania Republican, said the measure would still meaningfully update farm and food programs.

"It is more evident than ever that rural America needs a new farm bill now, not next year or next Congress," he said. "Producers are operating under the third consecutive farm bill extension and the simple truth is the policies of 2018 are no match for the challenges of 2026."

Agriculture Committee ranking Democrat Angie Craig of Minnesota opposed the bill, saying it did not address any of the pressing issues that farmers and SNAP recipients face. The bill does not help alleviate the rising costs farmers face from President Donald Trump's tariffs and "locks in the \$187 billion cut" to SNAP in last year's spending law, Craig said.

"It doesn't fix any of the underlying policy choices by Republicans and this administration that caused the problems in the first place," she said, adding that continuing the SNAP cuts put "more pressure on struggling Americans at a time when the cost of groceries and healthcare continues to grow."

Craig said Thursday morning that the measure could have helped corn farmers by including a provision to allow gasoline made with 15% ethanol available all year. The product, known as E15, increases demand for corn, but has been limited in summer months because of the pollution it can cause in high temperatures.

Thompson responded that the committee would consider a separate measure on year-round E15 in mid-May.

Local food, foreign food aid oversight

The bill does include some new provisions.

It would authorize \$200 million for a new local food procurement program, to be used largely by food banks.

It would move authority for foreign food assistance programs under USDA from the now-defunct U.S. Agency for International Development.

It would raise the limit that individual farmers could borrow from USDA and expand rural development programs that fund substance abuse and mental health services.

Members voted Thursday morning for an amendment that removed a controversial provision to shield pesticide producers from legal liability to warn users of a risk of cancer. If it became law, the provision would have mooted a case argued before the U.S. Supreme Court this week related to a Missouri jury's award to a user of Monsanto's popular Roundup weedkiller who developed non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

"Going to make hunger worse"

Several Democrats slammed the bill, but seemed to take more issue with the "big beautiful" law Trump signed last July 4. The farm bill, Massachusetts Democrat Jim McGovern said, would not counteract the changes in that law.

"We are considering on the floor a five-year farm bill that, quite frankly, does nothing for our farmers and screws over poor people and maintains the nearly \$200 billion in cuts to SNAP," the top House Rules Committee Democrat said on the House floor Thursday. "It is going to make hunger worse in this country."

Thompson said Democrats were too focused on what was not in the bill, rather than the provisions that enjoy bipartisan support.

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"Today, you will hear some opposing comments made that this is a partisan bill and even more on what's not in the bill," he said at the outset of floor debate. "This bill is filled with good policy that is also overwhelmingly bipartisan.

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

Millionaire taxes gain steam as states face budget crunches

BY: KEVIN HARDY

While the idea of a special tax on millionaires is hotly debated across the country, Maine state Rep. Cheryl Golek characterized her state's new tax as a modest and reasonable step toward fairness.

That's because, she said, working- and middle-class households in Maine — including teachers, firefighters and nurses — are paying effective state income tax rates similar to or higher than those of the highest earners.

"Those who benefit the most from our economy do so because of the people, infrastructure and communities that support that success," said Golek, a Democrat. "Asking for a small additional contribution from the wealthiest in our state is a reasonable and widely supported step toward a fairer system."

The legislation signed by Democratic Gov. Janet Mills this month will add a 2% tax to households whose income exceeds \$1 million per year.

Maine and Washington, which enacted its own law last month, are among the latest Democratic-led states to ask for more tax dollars from the rich as national wealth inequality widens and states face heightened budget pressures. They follow the lead of other states including New Jersey and Massachusetts that have implemented specific taxes for the rich.

The idea is gaining traction as lawmakers in at least a dozen states, including Illinois, Minnesota, Rhode Island and Virginia, have proposed new taxes for the wealthiest taxpayers. In California, advocates this week announced they gathered enough signatures for a ballot initiative that would impose a one-time tax on billionaires. But these proposals often stir yearslong battles.

The taxes can take different forms — taxing annual incomes above a certain threshold or taxing capital assets, including high-value stocks and real estate. Earlier this month, New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani and Gov. Kathy Hochul, both Democrats, proposed a new pied-à-terre tax for homes valued above \$5 million when owners have a separate primary residence outside of New York City.

In neighboring New Jersey, those earning over \$1 million per year face an income tax top rate of 10.75% in addition to a so-called mansion tax on the sales of high-value homes.

Proponents say these moves can help balance state tax structures that are tilted against lower earners. The left-leaning Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy says the tax systems of 40 states favor the wealthiest earners. But opponents argue that these measures levy new taxes on business owners, dissuading local investment and encouraging rich residents to move away — especially risky during a time when many other states are slashing taxes.

"When the outlook of our population growth is stagnant and we should be attracting people to Maine, it puts a disincentive to people to call Maine home," Patrick Woodcock, president and CEO of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, said during a news conference ahead of the state House vote on the tax.

The rising push to tax the wealthy in liberal states comes as some red states are moving to more regressive tax systems, which put a higher burden on lower earners.

"You increasingly have two poles where you have a larger number of states with fairly low income taxes and a smaller but still significant number of states that have doubled down on high rates, particularly high rates on high earners," said Jared Walczak, senior fellow at the conservative-leaning Tax Foundation.

He said increasing income taxes pushes wealthy people and employers to low-tax states. Even if individuals don't directly move because of taxes, they follow businesses to other states, he said.

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And some progressives are wary of going too far: California Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom is opposing the ballot initiative that would impose a one-time 5% tax on those whose net worth exceeds \$1 billion. Hochul, who pushed for the new tax on second homes in New York City, has warned that more tax increases on the millionaires and billionaires could hollow out a crucial portion of the state's tax base.

Walczak said only a handful of in-demand places can afford to impose higher taxes for the same reason that people pay higher rents.

"It's worth it to a lot of people," he said. "People are willing to pay very high rent, but there's a limit. In the same way, they're willing to pay higher taxes to live in New York, but there is a limit."

Rising wealth inequality

The gap between the rich and poor has been widening for decades.

Wealth for the bottom fifth of American households has barely moved in recent decades, while the top 0.1% have seen their wealth increase by nearly \$40 million each, according to an analysis by the anti-poverty nonprofit Oxfam America.

Between 1980 and 2022, the share of national income going to the top 1% doubled, while the share going to the bottom 50% fell by a third, Oxfam reported.

Recent federal policy changes have only exacerbated the need for progressive state tax changes, said Amber Wallin, executive director of the State Revenue Alliance, which is lobbying for higher taxes for the wealthy across multiple states.

President Donald Trump's major tax and spending bill, often called the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, slashed funds for safety net programs including food stamps and Medicaid. At the same time, it provided tax cuts that largely benefit the wealthy.

"So we know millions will lose access to healthcare, millions will lose food assistance, and states all across the country will see funding cuts for key programs," she said. "We know that people power a strong economy, not tax cuts for the wealthy, and when the rich pay their fair share of taxes, we all benefit."

Since Massachusetts voters in 2022 approved a 4% surtax on annual incomes above \$1 million, that Fair Share Amendment has provided the commonwealth with \$6 billion in transportation and education funding.

But Jim Stergios, executive director at the libertarian-leaning Pioneer Institute, said it's not just the ultra-wealthy who are paying that tax. People who record a one-time sale of a business or a home can face the tax even if they're not earning over \$1 million every year, he said.

He said the tax is pushing residents out of the state and dampening business investment. Federal data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows Massachusetts lost more than 33,000 residents to other states last year, though Democratic Gov. Maura Healy noted the overall population did increase because of foreign immigration. Stergios noted lawmakers are still facing challenges balancing the state budget even with the new revenue.

"So over the long term, it's not going to have a salutary effect," he said. "We're going to continue to have budget problems. We do have budget problems even with this."

Proponents and opponents of the state's millionaire's tax have touted recent IRS data in their arguments: Residents leaving Massachusetts took a total of \$4.2 billion in adjusted gross income with them in 2023, the first year of the new tax, Bloomberg reported. Yet the number of residents moving out of Massachusetts who reported income of \$200,000 or more fell after the tax was implemented.

"There's no real evidence of millionaire out-migration. I'm sure there's some isolated anecdotes, but the actual data don't show it," said Phineas Baxandall, director of research and policy analysis at the left-leaning Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center.

He said one piece of evidence that the wealthy remain in Massachusetts are the proceeds of the tax itself, which are funding major priorities including free community college and expanding childcare subsidies for thousands.

"Massachusetts is rightfully fearful of the federal cuts that are happening," Baxandall said, "but we've been able to still move forward with real, transformational investments."

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Multiyear efforts

Though interest in raising taxes on the rich is growing across the country, the idea faces considerable skepticism and often requires years of organizing.

In March, Michigan advocates announced they would suspend their campaign to put on the statewide ballot a 5% tax on individual incomes over \$500,000 and joint incomes over \$1 million.

"We always knew that we were going to face strong headwinds from billionaires who don't want to pay their fair share," Rachelle Crow-Hercher, president of the Invest in MI Kids steering committee, said in a statement to Michigan Advance. That coalition plans to eye the 2028 election cycle instead, she said.

Last week, Illinois House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch announced he would drop a push for a new millionaire's tax as Democrats came up short of the necessary supermajority needed to put the issue on this fall's ballot.

Welch believes the issue will come before lawmakers again, but after missing a key legislative deadline it won't be eligible for a statewide vote until 2028. He said it remains popular among voters. Lawmakers proposed using proceeds of a new tax for schools and property tax relief.

"I believe that we should tax the rich and the rich should pay more," he said. "To those who much is given, much is required."

Meanwhile, the newly enacted Washington tax faces a lengthy, though expected, court challenge.

The legislation signed last month by Democratic Gov. Bob Ferguson imposes a 9.9% tax on household income above \$1 million a year. Opponents argue that income is property and thus must be taxed uniformly because of state constitutional requirements.

In addition to the constitutional concerns, Republican state Rep. Jim Walsh said the new law opens the door for lawmakers to eventually expand income taxes to more households — not just the rich. Instead of raising revenue, he said Democratic lawmakers should focus on cutting spending, noting the state operations budget has more than doubled in the past decade.

"The problem is not the financing mechanism of the state's operations," he said. "It's the rate at which far-left advocates in the legislature have been increasing state government spending in the state. It's ridiculous."

To Democratic state Sen. Noel Frame, the legislation brings the state's regressive tax code more in line with Washington's progressive politics. With no statewide income tax, sales and property taxes leave lower income earners to cover more of the cost of state services, making Washington's one of the nation's most regressive tax systems.

"For all the things that we do that are good, big, bold economic policy — to have the tax code that we have is just an embarrassment, and it's completely out of line with our values as a state," Frame said.

Like the push for a \$15 minimum wage started in liberal cities and states, Frame expects the millionaire tax movement will spread into more conservative areas.

Already, some conservative states, including Idaho, Indiana and Florida, have made moves to reject some of last year's federal tax changes that benefit corporations and the wealthy.

"The people are demanding better," Frame said. "And the more that people understand the deep connection of tax policy to income and wealth inequality, the more engaged they become."

Stateline reporter Kevin Hardy can be reached at khardy@stateline.org.

This story was originally produced by Stateline, 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.

Kevin Hardy covers business, labor and rural issues for Stateline from the Midwest.

Many states unsure how to implement new Medicaid work requirements, KFF survey finds

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — State officials say they need more information from the Trump administration before they can fully implement new requirements for Medicaid, according to a survey released Thursday by KFF and the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families.

Republicans' "big, beautiful" law made several changes to the state-federal health program for lower income people and some people with disabilities, including that enrollees between the ages of 19 and 65 work, participate in community service, or attend an education program for at least 80 hours a month.

The survey of Medicaid program officials from 43 states showed the people tasked with implementing the law have questions about how exactly they should determine if someone meets the new requirements or is exempt.

"In addition to how to define medical frailty, states wanted additional direction in many areas including what qualifies as community service, how to calculate half-time school attendance, and what is considered a 'significant relationship' to qualify for the caregiver exemption," the report states. "They also indicated they need guidance about what sources can be used for verification, whether self-attestation will be allowed if other sources are not available, and how long verification of exemptions remain valid."

The law includes several additional carve-outs, including for Medicaid enrollees who are pregnant, have dependent children, are tribal community members or are in the foster care system, and for individuals released from incarceration in the last 90 days, among others.

The vast majority of state officials surveyed said they would implement the new requirement for work, education, or community service at the start of next year.

There are, however, a few states moving forward earlier.

Nebraska plans to begin May 1, Montana on July 1 and Iowa officials said they will begin this year, though they haven't provided a date, KFF said. Arkansas has planned a "soft launch" for July but won't actually remove anyone from Medicaid for not meeting the new requirements until next year, according to the report.

Hardship exemptions

The KFF-Georgetown survey says that nearly all states will allow hardship exemptions for people in counties with higher unemployment; those who recently experienced a natural disaster; those who have been admitted to a hospital or nursing facility; or those who need to travel outside their community for medical care.

Indiana and Iowa are the only two states so far that don't intend to allow any hardship exceptions from the requirement that Medicaid enrollees work, attend community service, or enroll in an education program, the report said.

"Oklahoma is not adopting the exceptions for residents of counties with high unemployment or with a declared natural disaster while Missouri is not adopting the exception for residents of counties with high unemployment," the report says. "New York is not planning to adopt the exception for individuals traveling outside their community for medical care. Twelve states had not made a decision."

Look-back periods vary

Thirty-six states will look back one month when someone applies for Medicaid to determine whether they're working, participating in community service, or enrolled in an education program. Indiana and Idaho will look back at the last three months before the person applied to determine whether they meet the new requirement.

Thirty-four states will look back one month during the renewal process, which must happen at least every six months under the law.

"Indiana and New Hampshire will check quarterly and at renewal to verify that enrollees meet the re-

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quirements every month between renewals," according to the report. "Arkansas will also look back three months at renewal but is not planning quarterly checks. States that had not made a decision at the time of the survey included five states for application, six states for renewal, and seven states for more frequent checks."

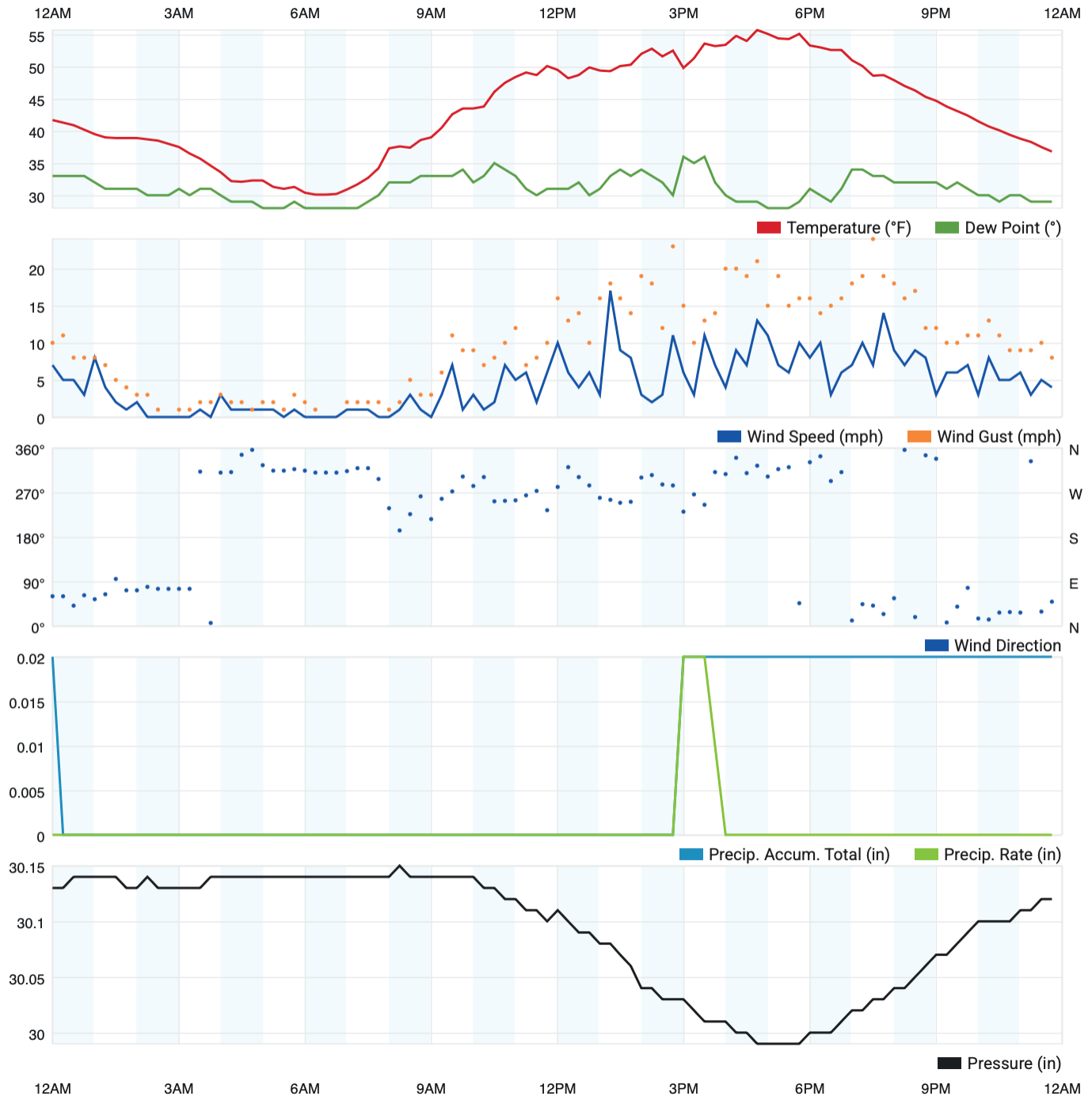
Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

April 30, 2026



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Today



High: 55 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 33 °F

Mostly Clear

Saturday



High: 70 °F

Mostly Sunny

Saturday Night



Low: 41 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Sunday



High: 67 °F

Mostly Sunny

Weather Outlook

Today



50s

Saturday



60s & 70s

Sunday



60s

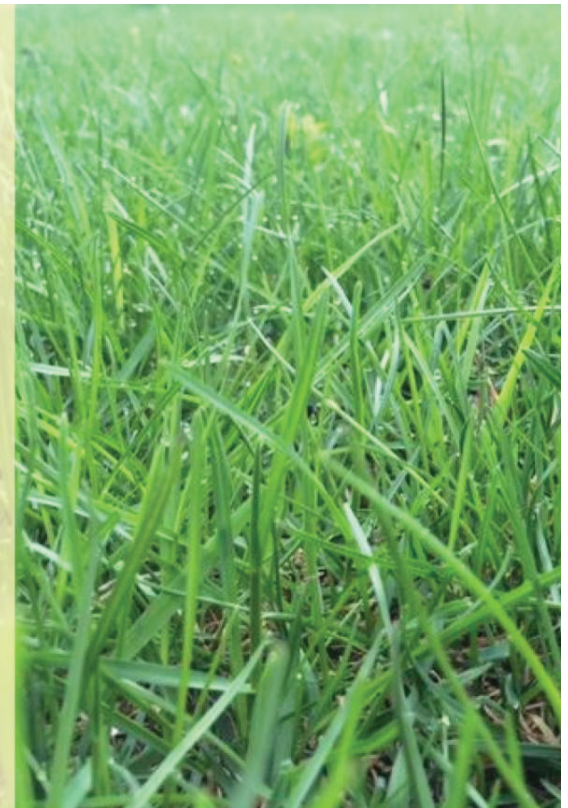
High pressure will remain in place across the Dakotas and Minnesota today, leading to cool and dry conditions with light winds.

The weekend weather pattern still looks mainly dry with warmer temperatures!



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD



Surface high pressure will maintain control of weather conditions across the area today. This will lead to lighter winds, cool temperatures and dry conditions. This high will begin to shift southeast of the region tonight into Saturday. A warmer air mass is expected to return as winds become south to southwesterly on Saturday. Then, a cold front is expected to swing through Saturday night into Sunday. Winds turn back to the northwest on Sunday with slightly cooler temperatures returning.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 56 °F at 4:40 PM

Low Temp: 30 °F at 6:20 AM

Wind: 25 mph at 7:27 PM

Precip: : 0.02

Today's Info

Record High: 102 in 1959

Record Low: 19 in 1961

Average High: 65

Average Low: 38

Average Precip in May.: .11

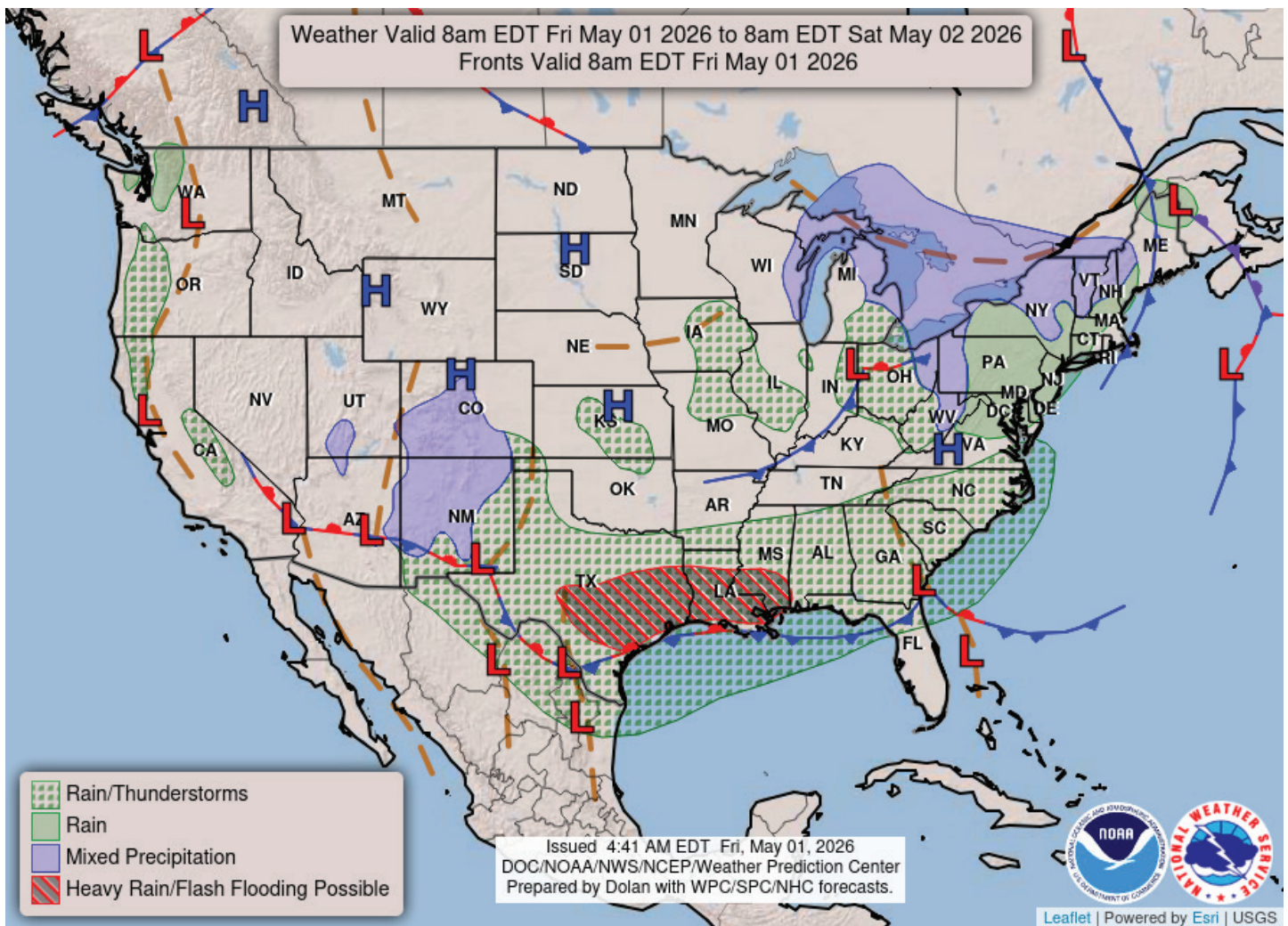
Precip to date in April.: 1.50

Average Precip to date: 4.08

Precip Year to Date: 3.12

Sunset Tonight: 8:38 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:19 am



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Today in Weather History

May 1st, 1959: Aberdeen recorded a high temperature of 102, the earliest date that Aberdeen reached 100 degrees.

May 1st, 1967: One of the latest blizzards on record for South Dakota ended on this day. Snowfall amounts in the west were 5 to 12 inches, with a 16-inch report in Lemmon and 30 inches in the northern Black Hills. Winds of 40 to 50 mph caused blowing snow, which occasionally reduced visibility to near zero and snow drifts of 4 to 5 feet. Other snowfall amounts include 5 inches in Murdo, 6 miles SE of McIntosh, and 4 inches in Timber Lake.

May 1st, 1997: Torrential rains of 1.5 to 2.5 inches, with a separate 4.5-inch report, fell over central South Dakota and caused flooding to several creeks, streams, low-lying areas, and roads. This early May rain only aggravated the flooded regions in March and April. Lyman County experienced the most significant flooding, with 4.5 inches of rain falling north of Vivian. Part of a golf course was flooded, and some personal property was flooded along with the KOA campground near Kennebec. Some rainfall amounts include 2.5 inches 7 miles NW of Presho and 2.01 inches near Stephan.

1854 — The Connecticut River reached a level of nearly twenty-nine feet at Hartford (the highest level of record up until that time). The record height was reached in the midst of a great New England flood which followed sixty-six hours of steady rain. (David Ludlum)

1935 — Snow, ice and sleet brought winter back to parts of southeast Minnesota. Minneapolis received three inches of snow to tie their May record which was established in 1892. (1st-2nd) (The Weather Channel)

1954 — The temperature at Polebridge MT dipped to 5 degrees below zero to establish a state record for the month of May. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Thunderstorms produced large hail and heavy rain in Texas. Baseball size hail pounded Dublin, and 3.75 inches of rain soaked Brady. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Strong southerly winds ahead of a cold front crossing the Rocky Mountain Region gusted to 90 mph at Lamar CO. High winds created blinding dust storms in eastern Colorado, closing roads around Limon. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the southeastern U.S. Rainfall totals of 1.84 inches at Charlotte NC and 2.86 inches at Atlanta GA were records for the date. Strong thunderstorm winds uprooted trees in Twiggs County GA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather from northern Alabama to North Carolina. There were sixty-three reports of large hail or damaging winds, with hail four inches in diameter reported near Cartersville GA. Ten cities in the southeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings warmed into the 90s. Jacksonville FL reported a record high of 96 degrees. Late night thunderstorms over central Texas produced up to ten inches of rain in southern Kimble County and northern Edwards County. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Daily Devotion

A Call to Godly Living

Life is full of options—it's wise to choose God's way.

Romans 12:1: Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

The apostle Paul wrote letters urging Christians to pursue godliness instead of the ways of the world. We do that by ...

Presenting our body to God. Our total being—mind, will, physical body, personality, and emotions—is to be turned over to our heavenly Father (James 4:7). Submitting ourselves to the Lord requires both a definite decision to give Him control and a daily commitment to remain under His authority. By surrendering to Him, we position ourselves for godly living.

Becoming a living sacrifice. Jesus left heaven to dwell among us so He might reconcile us to God. He offered up His life for our sake (1 John 3:16). And as believers, we are to follow His example. Paul used the term "living sacrifice" because it's something that is ongoing and repeated daily.

Life is full of options, and many decisions come down to a choice between God's way and ours. Since a righteous life is characterized by a focus on God, maturing Christians increasingly sacrifice their own desires and embrace His will. Though we won't live perfectly, our goal should be to obey the Lord. When we do, we'll find that aiming to please Him results in greater blessing than if we followed our own preferences.

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

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The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.30.26

5 19 21 42 55 3

TOP PRIZE:
\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 22 Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.28.26

14 36 41 47 66 15

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$178,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 7 Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.29.26

6 19 24 30 48 4

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$23,850,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 22 Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.29.26

11 14 20 24 30

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$74,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 37 Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.29.26

7 52 56 67 69 3

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 6 Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.29.26

3 19 35 51 67 15

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 6 Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

World shares are mixed with most markets closed for May Day, while oil holds steady at \$111 a barrel

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

World shares were mixed and U.S. futures edged higher Friday, with most markets closed for May Day holidays.

Brent crude's price rose 83 cents to \$111.23 per barrel while U.S. benchmark crude added 12 cents to \$105.19 a barrel.

Prospects for a deal to cement a three-week ceasefire in the Iran war remained clouded as Iran's supreme leader said it will protect its nuclear and missile capabilities as a national asset.

The war's shocks to oil supplies and prices are putting pressure on U.S. President Donald Trump, who was floating a new plan to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a critical passageway for oil and gas exports from the Middle East.

Britain's FTSE 100 fell 0.6% to 10,319.24. In Tokyo, the Nikkei 225 gained 0.7% to 59,678.31 as the Japanese yen gained against the U.S. dollar. In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 surged 0.9% to 8,743.70.

Most other share markets were closed.

The dollar bought 156.56 Japanese yen, down from 156.61 yen late Thursday. But that was well below the above 160 yen level it hit on Thursday. Japanese officials had warned they would intervene in the market if the yen fell further, and then reportedly acted on those warnings.

The euro rose to \$1.1733 from \$1.1731.

The futures for the S&P 500 and the Dow Jones Industrial Averaged edged 0.1% higher after U.S. stocks motored to more records Thursday on strong profits for Alphabet, Caterpillar and other big businesses.

The S&P 500 rallied 1% and topped its prior all-time high to close out its best month in more than five years. It closed at 7,209.01. The Dow leaped 1.6% to 49,652.14, while the Nasdaq composite climbed 0.9% to a record of 24,892.31.

Alphabet led the way and rallied 10% after the owner of Google and YouTube reported profit for the latest quarter that almost doubled analysts' expectations. Investments in artificial intelligence "are lighting up every part of the business," its CEO Sundar Pichai said.

It's the latest company to deliver fatter profits for the start of 2026 than analysts expected, even with very high oil prices and uncertainty about the economy.

In share trading, Meta Platforms tumbled 8.7% even though the company behind Facebook and Instagram made more profit last quarter than expected. Investors focused more on its increased forecast for how much it will spend on data centers and other investments as it builds out its AI capabilities.

Doubts are still high among some investors about whether all the spending on AI will produce enough profit and productivity to make it worth it.

Microsoft fell 3.9% after likewise raising its forecast for investments and other capital spending.

Reports suggested the U.S. economy grew at a slower pace in January to March than economists had expected, while a measure of inflation worsened in March.

A separate report said that fewer U.S. workers applied for unemployment benefits last week in an indication of fewer layoffs even though companies are announcing large cuts to workforces.

Friday brought some calm to the oil market, after prices surged Thursday on worries over the potential long-term impact of the war on the flow of crude.

Traders are buying and selling contracts for different kinds of oil, going out for many months. In the most actively traded part of the market for Brent crude, for delivery in July, the price rose as high as \$114.70 per barrel, fell back toward \$107 and settled at \$110.40 on Thursday, nearly unchanged from the day before.

So far during the war, the peak price for the most actively traded Brent contract has been \$119.50, which was set last month.

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In a less actively traded corner of the Brent market, the price for a barrel to be delivered in June briefly went above \$126 early Thursday before pulling back toward \$114.

Brent's price was roughly \$70 before the war.

What to know about May Day demonstrations as workers face rising energy costs due to Iran war

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Activists worldwide will march in May Day rallies Friday, calling for peace, higher wages and better working conditions as many workers grapple with rising energy costs and shrinking purchasing power tied to the Iran war.

The day is a public holiday in many countries, and demonstrations, some of which have turned violent in the past, are expected in many of the world's major cities.

"Working people refuse to pay the price for Donald Trump's war in the Middle East," the European Trade Union Confederation, which represents 93 trade union organizations in 41 European countries, said. "Today's rallies show working people will not stand by and see their jobs and living standards destroyed."

In the United States, activists opposing U.S. President Donald Trump's policies are planning marches and boycotts.

Here's what to know about May Day.

Rising energy prices and living costs

Rising living costs linked to the conflict in the Middle East are expected to be a key theme in Friday's rallies.

In the Philippines' capital of Manila, protest organizers said they expect big crowds of workers. "There will be a louder call for higher wages and economic relief because of the unprecedented spikes in fuel prices," Renato Reyes, a leader of the left-wing political group Bayan, told The Associated Press.

"Every Filipino worker now is aware that the situation here is deeply connected to the global crisis," said Josua Mata, leader of SENTRO umbrella group of labor federations.

In Indonesia, labor unions have warned against worsening economic pressures at home. "Workers are already living paycheck to paycheck," said Said Iqbal, president of the Indonesian Trade Union Confederation.

In Pakistan, May Day is a public holiday marked by rallies, but many daily wage earners cannot afford to take time off.

"How will I bring vegetables and other necessities home if I don't work?" said Mohammad Maskeen, a 55-year-old construction worker near Islamabad.

Rising oil prices have fueled inflation, which the government estimates at about 16%, in a country heavily reliant on financial support from the International Monetary Fund and allied nations.

Demonstrations across the world

Workers' unions traditionally use May Day to rally around wages, pensions, inequality and broader political issues.

Protests are planned from Seoul, Jakarta and Istanbul to most European Union capitals and cities across the United States.

In France, unions called for demonstrations in Paris and elsewhere under the slogan "bread, peace and freedom," linking workers' daily concerns to conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East.

In Italy, the government approved nearly 1 billion euros (\$1.17 billion) in job incentives this week, aiming to promote stable employment and curb labor abuses ahead of May Day. The measures extend tax breaks to encourage hiring young people and disadvantaged women, and seek to address exploitation tied to platform-based work. Opposition parties dismissed the package as "pure propaganda."

In Portugal, proposed labor law changes by the center-right government sparked a general strike and street protests last year. There is still no deal after nine months of negotiations with unions and employers. Unions say the proposals would weaken workers' rights, including by expanding overtime limits and reducing some benefits.

France's mandatory day off

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May Day carries special meaning this year in France after a heated debate about whether employees should be allowed to work on the country's most protected public holiday — the only day when most employees have a mandatory paid day off.

Almost all businesses, shops and malls are closed, and only essential sectors such as hospitals, transport and hotels are exempt.

A recent parliamentary proposal to expand work on the day prompted major outcry from unions and left-wing politicians.

"Don't touch May Day," workers' unions said in a joint statement.

Faced with the controversy, the government this week introduced a bill meant to expand May Day work to people staffing bakeries and florists. It is customary in France to give lily of the valley flowers on May Day as a symbol of good luck.

"May 1 is not just any day," Small and Medium-sized Businesses Minister Serge Papin said. "It symbolizes social gains stemming from a century of building social rules that have led to the labor code we know in France. It is indeed a special day."

Calls for street protests and boycotts in the US

Activists and labor unions are organizing street protests and boycotts across the United States, where May Day is not a federal holiday.

May Day Strong, a coalition of activist groups and labor unions, has called on people to protest under the banner of "workers over billionaires."

Voicing strong opposition to Trump's policies, organizers listed thousands of May Day actions across the country and are seeking an economic blackout through "no school, no work, no shopping."

Demands include taxing the rich and putting an end to the Trump administration's immigration crackdown,

While labor and immigrant rights are historically intertwined, the focus of May Day rallies in the U.S. shifted to immigration in 2006. That's when roughly 1 million people, including nearly half a million in Chicago alone, took to the streets to protest federal legislation that would've made living in the U.S. without legal permission a felony.

Roots in Chicago

May Day, or International Workers' Day, traces back more than a century to a pivotal period in U.S. labor history.

In the 1880s, unions pushed for an eight-hour workday through strikes and demonstrations. In May 1886, a Chicago rally turned deadly when a bomb exploded and police responded with gunfire. Several labor activists — most of them immigrants — were convicted of conspiracy and other charges; four were executed.

Unions later designated May 1 to honor workers. A monument in Chicago's Haymarket Square commemorates them with the inscription: "Dedicated to all workers of the world."

May Day is now observed in much of the world from Europe to Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Man charged with attempted murder after stabbings of Jewish men in London

LONDON (AP) — A 45-year-old man was charged Friday with attempted murder in the stabbings of two Jewish men in London, the latest in a string of attacks that have sparked fear and anger in Britain's Jewish community.

Police said Essa Suleiman faces two counts of the charge related to the attack in Golders Green. He also faces a third count of attempted murder over an incident elsewhere in the city earlier the same day that left a man with minor injuries.

Police have labeled the Golders Green attack an act of terrorism.

Police say Suleiman was referred in 2020 to the government's Prevent program, which tries to steer individuals away from extremism. The police force said his file was closed later the same year, and didn't disclose the reason for the referral.

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Suleiman, a Somalia-born British citizen who lives in London, is due to make his first court appearance later Friday.

The British government pledged to tackle antisemitism after the stabbings in an area in north London that is an epicenter of Britain's Jewish community. The victims, aged 34 and 76, were seriously injured. One has since been discharged from a hospital and the other is in stable condition.

The stabbings followed a string of arson attacks on synagogues and other Jewish sites in London in recent weeks.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said that his government would increase security for the Jewish community and "do everything in our power to stamp this hatred out."

Britain's official terror threat level was raised from substantial to severe after Wednesday's stabbing attack. Severe is the second-highest rung on a five-point scale and means intelligence agencies consider an attack highly likely in the next six months.

The government said the change was not due solely to the Golders Green attack but also due to increased danger "from Islamist and extreme right-wing terrorist threat from individuals and small groups based in the U.K."

2 employees fatally shot in a bank robbery in Kentucky

BEREA, Ky. (AP) — Two bank employees were fatally shot during a robbery in Kentucky and a search was underway for the suspect, authorities said Thursday.

A man wearing a gray-white hoodie, gloves and a mask entered a branch of U.S. Bank in Berea and shot a male and female employee, said Trooper Scottie Pennington, a spokesperson for the Kentucky State Police.

"They're our people that work in our community, and they're no longer with us," Pennington told reporters. "At this time we do have some leads, and we're trying our best to bring this evil person to justice."

Law enforcement officials were going door to door in search of information and surveillance video, as well as using helicopters, drones and dogs, Pennington said. Local and state police along with the FBI and other federal agencies were involved.

It was not clear whether the suspect fled in a vehicle, on foot or was picked up, the spokesperson said. He declined to say whether the suspect left the bank with anything.

State police posted a photo of the suspect on social media and asked people to call if they recognize him or have information.

"If you see something strange and you don't feel right about it — you know, your dogs are acting weird — call us," Pennington said. He urged residents to be vigilant and to keep their porch lights on and phones charged.

Area schools went into lockdown for a while until campuses were deemed safe. Students were not allowed to go home on buses and had to be picked up by their parents, Pennington said.

U.S. Bank said it was working closely with law enforcement and committed to supporting the victims' families and bank colleagues.

"We're deeply saddened by the tragic event that took the lives of two of our employees at our Berea, Kentucky branch earlier today," the company said in a statement. "Our hearts go out to the families of the victims, our colleagues and the entire Berea community."

Berea is about 36 miles (58 kilometers) south of Lexington.

'Mormon Wives' star Taylor Frankie Paul and ex-partner ordered to stay 100 feet apart

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Taylor Frankie Paul, a reality TV star from "The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives," and the father of her 2-year-old son were ordered Thursday to stay 100 feet (30 meters) away from each other for the next three years as a Utah court commissioner continues to assess custody plans for the child.

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Paul has been unable to spend unsupervised time with her son since an April 7 hearing, when Third District Court Commissioner Russell Minas said Paul had a history of volatile behavior directed at her former partner, Dakota Mortensen, while kids were present.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story includes discussion of domestic violence. If you or someone you know needs help, please call the national domestic violence hotline: 1-800-799-7233 in the U.S.

Minas on Thursday described the pair's dynamic as "very toxic" before granting Paul and Mortensen's dueling requests for protective orders against each other. He found that "there's been violence that occurred both ways between these parties" and urged them to figure out how to function as co-parents to their son, Ever.

"I'm hoping that you're not people who just thrive on the drama and the conflict," Minas said. "You've got to put your child first and shield the child from this conflict."

Paul, Mortensen and their families were present in court, but no other cast members from the Hulu reality show attended.

Attorneys offer competing descriptions of fights

Attorneys for Paul and Mortensen offered competing versions of fights between the pair, with each suggesting the other party was the aggressor.

Paul's attorney Eric Swinyard told the court commissioner that Mortensen is much larger and stronger than Paul — and that when she was faced with physical intimidation from Mortensen during an argument, she responded the same way a lot of people would.

"He said, 'Hit me,' and she did," Swinyard said.

One fight between the two came while Paul was dealing with recent miscarriages, and she felt that Mortensen had been blowing her off while their son was sick.

When Paul lost her footing and fell to the ground, Mortensen kicked her several times in the leg, Swinyard alleged. He submitted to the court photos of her bruises.

Mortensen's attorney Brent Salazar-Hall said his client was a victim of abuse from Paul, but that she kept luring him back with text messages inviting him over for intimacy.

During one argument, Paul and Mortensen were in a truck and she tried to interfere with his driving by squeezing his face, Salazar-Hall said. In response, Mortensen shoved her away, he said.

Paul's lawyers said Mortensen slammed her head into the vehicle's dashboard, causing bruises.

Mortensen had Paul's initials tattooed on the inside of his lip, which Paul's attorney pointed to as an example of his possessive nature. Mortensen's lawyer disagreed with that characterization and said many of the men on the TV show got lip tattoos of their partners' names in a humorous scene that has not yet aired.

"There seems to be a continuing attraction that they have for each other, whether it's physical, whether it's the thrill between the two of them of making themselves celebrities," Minas said.

"The problem is that the two of them can't be together in the same place at the same time before it starts to turn violent," he added.

Violations of the protective orders could result in criminal charges.

Leaked video of fight is one point of contention

Eleven fights between the exes were under examination in their protective order requests. A recently leaked video of one fight from 2023 prompted ABC to make the unprecedented move last month of shelving an already-filmed season of "The Bachelorette" starring Paul. Hulu also paused production of "The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives" and resumed filming last week.

In the video, Paul appeared to punch, kick and throw chairs at Mortensen while her daughter from another relationship watched and cried.

Swinyard alleged that Mortensen leaked that video to the press to ruin Paul's reality TV career just before her season of "The Bachelorette" was supposed to air.

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"Our point with the video is he's not just trying to come after her for custody. He's not just trying to seek a protective order. He wants to literally destroy her," Swinyard said.

Salazar-Hall said Mortensen denies leaking the video.

Just after the fight, Paul was charged with aggravated assault and other offenses, including domestic violence in the presence of a child. The police body camera footage of her arrest was featured in the first season of the Hulu series.

Paul pleaded guilty to an assault charge, which will be reduced from a felony to a misdemeanor if she stays out of legal trouble for a three-year probationary period that ends in August. The other counts were dismissed.

Earlier this month, the Salt Lake County District Attorney's Office declined to file new charges against Paul in recent fights with Mortensen. Any new charges would have violated Paul's probation from the 2023 assault.

Custody of their child is at stake

Minas said he would make custody recommendations by May 11. Mortensen has custody in the meantime.

Paul had majority custody of their son before the April 7 hearing.

A protective order in Utah can restrict or eliminate a parent's ability to see their child. When both parents have protective orders against each other, the court relies heavily on the recommendations of an attorney appointed to investigate the child's best interests.

Paul and Mortensen's son had a court-appointed attorney present at Thursday's hearing to help the commissioner determine the safest arrangement for the boy.

Iran's monthslong internet shutdown is crushing businesses in an already battered economy

By NASSER KARIMI, MEHDI FATTAHI and AMIR-HUSSEIN RADJY Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — At her studio in Iran's capital, Amen Khademi prepared a fashion shoot for a jacket she designed with Persian-inspired motifs. But even as she applied lipstick to the model, she was distracted, worrying if her business would survive after four months without its main link to customers — the internet.

Iran's 90 million people have been cut off from the internet for most of 2026, one of the world's longest and strictest national shutdowns. That is devastating an online economy that had long defied government restrictions and international sanctions. From fashion to fitness, to advertising and retailers, many have seen their incomes evaporate.

Khademi hasn't made a sale in months. "The internet outage in the past four months has completely destroyed not only my business, but many online businesses," she said.

Despite an uneasy truce with the U.S. and Israel, Iran's rulers have refused to reverse the shutdown they have depicted as a wartime necessity. But they are facing an outcry as it adds to mass job losses from strikes on key industries and an ongoing U.S. blockade.

Before January, Iranians could access the internet, but authorities blocked a large amount of content. Now all access to the global web has been shut down. Some workarounds exist, but they have become enormously expensive, out of reach for most Iranians.

The internet cutoff costs the economy an estimated \$30-40 million daily, with indirect losses likely twice that much, a member of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Afshin Kolahi, told a local newspaper. About 10 million people have jobs that depend on internet connectivity, according to the communications minister, Sattar Hashemi.

An unprecedented shutdown guts an online economy

Throughout years of economic turmoil in Iran brought on by sanctions and mismanagement, platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp helped small businesses to find customers, and people to earn extra income to afford skyrocketing prices for basic goods.

Iranian authorities first shut down the internet in January during mass anti-government protests. That cutoff was just starting to ease when the government imposed a complete internet blackout on Feb. 28

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as the U.S. and Israel launched the war.

Mahsa Alimardani, an expert on internet censorship, said Kashmir and Myanmar have had longer blocks affecting specific regions or platforms. Countries like China, with its "Great Firewall," and North Korea, have always strictly limited access to the global internet.

"What makes Iran's shutdown unprecedented is the combination of scale and severity: an entire country of 90 million people with a developed digital economy deliberately reverted to a controlled national intranet," said Alimardani, an associate director for technology threats and opportunities at the rights group Witness.

A flagship company of Iran's digital economy, online retailer DigiKala, recently said it was laying off 200 people, about 3% of its workforce. The pain extends to "production, foreign trade and even traditional business," Reza Olfatnasab, head of a national group representing digital businesses, said in comments published in Iranian media.

Khademi's shopfront is Instagram. But her studio's page — with more than 30,000 followers — is now inactive. She was doing the photo shoot to save the pictures for later, hoping to find an alternative.

Her model, Farnaz Ojaghloo, is also a fitness coach. The shutdown has dried up both her modeling gigs and the online courses she ran for people inside Iran and abroad.

"Psychologically, it really hits hard," Ojaghloo said. "All the plans you had for six months or a year ahead get pushed aside, and your only concern becomes surviving in the moment."

The alternatives are 'terrible'

For years, authorities in Iran have enforced filters and policed content on platforms like YouTube and Instagram. But before the war, Iranians could bypass restrictions with cheap virtual private networks, known as VPNs, and other easy workarounds.

Now, the shutdown has stoked high prices for black-market VPNs. Iranian state media routinely report arrests of people for using illegal VPNs or the American satellite system Starlink, which was banned last year.

Senior government officials are awarded "white" SIM cards granting them access to the global internet. Under pressure to alleviate the economic harm, the government is now allowing less-restricted internet access to a small number of professions, business and media.

An e-commerce trade group in Tehran condemned the tiered system in Iranian media on Wednesday, calling it "an abuse of an obvious need of every citizen." It said the outage threatens "the destruction of the country's infrastructure at the hands of our own decision-makers."

The vast majority of people have no choice but Iran's national net.

A Tehran resident who works in advertising said sponsors have little interest in paying for content that can't be posted on major platforms like Instagram, where he has tens of thousands of followers. He said his income is down to near zero since the war began.

A gamer in Isfahan — also with a large following on YouTube and Instagram — said Iran's domestic net "is terrible" — slow, insecure and full of bugs. He too has lost almost all his income from sponsors and donations.

Iran has its own social media platforms modeled on services like WhatsApp and YouTube, but content is closely monitored and often censored.

"Nobody really wants to use these platforms, but there is no other option," the gamer said. Both he and the advertising worker spoke on condition of anonymity out of security concerns.

A growing number of street vendors

The shutdown has piled new pressures on Iran's once large and educated middle class, already struggling in the face of a prewar currency crash.

Economic decline in Iran has spurred waves of anti-government protests, most recently in December. Now, more Iranians are thinking of emigrating, a software developer said.

The developer — likewise speaking on condition of anonymity out of safety fears — said the internet shutdown has wiped out remote work. He lost his own job when his former company laid off almost all its employees in recent weeks, he said.

The consequences are visible in the rising numbers of street peddlers in Tehran. Reza Amiri, a 32-year-

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old former employee of an internet provider, now sells hats and umbrellas by a metro stop. He lost his job after the war started and has not received his last month's salary, he said.

Monireh Pishgahi sells ornaments and accessories on the capital's famed Vali Asr Street. She said her tailoring business used to supply three online shops. As business dried up, she shut down and laid off her five employees.

One downtown shopkeeper, Mohammad Rihai, said he had given up on trying to persuade street vendors to stop blocking the sidewalk outside his store. "After the war, you see them all along the sidewalk. I cannot fight them anymore."

War-battered Syria now sells itself as a safe corridor amid regional conflict

By ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Ahed Badawi lived for more than a decade in Bahrain, a small Gulf country that — unlike her native Syria — rarely made headlines.

It provided a refuge for her, her sister and their elderly mother during Syria's 14 years of civil war.

"Nothing at all ever happened there," she said. "I mean, the Bahrainis don't even know what war is."

But after the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran, sparking a regional war, Bahrain and neighboring Gulf countries found themselves in Iran's crosshairs. So the family fled back to their home in Aleppo, which was once the site of some of the civil war's fiercest battles but now offered a safe haven.

War-battered Syria has stood out as one of the few spots of calm in the region's latest conflagration. Its leaders have been working to rebuild relations with Arab and Western countries that had shunned Syria under former President Bashar Assad, who was ousted in December 2024 by rebels, who then installed a new government.

Since the outbreak of the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, Damascus has seized on the opportunity to strengthen those relationships by staying neutral.

Syria has "presented itself as the solution to strategic crises in the region," said Obayda Ghadban, an official with the Syrian Foreign Ministry.

Syria positions itself as a safe corridor

After the U.S.-Israeli attacks, Iran rained missiles not only on Israel but on Gulf countries hosting U.S. bases. In Lebanon, the dormant war between Israel and the Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah reignited. And Iraq — which is home to both Iran-backed militias and U.S. bases — found itself in the crosshairs of both sides.

Despite missiles flying overhead — and occasionally falling on Syrian territory — Syria managed to stay on the sidelines and positioned itself as an alternative transport route for oil exports that could no longer be sent through the strait.

"Syria, which was once an arena for others' conflicts, has today chosen, through the will of its people and institutions, to be a bridge to security and a fundamental pillar of the solution," interim Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa said last week at a meeting of European leaders in Cyprus.

He touted his country as "the alternative and secure artery connecting Central Asia and the Gulf to the heart of the European continent."

Since Iran blocked access to the strait, oil shipments have been trucked from Iraq into Syria and shipped to European markets via Syria's Baniyas port, bypassing the Hormuz route. A key border crossing between northern Iraq and Syria reopened last month after being closed for more than a decade, with officials touting it as an additional route for energy exports.

The overland route is less efficient and more expensive than shipping exports through the strait, but it provides a workaround as long as Iran maintains its stranglehold on the channel.

Country has 'strategic enemies' on both sides

Ghadban said his country had no interest in allying with either side in the war.

"The parties participating in it are strategic enemies of Syria, whether we talk about Iran and its affili-

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ates, or if we talk about Israel and its aggressive expansionist policy in Syria," he said. "Both parties have an interest in weakening Syria."

Iran was a key ally of Assad and came to his aid during the civil war, as did Hezbollah and allied Iraqi militias. That put them in conflict with the groups that are now ruling in Damascus.

Israel, meanwhile, has been suspicious of and sometimes openly hostile toward Syria's new Islamist-led authorities. After Assad's fall, the Israeli military seized control of a U.N.-patrolled buffer zone in southern Syria and has been occupying it.

In the early weeks of the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran, some had speculated that Syria might join the fray to settle scores against Hezbollah.

But the Syrian military made no such move, and al-Sharaa and other officials insisted they had no interest in intervening in Lebanon.

U.S. withdrawal helps Syria stay on sidelines

Noah Bonsey, senior adviser on Syria with the International Crisis Group, said that while "Damascus was really clear from the beginning that it wanted no part of this war and signaled to everyone accordingly," its ability to actually stay out of the fray was in part due to fortuitous timing.

Eastern Syria had for years hosted bases housing U.S. troops, but the U.S. had drawn down its presence before the war with Iran started.

After fighting broke out between forces of the central Syrian government and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in northeastern Syria in January, the U.S. military moved thousands of suspected Islamic State militants held in detention centers in Syria to Iraq. The military also scaled down its own presence in Syria, where the main mission was to prevent a resurgence of IS.

"Because the withdrawal had gone so far by the time the war (with Iran) started, there were very few U.S. assets and personnel still in the country" that could have drawn Iranian fire, Bonsey said.

Syria is not immune from economic pain

Syria may have gained politically from its neutral positioning in the regional war, but it will still suffer from the conflict economically, Bonsey said.

Damascus had counted on Syria's postwar reconstruction receiving investment from wealthy Gulf Arab countries once known for their shopping malls and skyscrapers.

But now those countries will have fewer resources and "less bandwidth to spare for lower-priority issues" as they focus on "shoring up their own defense and getting their own economies back up to speed" after the war, Bonsey said.

While Syria could benefit in the long term from infrastructure projects such as proposed rail lines and gas pipelines that would link the Gulf to Turkey and to European markets, those projects will take years, if they happen at all.

In the meantime, Syria's new government faces increasing discontent from the population over the country's flagging economy.

But Badawi, for now at least, is happy to be back home, despite the difficulties.

"There's nothing like being in your own country," she said. "When you're in your own country, you feel a different kind of security."

EU-Mercosur trade deal takes provisional effect, boosting hopes and concerns for millions

By MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — The long-awaited trade deal between South American bloc Mercosur and the European Union took effect Friday, at least provisionally. The initiative creates a trans-Atlantic market estimated at \$22 trillion with 720 million potential consumers, and some nations expect to boost their exports by more than 10% by 2038, once it is fully implemented.

The trade deal was signed Jan. 17 at a meeting of the South American group. European Commission

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President Ursula von der Leyen's move to provisionally enact the deal, effectively sidestepping the EU Parliament, is being challenged by EU lawmakers at the bloc's judiciary. The agreement will be halted if the European body rules against it.

"This is good news for EU businesses of all sizes, good news for our consumers and good news for our farmers, who will gain valuable new export opportunities, with full protection for sensitive sectors," she said Thursday.

Von der Leyen is expected to hold a videoconference Friday with leaders of Mercosur nations Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay to celebrate the agreement.

Earlier this week, Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, one of the key supporters of the agreement, signed a decree validating the deal in his country. He said it is a response to unilateral tariffs imposed last year by U.S. President Donald Trump and a reaffirmation of multilateralism.

"Nothing better than believing in the exercise of democracy, in multilateralism, and in cordial relations between nations," Lula said in a ceremony in the capital, Brasilia, to celebrate the milestone after more than 25 years of negotiations.

Last week, Brazil's vice president and one of the negotiators of the deal, Geraldo Alckmin, said in an interview with The Associated Press and other news agencies that not striking the deal with the EU would have meant staying behind while competitor nations made other agreements.

Brazil is by far Mercosur's largest economy, with a gross domestic product estimated at over \$2.3 trillion in 2025.

Lia Valls, an associate researcher at the think-tank Fundacao Getulio Vargas based in Rio de Janeiro, agrees that the deal offers better perspectives against unilateralism worldwide.

"The EU and Mercosur are showing that it is possible for big blocs to reach a deal in this world where that multilateral system is being very weakened and where the U.S. clearly operates to do that," Valls told the AP. "It is a very positive sign."

The agreement faced opposition from European farmers and environmental groups and was delayed in December, before being referred to the EU's top court.

South American agribusiness industries, chiefly beef, fruit and minerals, are expecting a boost in exports to Europe. European automakers, pharmaceutical companies and technology firms also look forward to making new inroads in Mercosur markets.

While companies based in Mercosur countries have expressed fear of tough competition from European peers in hi-tech industries, European farmers have shown concerns about price pressures and imports that do not follow similar environmental standards.

French President Emmanuel Macron, one of the critics of the deal, has long demanded safeguards to monitor and stop large economic disruption in the EU, increased regulations in the Mercosur nations like pesticide restrictions, and more inspections of imports at EU ports.

The agreement gradually removes trade barriers and tariffs in the two blocs, but it also keeps economic safeguard clauses for European countries to protect some sectors from excessive competition, such as poultry, beef, sugar, and fruit.

Prosecutors release video of armed man storming correspondents' dinner

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal prosecutors released a video Thursday showing the moment authorities say a man armed with guns and knives tried to storm the White House Correspondents' Association dinner and attempt to kill President Donald Trump.

Jeanine Pirro, the U.S. attorney for Washington, posted the video on social media amid questions over whose bullet struck a Secret Service officer as Cole Tomas Allen ran through security with a long gun toward the hotel ballroom packed with journalists, administration officials and others.

Prosecutors had previously claimed the agent was shot in the bullet-resistant vest during the melee, but

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had not confirmed it was Allen who shot the agent. Pirro, however, said Thursday that there is no evidence that the officer was hit by friendly fire.

The video appears to show Allen run through a magnetometer and point his weapon at the agent, who fired back five times, according to authorities. It's not clear from the video at what moment Allen's weapon fires.

Allen was injured but was not shot during the Saturday night attack at the Washington Hilton, which disrupted one of the highest-profile annual events in the nation's capital.

Allen agreed earlier Thursday to remain jailed while he awaits trial. He did not enter a plea during his brief appearance in federal court.

Secret Service Director Sean Curran defended the agency's security plan for the event and said he would not change it. He said in a Fox News interview that the attack was stopped within seconds at the outermost perimeter of a multi-layered security bubble around the president. The distance from the magnetometers to the podium where Trump was seated was 355 feet, with two sets of stairs, a doorway and many more armed Secret Service officers in between, he said.

"The site was set up perfectly," Curran said.

The nearly six-minute video released by Pirro shows Allen walking back and forth down a hallway the day before the attack, and briefly checking out the hotel gym. Footage from the security checkpoint shows about a dozen federal officers taking down magnetometers and casually standing around when the gunman emerges from a doorway and starts sprinting toward them. The gunman quickly reaches the officers before most of them appear to notice him.

Only one officer visible in the video appears to have drawn his gun before the gunman passed; Pirro said he's the one who was shot and returned fire.

In court papers pressing for Allen's continued detention, prosecutors wrote Wednesday that Allen took a picture of himself in his hotel room just minutes before the incident, and that he was outfitted with an ammunition bag, a shoulder gun holster and a sheathed knife. In a message that authorities say sheds light on his motive, Allen referred to himself as a "Friendly Federal Assassin" and alluded obliquely to grievances over a range of Trump administration actions.

Allen's lawyers agreed during the brief hearing before U.S. Magistrate Moxila Upadhyaya to keep their client behind bars for now after initially arguing in court papers that Allen should be released.

In a court filing Wednesday, the defense wrote that the government's case is "based upon inferences drawn about Mr. Allen's intent that raise more questions than answers" and noted that Allen's writings never mentioned Trump by name. The defense left the door open to pressing in the future for Allen's release before trial.

"The government's evidence of the charged offense — the attempted assassination of the president — is thus built entirely upon speculation, even under the most generous reading of its theory," defense lawyers wrote.

Allen was charged on Monday with that crime, as well as two additional firearms counts, including discharging a weapon during a crime of violence. He faces up to life in prison if convicted of the assassination count alone.

Allen, 31, is from Torrance, California. He worked as a part-time tutor for a test preparation company and is an amateur video game developer.

Republicans say they will defer to Trump on Iran war despite arrival of 60-day deadline

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, STEPHEN GROVES and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Many Republicans who have been uneasy with President Donald Trump's war in Iran emphasized that there would be a May 1 deadline for Congress to intervene. But the date is now set to pass with no action from GOP lawmakers who continue to defer to the White House.

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Under the War Powers Resolution of 1973, Congress must declare war or authorize the use of force within 60 days — a deadline that falls on Friday — or within 90 days if the president asks for an extension. But Congress made no attempt at enforcing that requirement, leaving town for a week on Thursday after the Senate rejected a Democratic attempt to halt the war for a sixth time.

The Trump administration has shown no interest in seeking congressional approval at all. It is arguing that the deadlines set by the law don't apply because the war in Iran effectively ended when a ceasefire began in early April.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said Thursday he doesn't plan on a vote to authorize force in Iran or otherwise weigh in.

"I'm listening carefully to what the members of our conference are saying, and at this point I don't see that," Thune said.

The reluctance to defy Trump on the war comes at a politically perilous time for Republicans, with public frustration mounting both over the conflict and its impact on gas prices. Still, most GOP lawmakers say they are supportive of Trump's wartime leadership, or are at least willing to give him more time amid the fragile ceasefire.

Republican Sen. Kevin Cramer of North Dakota says he'd vote for an authorization of war if Trump asked for it. But he questioned if the War Powers Resolution, passed during the Vietnam War era as a way for Congress to claw back its power, is even constitutional.

"Our founders created a really strong executive, like it or not like it," Cramer said.

Still, some GOP senators made clear that they eventually want Congress to have a say. Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski said in a floor speech Thursday that she will introduce a limited authorized use of military force when the Senate returns from the one-week recess if the administration has not yet presented what she called a "credible plan."

"I do not believe we should engage in open-ended military action without clear accountability," Murkowski said. "Congress has a role."

Some Republicans signal they want a vote

A handful of GOP senators have said for weeks that Congress should assert its authority over the war at some point. One of those senators, Maine's Susan Collins, voted for the first time with Democrats on Thursday to halt the war. She said in a statement she wants to see a defined strategy for bringing the conflict to a close.

"The president's authority as commander-in-chief is not without limits," Collins said, adding that the 60-day deadline is "not a suggestion, it is a requirement."

In addition to Collins and Murkowski, Republican Sens. John Curtis of Utah, Thom Tillis of North Carolina and Josh Hawley of Missouri, among others, have said in recent weeks that they would eventually like to see a vote.

Curtis said he would not support continued funding for the war until Congress votes to authorize it.

"It is time for decision-making from both the administration and from Congress — and that can happen in league with one another, not in conflict," Curtis said.

Thune suggested the White House step up its outreach to lawmakers with briefings and hearings if it wants continued support from Capitol Hill.

"Obviously, getting readouts from our military leadership on a somewhat regular basis I think will be helpful in terms of shaping the views of our members about how comfortable they are with everything that's happening there, and the direction headed forward," Thune said.

Trump administration argues deadline doesn't apply

The War Powers Resolution of 1973 states that a president has 60 calendar days after notifying Congress that the U.S. is engaged in military hostilities to either end the military campaign or gain approval from Congress. The White House can use a 30-day extension to safely withdraw forces, but Congress must be notified.

The 60-day window will expire Friday, but Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said during a hearing Thursday, "We are in a ceasefire right now, which our understanding means, the 60-day clock pauses or stops."

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Meanwhile, a senior administration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the administration's position, said for purposes of the war powers law, "the hostilities that began on Saturday, Feb. 28 have terminated." The official said the U.S. military and Iran have not exchanged fire since the two-week ceasefire that began April 7.

The administration is making that argument even though Iran maintains its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz and the U.S. Navy is maintaining a blockade to prevent Iran's oil tankers from getting out to sea.

Democrats scoffed at the suggestion that May 1 is not the real deadline. "I do not believe the statute would support that," Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine told Hegseth in the hearing.

Sen. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., argued that the military is still operating warships and other military assets even though it has stopped bombing Iran during the ceasefire.

"Ceasing to use some forces while using others does not somehow stop the clock," Schiff said.

Yet, the development came as little surprise to at least one House Democrat who oversees the military.

Rep. Adam Smith, the ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, told The Associated Press: "Is the expectation that the Trump administration is going to follow the law? I do not have that expectation."

Florida Republicans slice and dice congressional districts: How a new map could cost Democrats seats

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — With President Donald Trump's poll numbers fading, beleaguered Florida Democrats hoped this year would be an opportunity to gain ground in the state.

But now they're looking at the possibility of losing up to four U.S. House seats in the midterms because of a new congressional map passed this week by the Republican-controlled legislature.

Gov. Ron DeSantis said redistricting will reflect Florida's population growth and political leanings. Democrats called it a power grab by Trump, who has been urging Republicans to redraw maps across the country.

The changes use both "packing and cracking," the principal tools of gerrymandering. Packing involves concentrating like-minded voters into fewer districts, or into a single district, to minimize their overall impact across multiple districts. Cracking involves spreading like-minded voters across more districts, making it harder for them to influence any single district's election.

Under the new lines, there are 24 districts where Trump won in 2024 by double digits, according to analysts from both parties. If Republicans win all of them, it will be a gain of four seats.

Although there will almost certainly be legal challenges to the map, here's a look at how the new boundaries affect Florida's current Democratic-controlled districts.

Cracking in Tampa Bay area could mean no Democratic seats

Pinellas and Hillsborough counties were, not that long ago, regarded as two of the most populous swing counties in U.S. politics. Voters in and around Tampa and St. Petersburg served as a bellwether in presidential contests.

Currently, the core metro area is split between the right-leaning district represented by Republican Rep. Anna Paulina Luna and the left-leaning district represented by Democratic Rep. Kathy Castor. The new map splits that into three districts, all of which tilt Republican, and Castor's seat now includes more conservative rural areas.

She called the new designs "blatantly illegal" because of Florida's state constitutional ban on partisan gerrymandering. But she said, "No matter how new districts are drawn, I will keep fighting for Tampa Bay families."

Luna, a top Democratic target in November, picked up more Republican-leaning precincts, but Democrats in Washington said they could still win the seat given Trump's lagging popularity.

Packing in Orlando turns two Democratic districts into one

Right now, Democrats Darren Soto and Maxwell Frost have adjoining districts in and around Orlando,

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with Frost's concentrated in the city and Soto's covering Kissimmee and extending south and east over much of Osceola County.

Now, the Orlando metro core will become a single district that is all but guaranteed to go Democratic. Meanwhile, other parts of Orlando will become part of a separate district that's more sprawling and more Republican.

Frost blasted the design for pairing city residents with voters who live a two-hour drive away. "That's how hard DeSantis map-makers had to work to dilute the impact of voters in Orange County and make this district red," he said on social media.

Soto, who is Puerto Rican and represents many Puerto Ricans now, lashed out at the governor.

"DeSantis declared war against Florida's 1.3M Puerto Ricans," he wrote on social media. "We are American citizens, our people served and died for this country, and we vote."

Heavily Black district erased to reorder south Florida seats

The new map singles out a heavily Black south Florida district that had been represented by Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick before her recent resignation during a House ethics inquiry into her use of campaign funds. The district was drawn originally to comply with Voting Rights Act provisions that the U.S. Supreme Court effectively gutted on Wednesday.

DeSantis described the district as an egregious race-based gerrymander, with most of it located inland while two arms stretched toward coastal Democratic areas.

Now the district will essentially be erased, spread out across multiple districts.

Frankel's and Moskowitz's districts scrambled in Palm Beach, Broward counties

Reps. Lois Frankel and Jared Moskowitz currently have adjoining districts covering swaths of Palm Beach and Broward counties. Both lean slightly Democratic.

The new map creates a more Democratic district anchored by West Palm Beach, mixing some of Frankel's voters and those formerly represented by Cherfilus-McCormick. It divides Moskowitz's current territory across three districts, a more difficult blow for his reelection prospects than Frankel would face.

Parkland, where Moskowitz lives, will be in a more Republican district that reaches across the state to Naples. One of the national Republicans' top targets even before redistricting, Moskowitz has not said what district he will choose for a reelection bid.

Wasserman-Schultz loses her district and Wilson's is redrawn

Reps. Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, a former Democratic National Committee chairwoman, and Frederica Wilson currently represent neighboring districts to the south of Frankel's and Moskowitz's pairing.

Wasserman-Schultz has north Broward, including Weston, where she lives, along with Hollywood, Pembroke Pines and part of Miramar. Wilson, who lives in Miami Gardens, represents the second-most Democratic district on the outgoing map, with south Broward and parts of Miami-Dade.

Now, there will be just one concentrated Democratic district in Miami-Dade, with Wilson in position to stay in office there. Between that new Miami-Dade district and Frankel's Palm Beach County base is a new heavily Democratic Broward district. Wasserman-Schultz does not live in that part of Broward. She will have to decide whether to run there or choose one of the new, more Republican districts that Moskowitz also is considering.

Wasserman-Schultz has called the redraw "a nakedly partisan scheme" that "breaks state law."

In a possible bright spot for Democrats nationally, the south Florida changes did not substantially bolster Republican Reps. María Elvira Salazar, who lives in Coral Gables, or Carlos Giménez, another Miami-Dade lawmaker. Democrats plan to continue targeting them in this year's midterms.

Former leader Aung San Suu Kyi moved from prison to house arrest in Myanmar

By GRANT PECK Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Former Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been moved from prison to house arrest and her sentence has been reduced as part of a prisoner amnesty for a Buddhist holiday.

Accompanying the announcement was a photo of the 80-year-old leader dressed in a traditional white blouse and skirt and sitting on a bench behind a low table facing unidentified men who wear military and police uniforms. Myanmar's military information office and state television disclosed the move and shared the photo of her Thursday night, but when and where the photo was taken was not clear.

Suu Kyi was detained Feb. 1, 2021, when the army seized power from her elected government. She has not been seen publicly since then, and the last official photo of her was from a court appearance on May 24, 2021.

Earlier Thursday, authorities had announced Suu Kyi's sentence was being reduced as part of a prisoner amnesty marking a Buddhist holiday, the Full Moon Day of Kason honoring Buddha's birthday. The amnesty covered 1,519 prisoners and cut the sentences for those still in prison by one-sixth.

It's the second recent prisoner amnesty to apply to her

Prisoner amnesties are common in Myanmar for religious holidays and other important events, and the amnesty announced Thursday was the second in recent weeks to apply to Suu Kyi. Nearly two weeks earlier, a separate amnesty freed ousted President Win Myint, a longtime Suu Kyi loyalist who was arrested the same day as her.

The amnesties came after Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing was sworn into office as president April 10 following an election that critics say was orchestrated to maintain the military's tight grip on power.

In his inauguration speech, he said his government would grant amnesties to promote social reconciliation, justice and peace. Actions including the amnesties and Suu Kyi's transfer are widely seen as an effort to burnish his image.

The message announcing her transfer says she was moved from the main prison in Myanmar's capital Naypyitaw to house arrest, with the action "made to celebrate Buddha Day, to show humanitarian concern, and to demonstrate the state's benevolence and goodwill."

It does not specify her exact location but says that by law "she will now serve the remainder of her sentence at a specific home instead of in prison."

Her prison sentence was seen as an attempt to discredit her

Suu Kyi was originally sentenced to 33 years in prison in late 2022 for several offenses that her supporters and rights groups described as attempts to legitimize the army takeover that removed her from office, as well as to prevent her return to politics.

Thursday's amnesty would bring her sentence down to 18 years, with more than 13 years left to serve, according to the calculation.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres considered Suu Kyi's transfer "a meaningful step toward conditions conducive to a credible political process," U.N. spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said.

Guterres also called for all political prisoners to be released as a fundamental step toward a political process and solution that "must be based on an immediate cessation of violence and a genuine commitment to inclusive dialogue," his spokesperson said.

The human rights advocacy group Burma Campaign UK said the announcements were part of a strategy to project reform while maintaining power.

"Moving Aung San Suu Kyi isn't about change or reform, it's about public relations designed to preserve military rule," Burma Campaign UK's director Mark Farmaner said. "No-one should be fooled."

Nay Phone Latt, a spokesperson for the National Unity Government, the main group coordinating armed opposition to military rule, told The Associated Press on Friday that the move was aimed at diverting the opposition movement.

"It is important that we do not fall for these tricks. We will continue until the revolution achieves its six

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goals," said Nay Phone Latt, referring to the group's political roadmap to end military rule, including ending the military's involvement in politics and placing all armed forces under the command of an elected civilian government.

Information about Suu Kyi is tightly controlled

Suu Kyi's legal team has not been allowed to meet her in person since December 2022. Reports of declining health, including low blood pressure, dizziness and heart problems in 2024 and 2025 could not be verified.

Kim Aris, her younger son living in London, and Myanmar democracy activists launched an online campaign named "Proof of Life" to demand evidence she is alive and well, following the last mass amnesty on April 17.

"Moving her is not freeing her," Kim said in a statement posted on Facebook following the announcement of her house arrest. "My request is simple: verified information that my mother is alive, the ability to communicate with her, and to see her free. If she is alive, show verified proof of life."

The 2021 army takeover triggered massive public resistance that was brutally suppressed, triggering a bloody civil war that has killed thousands of people.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a rights monitoring organization, 22,047 people had been detained for political reasons since the army takeover.

Suu Kyi, the daughter of Myanmar's martyred independence hero Gen. Aung San, spent almost 15 years as a political prisoner under house arrest between 1989 and 2010.

Her stand against military rule in Myanmar turned her into a symbol of nonviolent struggle for democracy, and won her the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize.

Stabbing at Washington state high school wounds 6, including suspect, police say

TACOMA, Wash. (AP) — A student at a Tacoma high school was booked on five counts of first-degree assault after four students and an adult security guard were wounded in a stabbing at the school Thursday, police said.

The Tacoma Fire Department took five people to hospitals from Foss High School, with four of the patients in critical condition and one with minor injuries, said Chelsea Shepherd, a spokesperson for the department.

A sixth person was in police custody and taken to a hospital with minor injuries, she said. All were in stable condition as of late afternoon.

All of those wounded were either stabbed or cut, said Shelbie Boyd, a spokesperson for the Tacoma Police Department. The suspect was among those cut in the altercation.

The school went into lockdown at 1:38 p.m. after the violence began and students were safely dismissed at 2:45 p.m., Tacoma Public Schools said in a statement.

"The school is secure, and we are currently investigating," Boyd said, adding that a reunification area had been set up at the school for parents to pick up their students.

School and after-school activities for Friday were canceled. The school will reopen Monday with counselors on site to support students and staff.

"We are grateful for the quick, calm action of our staff and our first responders," the district said.

Iran's supreme leader vows to protect nuclear and missile capabilities

By JON GAMBRELL and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's supreme leader defiantly vowed Thursday to protect the Islamic Republic's nuclear and missile capabilities, which U.S. President Donald Trump has sought to curtail through airstrikes and as part of a wider deal to cement the war's shaky ceasefire.

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In a statement read by a state television anchor, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei said the only place Americans belonged in the Persian Gulf is "at the bottom of its waters" and that a "new chapter" was being written in the region's history. Khamenei has not been seen in public since taking over as supreme leader following the killing of his father in the war's opening airstrikes.

His remarks come as Iran's economy is reeling and its oil industry is being squeezed by a U.S. Navy blockade halting its tankers from getting out to sea. The world economy is also under pressure as Iran maintains its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of all crude oil is transported. On Thursday, the global benchmark for oil, Brent crude, traded as high as \$126 a barrel.

That shock to oil supplies and prices is putting pressure on Trump, who is floating a new plan to reopen the critical passageway used by the U.S.'s Gulf allies to export their oil and gas.

Under the plan, the U.S. would continue its blockade on Iranian ports, while coordinating with allies to impose higher costs on Iran's attempts to subvert the free flow of energy, according to a senior administration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly.

In a cable sent Tuesday, the U.S. State Department instructed American diplomats around the world — except those in Belarus, China, Cuba and Russia — to seek their host government's support for the Trump administration's call for assistance in establishing a "maritime freedom construct" that would ensure free and unimpeded access to shipping through the strait.

"This commitment reflects broad international consensus on the need for coordinated action to counter Iranian maritime provocations and ensure navigational rights and freedoms in the Strait of Hormuz," said the cable, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press on Thursday.

The initiative, being led by the State Department and the Pentagon's Central Command, "is a fundamentally defensive response to protect the rights of all countries to navigate international waters freely and safely and to hold Iran accountable for its aggressive and illegal actions to impede the free flow of commerce," the cable said.

At the same time, Trump has also floated possible changes to U.S. troop presence in allied countries in Europe. The day after the president announced his administration was conducting a review on potentially reducing the U.S. troop presence in Germany, he was asked by a reporter whether he'd weigh pulling U.S. forces out of Italy and Spain — which have sparred with the United States over use of bases for Iran-related operations.

"Why shouldn't I," Trump answered. "Italy has not been of any help to us, and Spain has been horrible, absolutely horrible."

Ceasefire shaken as strait remains shut

The U.S. blockade — which as of Thursday has turned back some 44 commercial vessels, according to U.S. Central Command — is designed to prevent Iran from selling its oil, depriving it of crucial revenue while also potentially creating a situation where Tehran has to shut off production because it has nowhere to store oil.

A recent Iranian proposal would push negotiations on the country's nuclear program to a later date. Trump said one of the major reasons he went to war was to deny Iran the ability to develop nuclear weapons. Iran has long maintained its program is peaceful, though it enriched uranium at near-weapons-grade levels of 60%.

Pakistan on Thursday said it was still facilitating indirect talks between the U.S. and Iran aimed at easing tensions, but that Islamabad would also welcome direct communication between the two sides, even by phone.

"If the two parties can engage in real-time conversations, that could ease the sticking points," said Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Tahir Andrabi at a weekly news briefing. He declined to share details of any Iranian or U.S. proposals.

Speaking to mark Persian Gulf Day in Iran, Khamenei's remarks signaled that nuclear issues and Iran's ballistic missile program wouldn't be traded away.

"Ninety million proud and honorable Iranians inside and outside the country regard all of Iran's identity-

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based, spiritual, human, scientific, industrial and technological capacities — from nanotechnology and biotechnology to nuclear and missile capabilities — as national,” Khamenei said.

Khamenei referred to America as the “Great Satan,” a long hurled insult by Iranian leaders toward the U.S. since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Khamenei signals strait will remain shut

In his remarks, Khamenei seemed to signal Iran would maintain its control over the waterway, which sits in the territorial waters of Iran and Oman. Iran had been charging some ships reportedly \$2 million apiece to travel through the strait.

He said that Iran’s control of the Strait of Hormuz will make the Gulf more secure, and that Tehran’s “legal rules and new management” of the strait will benefit all the region’s nations.

However, the world considered the strait an international waterway, open to all without paying tolls. Gulf Arab nations, chief among them the United Arab Emirates, have decried Iran’s control of the strait as akin to piracy.

Crackdown intensifies in Iran

Iran announced Thursday it hanged a 21-year-old man over charges stemming from the nationwide protests in January, the judiciary’s Mizan news agency reported.

The agency identified the executed man as Sasan Azadvar, from Isfahan. It said he was hanged for the crime of “effectively cooperating with the enemy by attacking police officers” during the protests.

Activists and rights groups say a crackdown on dissent, including a wave of executions, has further intensified since the U.S.-Israel war with Iran.

U.N. Human Rights Chief Volker Turk said on Wednesday at least 21 people have been executed since the start of the war.

Iran routinely holds closed-door trials in which defendants are unable to challenge the accusations they face, rights groups say, warning that several other people remain at risk of execution.

Fighting continues in southern Lebanon

Despite a ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon-based, Iran-backed Hezbollah militants, the group has continued to claim attacks on Israeli troops in southern Lebanon. Israel’s military said one of its soldiers was killed in battle there Thursday, raising the troop casualties to 17 since the Iran war started.

Air raid sirens sounded multiple times in border communities in northern Israel on Thursday, too. The Israeli military said it struck military structures used by Hezbollah, and the Lebanese Health Ministry said 9 were killed in strikes, including women and children.

Late on Thursday, the foreign ministry of United Arab Emirates — which has come under attack by Iran during war — announced a travel ban for its citizens covering Iran, Lebanon and Iraq, and urged those already in those countries to return home.

Trump administration says its war in Iran has been ‘terminated’ before 60-day deadline

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration is arguing that the war in Iran has already ended because of the ceasefire that began in early April, an interpretation that would allow the White House to avoid the need to seek congressional approval.

The statement furthers an argument laid out by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth during testimony in the Senate earlier Thursday, when he said the ceasefire effectively paused the war. Under that rationale, the administration has not yet met the requirement mandated by a 1973 law to seek formal approval from Congress for military action that extends beyond 60 days.

A senior administration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the administration’s position, said for purposes of that law, “the hostilities that began on Saturday, Feb. 28 have terminated.” The official said the U.S. military and Iran have not exchanged fire since the two-week ceasefire that began April 7.

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While the ceasefire has since been extended, Iran maintains its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz, and the U.S. Navy is maintaining a blockade to prevent Iran's oil tankers from getting out to sea.

Under the War Powers Resolution, the law that sought to constrain a president's military powers, President Donald Trump had until Friday to seek congressional authorization or cease fighting. The law also allows an administration to extend that deadline by 30 days.

Democrats have pushed the administration for formal approval of the Iran war, and the 60-day mark would likely have been a turning point for a swath of Republican lawmakers who backed temporary action against Tehran but insisted on congressional input for something longer.

"That deadline is not a suggestion; it is a requirement," said Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, who voted Thursday in favor of a measure that would end military action in Iran since Congress hadn't given its approval. She added that "further military action against Iran must have a clear mission, achievable goals, and a defined strategy for bringing the conflict to a close."

Richard Goldberg, who served as director for countering Iranian weapons of mass destruction for the National Security Council during Trump's first term, said he has recommended to administration officials that they simply transition to a new operation, which he suggested could be called "Epic Passage," a sequel to Operation Epic Fury.

That new mission, he said, "would inherently be a mission of self-defense focused on reopening the strait while reserving the right to offensive action in support of restoring freedom of navigation."

"That to me solves it all," added Goldberg, who is now a senior adviser at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a hawkish Washington think tank.

During testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday, Hegseth said it was the administration's "understanding" that the 60-day clock was on pause while the two countries were in a ceasefire. Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., who had asked Hegseth about the timeline, later told reporters that the defense secretary "advanced a very novel argument that I've never heard before" and "certainly has no legal support."

Katherine Yon Ebright, counsel at the Brennan Center's Liberty and National Security Program and an expert on war powers, said that interpretation would be a "sizeable extension of previous legal gamesmanship" related to the 1973 law.

"To be very, very clear and unambiguous, nothing in the text or design of the War Powers Resolution suggests that the 60-day clock can be paused or terminated," she said.

Other presidents have argued that the military action they've taken was not intense enough or was too intermittent to qualify under the War Powers Resolution. But Trump's war in Iran would certainly not be such a case, Ebright said, adding that lawmakers need to push back against the administration on that kind of argument.

Louisiana congressional primaries are suspended as a result of the Supreme Court's ruling

By SARA CLINE, JACK BROOK and DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Louisiana suspended its congressional primaries Thursday as early voting was about to get underway, while pressure mounted on Republican officials in other states to redraw their U.S. House maps in light of a Supreme Court ruling that significantly weakened the Voting Rights Act.

Early voting had been scheduled to begin Saturday for Louisiana's May 16 primaries. But Republican Gov. Jeff Landry issued an executive order postponing the U.S. House primary in response to a ruling Wednesday by the court that struck down a majority Black congressional district.

"Allowing elections to proceed under an unconstitutional map would undermine the integrity of our system and violate the rights of our voters," Landry stated. "This executive order ensures we uphold the rule of law while giving the Legislature the time it needs to pass a fair and lawful congressional map."

The Republican-controlled secretary of state's office, which declared an electoral emergency allowing for Landry's order, said it would post notices at early voting sites alerting the public about the suspended

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congressional primary. All other races on the ballot will proceed as scheduled.

The Supreme Court decision and Landry's move triggered a flurry of follow-up legal action. On Thursday night, the three-judge federal appeals court panel that heard the initial case that was appealed to the high court issued a brief order suspending Louisiana's House election until new maps are drawn — a move some legal experts said was premature. Marc Elias, a prominent Democratic election attorney, announced the filing of a lawsuit challenging Landry's order.

The governor's order postponed the congressional primary until either July 15 or a date to be set by the Legislature. The state's Republican House and Senate leaders said they are prepared to pass new congressional voting districts — and set a new election date — before their regular session ends in a month.

President Donald Trump used his social media platform to praise Landry, who also is his special envoy to Greenland, for moving quickly to revise the state's congressional districts. He also urged Republicans in Tennessee to do likewise in response to the Supreme Court's decision.

Democrats say the delay could cause confusion

While civil rights activists denounced the potential for diminished minority representation in Congress, top Republicans cited the Supreme Court's decision as justification to spur an already intense national redistricting battle among states before the November elections.

"I think all states who have unconstitutional maps should look at that very carefully, and I think they should do it before the midterm," House Speaker Mike Johnson told reporters in Washington.

The election suspension in Louisiana was denounced by some Democrats.

"This is going to cause mass confusion among voters -- Democrats, Republicans, white, Black, everybody," said Louisiana state Sen. Royce Duplessis, a Democrat who represents the New Orleans area. "What they're effectively doing is changing the rules of the game in the middle of the game. It's rigging the system."

Delaying an election is unusual but not unprecedented.

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, several states pushed back elections because of health concerns. Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards, who led Louisiana at the time, postponed the state's April 4 presidential primary three weeks before it was supposed to occur — then delayed it again until July 11.

More states could join a national redistricting wave

Louisiana currently is represented in the U.S. House by four Republicans and two Democrats. A revised map could give Republicans a chance to pick up at least one more seat in the November midterms — adding to Republican gains elsewhere from redistricting.

Voting districts typically are redrawn once a decade, after each census. But Trump last year urged Texas Republicans to redraw House districts to give the GOP an edge in the midterms. California Democrats reciprocated, and redistricting efforts soon cascaded across states.

On Wednesday, Florida lawmakers became the latest to redraw U.S. House districts, adopting a new map backed by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis that could give the GOP a chance at winning several additional seats.

The Florida vote occurred just hours after the U.S. Supreme Court's conservative majority issued a ruling that significantly weakened minority protections under the federal Voting Rights Act. The court said Louisiana officials had relied too heavily on race when drawing a congressional district that is represented by Democrat Cleo Fields.

Trump said he wants Tennessee to take up redistricting in response to the court's ruling. The president posted on social media that he had spoken with the state's Republican governor, Bill Lee, who he said would work hard for a new map that could help Republicans gain an additional seat. Democrats currently hold only one of the state's nine House seats — a district centered in Memphis, which is majority Black.

Tennessee House Speaker Cameron Sexton, a Republican, said he is in conversations with the White House and others while reviewing the court's decision.

Louisiana has a history of redistricting challenges

After the 2020 census, Louisiana officials had drawn House voting district boundaries that maintained one Black majority district and five mostly white districts, in a state with a population that is about one-

third Black. A federal judge later struck down the map for violating the Voting Rights Act.

The following year, the Supreme Court found that Alabama had to create a second congressional district that would be favorable to Black voters.

Federal judges permanently barred Alabama from using a congressional map drawn by state lawmakers and ordered the use of a plan that added a second district with a substantial number of Black voters.

On Thursday, Alabama filed an emergency motion with the Supreme Court seeking an expedited review of its appeal. The state is seeking to lift the injunction blocking the use of the 2023 map drawn by the Republican-controlled legislature that did not include the new district.

Louisiana's legislature and governor adopted a new House map in 2024 that created a second Black majority district. But that map also was subsequently challenged in court, leading to the most recent Supreme Court ruling.

After the ruling, Landry called U.S. House candidates on Wednesday and told them that primaries would most likely be stalled, according to Misti Cordell, a Republican running in a crowded race to fill U.S. Rep. Julia Letlow's vacated seat.

"It's an inconvenience for a candidate for sure, but you know they want to do it right versus having to go through all this again," Cordell said. She added that she appreciated the heads up before she and other candidates began "spending their war chest" during the final weeks leading up to Election Day.

Meta raises specter of shutting down service to New Mexico in legal clash over child safety

By MORGAN LEE Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — Meta is raising the prospect of shutting down its social media services in New Mexico in response to a push by state prosecutors for fundamental changes to the company's platforms, including Instagram, to protect the mental health and safety of children.

The possibility emerged amid legal gamesmanship in the runup to a bench trial next week on allegations that Meta poses a public nuisance. It's the second phase of a case that already resulted in \$375 million in civil penalties on a jury's determination that Meta knowingly harmed children's mental health and concealed what it knew about child sexual exploitation on its platforms.

Prosecutors are asking the court to order a series of changes to child accounts on social media aimed at reining in addictive features, improving age verification and preventing child sexual exploitation through default privacy settings and closer oversight.

Meta executives have emphasized that the company continuously improves child safety and addresses compulsive social media use. The company says its being singled out among hundreds of apps that teens use.

In a court filing unsealed Thursday, Meta said it was unfeasible for the company to meet a proposed requirement for 99% accuracy in verifying that child users are at least 13 years old, among other demands.

"As a practical matter, this requirement effectively requires Meta to shut down its services — for all users in the state — or else comply with impossible obligations," Meta said in the filing.

Such a shutdown across a population of 2.1 million residents in New Mexico could silence personal communication on Meta's immensely popular platforms, which also include Facebook and WhatsApp, and also impact their use for commercial advertising.

By withdrawing from New Mexico, Meta would satisfy any concerns about harm to children, but the message could appear intentionally hostile and might lead to unintended consequences, said Eric Goldman, codirector of the High Tech Law Institute at Santa Clara University School of Law in California.

Goldman noted that Canadian authorities accused Facebook in 2023 of putting profits over safety after the platform blocked local news content during record-setting wildfires and evacuations. Facebook was responding to a newly enacted law that requires tech giants to pay publishers for linking to or otherwise repurposing their content online.

A Los Angeles jury last month found both Meta and YouTube liable for harms to children using their

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services, validated longstanding concerns about the dangers of social media.

New Mexico's case against Meta is the first to reach trial among more than 40 state attorneys general who have filed suit against the company on claims it contributes to a mental health crisis among young people. Most are pursuing remedies in U.S. federal court.

"I highly doubt that they're going to be willing and able to turn the lights off for their product all over the country," New Mexico Attorney General Raúl Torrez said in an online news conference.

Torrez disputed Meta's argument that proposed changes are impractical, describing "before times" in an ever-evolving social media landscape when "we didn't have infinite scroll and we didn't have auto-play." Torrez, a Democrat running for reelection to a second term in November, said he won't be "turning a blind eye to exploited children in the state of New Mexico because people have an advertising contract."

Beyond the U.S., other countries have implemented — or are planning — a bevy of restrictions on children's online activities, ranging from social media bans to requiring younger teens to link their accounts to a parent's. New Mexico also wants all child accounts on Meta platforms to have an associated parent or guardian, as well as a court-supervised child safety monitor to track improvements over time.

Goldman said there are some countries that Facebook "doesn't directly support in part because it's just not worth it."

"The cost of maintaining the separate service is greater than any value from that territory," he said. "And that could be the case with New Mexico as well."

Massive explosion at NYC home sends police officers flying

NEW YORK (AP) — A massive, fiery explosion at a house in Queens sent several New York City police officers flying through the air early Thursday morning as they were responding to a call of a man inside armed with a knife and the smell of gas.

Eight officers were treated for minor injuries — including burns and at least one head laceration — after the blast, and all of the people who were inside the building have been accounted for, though several were taken to a hospital, police said.

Police body camera video of the explosion shows officers about to enter a small home in Queens before 3 a.m., and just as one starts to open the door, a huge blast erupts, blowing out windows and knocking officers back across a yard and into a gate. The officers can then be seen scrambling to recover through debris as smoke billows out of the house, checking on each other to see if anyone had been hurt.

"You guys good?" one of the officers can be heard saying.

The video then cuts to about a minute later and shows an officer helping two young children out of the home as a handful of other people come staggering out of the house.

"I want to be clear: We got very lucky today, alright," Assistant Chief Christopher McIntosh of the New York Police Department said at a news briefing hours later. "This could have turned out really differently."

"Thankfully, today, luck was on their side," he said of the officers.

McIntosh said the man who prompted the initial call arrived at the home intoxicated and carrying a knife and two garbage bags filled with canisters containing an "unknown substance." He pushed in an air conditioning unit to get into a basement apartment where his wife, daughter and two grandchildren live.

They were eventually able to flee from the building and officers arrived shortly after that. The man is unaccounted for, McIntosh said.

The home collapsed after the explosion, authorities said. Neighboring homes were also damaged.

Trump signs bill funding the Department of Homeland Security, ending record shutdown

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump swiftly signed a bipartisan legislation Thursday to fund much of the Department of Homeland Security, but not its immigration enforcement operations, shortly

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after the package won final approval in the House, ending the longest agency shutdown in history.

The quick action after weeks of political blame brought an abrupt end to the months-long standoff that began after Trump's deadly immigration crackdown in Minneapolis launched a reckoning on Capitol Hill over the funding for the president's agenda.

DHS has been without routine funds since Feb. 14, causing hardship for workers, though many of the immigration enforcement operations were able to keep running with separate funding sources. The White House had warned that temporary funding Trump had tapped to pay Transportation Security Administration and other agency personnel would "soon run out." Some employees risked missed paychecks in May.

"It is about damn time," said Rep. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, who proposed the bipartisan bill more than 70 days ago.

The House swiftly voted by voice earlier Thursday, without a formal roll call, to pass the measure.

The movement in Congress comes as DHS is under intense scrutiny after Trump ousted Kristi Noem as the department's leader, installing Oklahoma Sen. Markwayne Mullin in the middle of the shutdown. The agency counts some 260,000 employees, across TSA, the Coast Guard, FEMA and other operations.

Many workers have endured repeated turmoil with potential furloughs and pay lapses as the congressional stalemate dragged on. This shutdown came on the heels of last year's governmentwide closure, which itself had set a record at 43 days. Countless employees have struggled with bills or simply quit their jobs.

Trump's deportation strategy fueled the dispute

In the aftermath of the fatal shootings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti, both U.S. citizens, by federal agents during protests against the immigration actions in Minneapolis, Democrats refused to fund U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Border Patrol without changes to those operations.

At the same time, Republicans would not go along with a plan pushed by Democrats to fund TSA and the other parts of DHS without the money for ICE and Border Patrol. They insisted that immigration operations must not be zeroed out.

After the shutdown intensified, with hourslong lines at airport security screening, the Senate unanimously approved the bipartisan package without the immigration-related funds in a middle-of-the-night vote a month ago. Then the bill languished in the House.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., himself had called the legislation a "joke."

To break the impasse, Republican leaders in both the House and Senate decided to tackle the immigration enforcement funding on their own through what is called budget reconciliation, a cumbersome weekslong process ahead.

By beginning that path with a separate vote late Wednesday night, adopting a GOP budget resolution to eventually provide \$70 billion for immigration and deportation operations for the remainder of Trump's term in 2029, Johnson was able to unlock the broader bipartisan bill for the rest of DHS.

Johnson acknowledged Thursday that while he had trashed the bipartisan bill before, the new budget process ensure that the immigration enforcement money eventually will flow "with no crazy Democrat reforms."

"We threw a fit," the speaker said. "We had to."

But not all Republicans were pleased. During the quick floor action Thursday, Rep. Chip Roy of Texas said isolating the immigration-related money on a separate track is "offensive to the men and women who serve in ICE and Border Patrol, and are serving this country every single day."

White House warned paychecks were at risk, again

The White House had urged Congress this week to act, warning that the money Trump tapped to temporarily pay TSA and other workers through executive actions was drying up.

Immigration enforcement workers have largely been paid through the flush of new cash — some \$170 billion — that Congress approved as part of Trump's tax cuts bill last year. Others, including at the TSA, have had to rely on Trump's intervention through executive action to ensure their paychecks. Most of its employees are considered essential and have remained on the job.

But with salaries topping a combined \$1.6 billion every two weeks, Mullin said recently that the money was dwindling.

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On Thursday, he said in a social media post that the shutdown "NEVER should have happened."

More than 1,000 TSA officers have quit since the shutdown began, according to Airlines for America, the U.S. airlines trade group that on Wednesday called on Congress to fully fund the Cabinet department.

Everett Kelley, national president of the American Federation of Government Employees, said while workers are "pleased that Congress finally stepped up to do their jobs and fund DHS, it is unacceptable that it took them this long to do so."

He said "federal employees are not political pawns. They are not leverage. They are Americans — and they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect."

Complicated budget strategy ahead

The go-it-alone strategy under the budget resolution process is the same that was used last year to approve Trump's tax cuts bill, which all Democrats opposed.

With the budget resolution now adopted by the House and Senate, lawmakers will next draft the actual \$70 billion ICE and Border Patrol funding bill, with voting expected in May.

Trump has said he wants it on his desk by June 1.

Trump pulls Casey Means' stalled surgeon general nomination. New pick is radiologist Nicole Saphier

By ALI SWENSON and MEG KINNARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Thursday he's nominating radiologist and former Fox News Channel contributor Dr. Nicole Saphier for surgeon general after Dr. Casey Means' path forward stalled in the Senate over questions about her experience and her stance on vaccines.

In a social media post, Trump said he would nominate Saphier, whom he called "a STAR physician who has spent her career guiding women facing breast cancer through their diagnosis and treatment." Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. complimented the nomination, calling Saphier "a long-time warrior for the MAHA movement."

But at least in one instance, she hasn't been in lockstep with Trump's thoughts on health policy, telling The Associated Press in September that his cautions about pregnant women taking Tylenol were oversimplistic and "patronizing."

Means' withdrawal came after her tense exchanges with lawmakers of both parties threw into question whether she could secure enough votes to advance out of the Senate health committee.

In an interview Thursday, Means said her nomination fell apart after a "yearlong smear campaign against me," which she said was a larger effort to impugn the MAHA movement and its focus on reforming food and healthcare.

She said she will continue to "help with progress on this movement how I can."

Means pitched ideas popular with MAHA

In nominating Means last May, Trump sought to hire a close Kennedy ally as the nation's doctor. The 38-year-old Means, a Stanford-educated physician who became disillusioned with the health care system and pivoted to a career as an author and entrepreneur, promotes ideas popular with the MAHA movement, including that Americans are overmedicalized and that diet and lifestyle changes should be at the center of efforts to end widespread chronic disease.

But Means, who did not finish her surgical residency program and doesn't currently have an active medical license, also had faced scrutiny for her lack of experience and potential conflicts. On top of those concerns, senators grilled her in February about Kennedy's effort to pull back vaccine recommendations — leading to some contentious moments as Means toed the line between support for vaccines and calling them a decision best made by patients and their doctors.

In her confirmation hearing, Means was repeatedly asked about the birth dose of the hepatitis B vaccine, which the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stopped recommending for all children late last year in a move criticized by scientific and medical groups nationwide and currently blocked during a lawsuit. Means has raised doubts about the birth dose, posting on social media in 2024 that giving the

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vaccine to a newborn whose parents don't have hepatitis B was "absolute insanity."

Means' nomination had languished since the late February confirmation hearing, even as activists from the MAHA movement orchestrated a push to support her bid by surging phone calls to Republican senators Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Susan Collins of Maine. They had both indicated reservations with the pick.

Means told The Associated Press her understanding was that Murkowski wasn't going to vote for her, and Collins had serious reservations.

"I think there was some talking past each other," Means said of her conversations with the senators, noting they seemed focused on vaccines when she "wasn't coming in with any agenda to impact the vaccine conversation."

In post Thursday, Trump called Means "a strong MAHA Warrior" and also criticized the "intransigence and political games" from GOP Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, the chair of the Senate health committee, who is facing a tough reelection this year and who interrogated Means about vaccines during the hearing.

Means' brother, Calley Means, a health adviser to the Trump administration, blamed Cassidy in a social media post, claiming his "constant delay tactics" sank the nomination because he didn't bring Means' nomination to a committee vote. Kennedy later piled on with his own post claiming Cassidy "did the dirty work for entrenched interests seeking to stall the MAHA movement." Cassidy didn't respond to a request for comment.

Now Trump will try to fill the post a third time

Means is the second U.S. surgeon general pick whose nomination has been withdrawn in Trump's second term. Trump withdrew his first nominee, Fox News medical contributor Janette Nesheiwat, after questions were raised about her academic credentials.

Saphier is director of breast imaging at Memorial Sloan Kettering Monmouth, according to her profile on the New York-based institution's website. She has a doctor of medicine degree from Ross University School of Medicine in Barbados along with fellowships at the Mayo Clinic, the profile said.

Like Means, Saphier has questioned whether every child needs to get the hepatitis B vaccine at birth.

"I don't necessarily think it's necessary," she said on a podcast in September. "My opinion is if a woman recently tested negative for hepatitis B and they're living a low-risk lifestyle, no IV drug use, not a sex worker, they don't have a hepatitis B positive person living in the home, then the newborn probably doesn't need this vaccine and we can have a conversation about whether or not they should get the vaccine later in life."

She also has criticized COVID vaccine booster requirements, arguing on a radio show in September that they were not always rooted in evidence.

Saphier used the phrase "Make America Healthy Again" years before Kennedy popularized it. It was the title of a book she wrote in 2020 that criticized government handling of health care and the Affordable Care Act.

In at least one case, Saphier has diverted from Trump's medical messaging. Last year, as Trump advised pregnant women, "Don't take Tylenol" — promoting unproven and in some cases discredited ties between the medication, vaccines and autism — Saphier said that while pregnant women generally are advised to take acetaminophen only under medical supervision, when necessary and at the lowest effective dose, equally important was that untreated fever or severe pain can also pose serious risks to mothers and babies. She noted that part was missing from Trump's message, delivered at a press conference with top U.S. health officials.

"For decades, women have endured a paternalistic tone in medicine. We've moved past dismissing symptoms as 'hysteria,'" Saphier wrote in an email to the AP at the time. "The President's recent comments on Tylenol in pregnancy are a prime example. Advising moderation was sound; delivering it in a patronizing, simplistic way was not."

On a podcast at the time, Saphier said the press conference was "full of hyperbole" and "really painful to watch."

Saphier did not respond to a request for comment.

Britney Spears charged with driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Britney Spears was charged in California on Thursday with driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol, authorities said.

The 44-year-old pop star was charged with a single misdemeanor count of driving under the combined influence of alcohol and at least one drug, the Ventura County District Attorney's Office said.

A Spears representative had no immediate comment.

The criminal complaint does not specify what kind of alcohol or drugs, or what amount, Spears is accused of having used.

Spears, who has since entered substance abuse treatment, was arrested March 4 after she was pulled over for driving her black BMW fast and erratically on U.S. 101 near her home, the California Highway Patrol said. She appeared to be impaired, took a series of field sobriety tests, was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of a combination of alcohol and drugs and was taken to a Ventura County jail, the CHP said.

She was released on bail the following day. Police completed their investigation and presented it to prosecutors on March 23.

A representative at the time called Spears' actions "completely inexcusable" and said it would ideally be "the first step in long overdue change that needs to occur in Britney's life."

Spears voluntarily checked into a substance abuse treatment facility just over a month after the arrest, her representative said.

Spears' arraignment is set for Monday. Because it is a misdemeanor charge, she will not be required to appear in court, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors said the case will be handled according to their standard protocol for defendants with no DUI history, no crash or injury on the road and a low blood-alcohol level.

In court on Monday, Spears will be offered what is commonly known as a "wet reckless," allowing a defendant to plead guilty and get a year of probation, credit for any time served in jail, a required DUI class and state-mandated fines and fees, prosecutors said.

The offer is common especially for defendants who have independently shown motivation to address their problems and seek treatment, the district attorney's office said.

The singer has a home in Ventura County just outside the Los Angeles County line. Her arraignment will be held in the city of Ventura, a seaside community of about 110,000 people about 70 miles (113 kilometers) northwest of downtown LA.

The onetime teen pop phenomenon and "Mickey Mouse Club" alum became a defining superstar of the 1990s and 2000s with hits like "Toxic," "Gimme More" and "I'm a Slave 4 U." Most of Spears' albums have been certified platinum, according to the Recording Industry Association of America, with two diamond titles: 1999's "... Baby One More Time" and 2000's "Oops! ... I Did It Again."

Spears became a tabloid focus in the early 2000s, and a source of public scrutiny, as she battled mental illness and paparazzi documented the details of her private life.

In 2008, Spears was placed under a court-ordered conservatorship, run primarily by her father and his lawyers, that would control her personal and financial decisions for well over a decade. It was dissolved in 2021.

Since then, she has married and divorced, and released a bestselling, tell-all memoir, "The Woman in Me."

She has essentially been retired as an artist in recent years, releasing only a few collaborative singles since her last full album in 2016.

Takeaways from Hegseth's first hearings in Congress since the start of Iran war

By BEN FINLEY, STEPHEN GROVES and MEG KINNARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth appeared before Congress at a pair of hourslong hearings this week for the first time since the Trump administration went to war against Iran, with the Pentagon chief facing tough questions from skeptical Democrats.

Hegseth seemed to emerge with solid Republican support over his leadership and handling of the war. But a few GOP lawmakers questioned his dismissal of a top Army general, while some sought assurances that the Pentagon is doing everything possible to prevent civilian deaths.

The hearings Wednesday and Thursday before the House and Senate Armed Services committees delved into the Trump administration's 2027 military budget proposal, which would boost defense spending to a historic \$1.5 trillion. Hegseth and other Pentagon officials stressed the need for more drones, missile defense systems and warships.

While Republicans focused on the details of military budgeting and voiced support for the Iran operation, Democrats grilled Hegseth about the ballooning costs of the war, the huge drawdown of critical U.S. munitions and the bombing of a school that killed children.

Here are some takeaways from the hearings:

Hegseth clashes with Democrats over strategy of the Iran war and its economic impact

The hearings were the first time a member of President Donald Trump's Cabinet has defended the war publicly on Capitol Hill since it entered the conflict without congressional approval two months ago.

Hegseth did not hold back in his criticism of anyone who questioned the war.

"The biggest adversary we face at this point are the reckless naysayers and defeatist words of congressional Democrats and some Republicans," Hegseth said on Thursday as he opened the second day of hearings.

He cast the conflict as a historic victory by a president who, unlike his predecessors, is backing up his tough talk on Iran. Yet even Hegseth's timeline for the war included a tacit admission that it has dragged on much longer than Trump's initial pledges of only a few weeks.

Democrats relentlessly questioned Hegseth on end-goals for the war and sought to highlight the steep economic repercussions being felt through high prices for gas and other goods.

"I'm sad for all the people who voted for Trump. I'm sad for them because you betrayed them," Rep. Ro Khanna, a California Democrat, told Hegseth as he questioned the war costs during a nearly six-hour hearing Wednesday.

Sen. Jack Reed, the Senate committee's ranking Democrat, argued Thursday that the war has left the U.S. in a worse strategic position, with 13 American troops killed and more than 400 injured.

The Strait of Hormuz, a critical sea route for global oil shipments, remains closed, sending fuel prices skyrocketing. Iran still has highly enriched uranium and enough combat capabilities to keep the conflict locked in an impasse.

"I am concerned that you have been telling the president what he wants to hear instead of what he needs to hear," Reed said.

The Trump administration, meanwhile, is coming under growing pressure from Republicans on Capitol Hill to find an end to the conflict, especially as a 60-day legal window expires for the president to conduct the military campaign without permission from Congress.

That deadline is Friday, but Hegseth claimed that because a fragile truce is in place, "the 60-day clock pauses or stops in a ceasefire."

Sen. Tim Kaine, a Virginia Democrat, responded, "I do not believe the statute would support that," adding that he had "serious constitutional concerns."

The Iran war has cost \$25 billion so far

Pentagon officials informed lawmakers that the cost of the war to date is \$25 billion, with most of that being spent on munitions. Operations and equipment repairs also have contributed to the costs.

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Still, that number was met with some skepticism on Capitol Hill, where lawmakers have been expecting an eventual request for war funding from the White House to run closer to \$100 billion.

There is also concern that the bombing campaign against Iran has depleted America's supply of weapons, such as crucial missile defense systems, potentially leaving the country vulnerable if conflicts break out in other areas of the globe.

Hegseth contended that the Pentagon is not in any danger of running low on munitions, yet he also blamed any challenges on President Joe Biden's decision to assist Ukraine as well as on an aging U.S. defense manufacturing industry.

"On the munitions front, we're in really good shape, but we need to accelerate," Hegseth told senators. He presented the Pentagon's budget request as vital to the goal of multiplying munition production rates and said he plans to bolster the industry so that it can quickly replace any munitions used in the Iran war.

The budget request would amount to a record boost to defense spending that would increase the Pentagon's budget by over 40% from the previous year.

Pentagon firings rankle Democrats and some Republicans

The defense secretary faced intense questions from Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, a Pennsylvania Democrat, about his decision to oust the Army's top uniformed officer, Gen. Randy George, one of several top military officers to be dismissed since Trump took office again.

Houlahan said George was deeply respected by members of the military and Congress and asked why Hegseth fired him. Hegseth's response that "new leadership" was needed failed to satisfy her.

"You have no way of explaining why you fired one of the most decorated and remarkable men," Houlahan began, before Hegseth interrupted her. "We needed new leadership," he repeated.

Republican Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa also spoke out about George, saying she was "disappointed" to see his retirement "hastened."

Ernst said George "pulled the Army out of its worst recruiting crisis since the Vietnam era" and trimmed "nonessential" positions. George had held the post of Army chief of staff, which typically runs for four years, since August 2023.

"He had 38 years of honorable service. He achieved the greatest Army recruitment and modernization effort in a generation," Ernst said.

Bombing of Iranian school still under investigation

Hegseth told lawmakers in the House that a deadly strike on an Iranian elementary school that killed more than 165 people, including many children, is an "unfortunate situation" that is still under investigation.

The Associated Press has reported there was growing evidence that pointed to U.S. culpability for the Feb. 28 strike, which hit a school adjacent to a Revolutionary Guard base in Iran. Experts, citing satellite image analysis, said the school was probably struck as bombs were dropped on the compound in quick succession.

Senators wanted to know what the Pentagon is doing to prevent deaths of civilians.

Democratic Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York asked Hegseth: "What is your response to targeting that has resulted in the destruction of schools, hospitals, civilian places? Why did you cut by 90% the division that's supposed to help you not target civilians?"

Hegseth responded that the Pentagon has an "ironclad commitment" to do more than other countries to prevent civilian deaths. ____

Kinnard reported from Columbia, South Carolina.

Amtrak may make it easier to bring guns on its trains despite the alleged attempt on Trump's life

By JOSH FUNK and CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

Amtrak is considering allowing people to store guns in lockboxes on most of its trains, which critics say would weaken security measures that instead should be strengthened in light of the shooting at last weekend's White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

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The company has been considering the policy change since at least early this year, after being pressured by Trump administration officials to ease restrictions on transporting weapons, two people familiar with the proposed plan told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak about it publicly.

They said the railroad hasn't abandoned the proposal despite Saturday's arrest of a man who authorities say traveled by Amtrak from California to Washington, D.C., with his firearms intent on killing President Donald Trump and other administration officials at Saturday's event.

Cole Tomas Allen was arrested after authorities say he tried to race past security barricades near the hotel ballroom that was hosting the dinner, prompting an exchange of gunfire with Secret Service agents. A Secret Service officer wearing a bullet-resistant vest was shot in the vest and survived.

Authorities say Allen was armed with a shotgun and semiautomatic pistol that he brought with him by rail from his home in Torrance, California. Amtrak declined to say if he followed the company's existing rules, which would have required him to declare he had guns and allow the railroad to lock them up with his checked bags. A lawyer for Allen has said he has no criminal record and is presumed innocent.

Amtrak's proposed rule change, which the railroad could begin testing soon, calls for adding lockboxes to its trains to allow passengers throughout the country to bring guns aboard, instead of only allowing guns on trains that have locked baggage cars, according to the people who spoke to the AP.

The change would open up more than 1,500 trains a day to allowing guns aboard — including the routes that roughly 750,000 people travel every day in Amtrak's Northeast Corridor — instead of the current rule that only allows guns on a couple dozen mostly long-distance trains that have locked baggage cars.

John Feinblatt, president of the advocacy group Everytown for Gun Safety, said doing this would decrease safety.

"Just days after a man took an Amtrak train to Washington with a shotgun and pistol and tried to assassinate the president and other federal officials, the Trump Administration is trying to open the floodgates for firearms on every Amtrak route, while also moving to hollow out the agency responsible for enforcing gun laws and preventing gun trafficking," he said. "This will only make Americans less safe and Congress must step in before the next tragedy."

Officials at Amtrak and the Transportation Department didn't immediately respond to questions about the gun policy.

How this would change the rules

Currently, Amtrak requires passengers to declare they are bringing firearms aboard and secure them unloaded in a hard case. The guns must meet certain size and weight requirements. Such weapons are only allowed in checked baggage, similar to policies for firearms being transported on commercial flights.

This proposed change would still require guns to be locked up aboard trains, and only the conductor would have the key, according to the two people who spoke to the AP. But the plan would be to add lock boxes to every train.

It's unclear how Amtrak would determine who is legally allowed to carry a gun and whether local laws at their destinations would permit it. In some places, including New York City, there are restrictions on who can carry guns and a permit might be required. But other places have looser gun restrictions.

Despite Amtrak's current gun policies, it's possible that some passengers are already armed or have carried guns on board. Unlike airports, which screen passengers and their luggage, train passengers aren't screened and Amtrak doesn't run passenger names through a criminal database to identify possible threats. That's true at crowded terminals such as Washington's Union Station and the tiny unstaffed stations throughout the country where trains stop in the middle of the night to pick up passengers.

In those sleepy unstaffed stations, passengers routinely board and the train starts moving again before the conductor ever makes contact or scans their tickets. So there would be at least several minutes before a gun could be secured under the proposal.

Security expert Sheldon Jacobson, whose research contributed to the design of the TSA PreCheck system used in aviation, said railroads should do more to screen their passengers ahead of time by collecting

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more information when they sell the tickets and checking passengers' backgrounds. But he said it's not possible to eliminate guns on trains when there is no way to enforce the rule.

"The initial condition is that there's almost 400 million guns in this country," he said. "Then work from there as opposed to trying to create a utopian environment where there's not guns and we're going to keep it that way."

Rail travel poses fewer risks than air travel, so it wouldn't be worth the investment needed to create a strict passenger screening system at every train station similar to what TSA does at airports, Jacobson said. But he acknowledged that calculation could change if there ever were a major tragedy on a passenger train.

"You have to weigh the risks and rewards. And you have to say, where are we going to put our money to get the greatest risk reduction for the greatest benefit with the least inconvenience to people?" he said.

Unions have sought worker protections for years

Unions have been fighting to strengthen passenger rail workers' protections for nearly a decade, after several incidents like the 2017 shooting of a conductor by an enraged passenger at the train station in Naperville, Illinois.

Two bills in Congress would give rail workers similar protections to what airline crews have by making it a federal crime to interfere with or assault a rail worker performing their duties. The unions have also had some success getting states to pass laws.

Amtrak and many other ground transportation companies barred weapons on trains and buses after 9/11, but none put security measures in place to detect or screen every passenger for firearms. In 2010, Congress passed a law requiring Amtrak and other companies to allow firearms to be transported as long as they are checked.

David Allan Coe, who wrote 'Take This Job and Shove It' and other country hits, dies at 86

By COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

David Allan Coe, the country singer-songwriter who wrote the working-class anthem "Take This Job and Shove It" and had hits with "Mona Lisa Lost Her Smile" and "The Ride" among others, has died. He was 86.

Coe's wife, Kimberly Hastings Coe, confirmed his death to Rolling Stone on Wednesday.

She described him as one of the best singers and songwriters of our time.

"My husband, my friend, my confidant and my life for many years. I'll never forget him and I don't want anyone else to ever forget him either," she wrote to the publication.

A statement from a Coe representative to People said he died around 5 p.m. Wednesday. The cause of death wasn't disclosed.

Whether he was labeled outlaw or underground, Coe was clearly an outsider in Nashville's music establishment, even throughout his successes as an in-demand songwriter and singer, eventually developing a core following around his raw, often obscene lyrics and a checkered, somewhat mysterious past.

His wife posted on Facebook in September 2021 that he had been hospitalized with COVID-19, and he made few appearances after that.

Coe toured over the years with Willie Nelson, Kid Rock, Neil Young and others. He wrote "Take This Job and Shove It," a hit by Johnny Paycheck in 1977, and "Would You Lay With Me (in a Field of Stone)," a hit by Tanya Tucker in 1974. He was also the first country singer to record "Tennessee Whiskey," penned by Dean Dillon and Linda Hargrove, which has since become a genre standard and a hit for both George Jones and Chris Stapleton.

Coe also appeared in a handful of movies, including "Stagecoach" and "Take this Job and Shove It," which was named after his song.

"Spent so much time with David over the years, touring, writing songs and just hanging out," Kid Rock wrote Thursday on X. "I knew a side of Dave most people never got to see. He was such a deep thinker, kind and about as real as an outlaw can get!"

Coe, born in Akron, Ohio, spent time in reformatories as a youngster and served time in an Ohio prison

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from 1963 to 1967 for possession of burglary tools. He also said he spent time with the Outlaws motorcycle club, but some tales about his prison time and his personal life have been wildly exaggerated over the years.

"I'd have never made it through prison without my music," he said in a 1983 interview with The Associated Press. "No one could take it (music) away from me. They could put me in the hole with nothing to do, but I could still make up a song in my head."

He recorded his first album, a blues album called "Penitentiary Blues," using songs he wrote in prison. He later told reporters that he tried not to lean too heavily on prison as a song topic because of similarities to Merle Haggard's backstory, but that his criminal history was all people seemed interested in.

Coe recorded next for Columbia Records and made the album "The Mysterious Rhinestone Cowboy," which became his nickname after he performed in a rhinestone suit while wearing a mask.

In his debut at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Coe performed "Get a Little Dirt on Your Hands" and "You Never Even Called Me By My Name."

During the outlaw movement heyday, Coe placed himself at the center of the scene with songs like "Longhaired Redneck," which featured lyrics about performing in dive bars, "where bikers stare at cowboys who are laughing at the hippies who are praying they'll get out of here alive."

He was featured in the acclaimed documentary about the outlaw country movement called "Heartworn Highways," in which he performed a concert at a Tennessee prison.

Coe, himself heavily tattooed and sporting long hair, claimed a diverse fan base that included bikers, doctors, lawyers and bankers. His last record, released in 2006, was a collaboration with Dimebag Darrell and other former members of the heavy metal group Pantera.

He released two R-rated albums, 1978's "Nothing Sacred" and 1982's "Underground Album," that he sold via biker magazines. The songs on these albums have been criticized for being racist, homophobic and sexually explicit. He told "Billboard" magazine in 2001 that author and songwriter Shel Silverstein convinced him to record the songs he had written, something he had come to regret.

"Those were meant to be sung around the campfire for bikers, and I still don't sing those songs in concert," he said.

David Wade, a friend who worked on several projects with Coe, said the singer wanted people to be talking about him.

"He always said any press is good press," said Wade, who runs music management company Neon Deuce.

They met in 1988 and Wade said he began working occasionally with Coe in 1996. Wade said a close family friend of Coe's told him of the singer's death.

"I learned a lot from David," Wade said of Coe. "He was very complicated. I never found him to be racist. I never found him to be any of those things."

They collaborated on a documentary about Coe that's still in the works, according to Wade, who said he's producing it along with actor Johnny Knoxville.

"David did hours of interviews for it," Wade added. "It all comes down to money and getting the rights and clearances and everything for the songs."

The documentary looks at Coe "being in prison, to being a biker gang member to being a songwriter," Wade said.

In 2016, Coe was ordered to pay the IRS more than \$980,000 in restitution for obstructing the tax agency and was sentenced to three years' probation. Court documents say Coe earned income from at least 100 concerts yearly from 2008 through 2013 and either didn't file individual income tax returns or pay taxes when he did file.

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The first direct US-Venezuela commercial flight in 7 years lands in Caracas

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — The first direct commercial flight between the United States and Venezuela arrived Thursday in the capital of the South American country, seven years after the U.S. Homeland Security Department ordered an indefinite suspension, citing security concerns.

The resumption of a nonstop commercial flight between the two countries comes months after the U.S. capture of then President Nicolás Maduro in a stunning nighttime raid on his residence in Caracas in early January.

It also comes a month after the U.S. formally reopened its embassy in Caracas following the restoration of full diplomatic relations with Venezuela.

"I'm very excited to go and see the family and I'm looking forward to see the country," said passenger Lennart Ochoa of Miami shortly before boarding. He said that he was "ready to go" and got his ticket as soon as they were available. "Just to go and see the family on a direct flight from Miami to Caracas is priceless."

The director of the U.S. National Energy Dominance Council, Jarrod Agen, was among the passengers on the inaugural flight. Agen is scheduled to meet with Venezuelan officials and executives from energy and mining sectors as part of the Trump administration's efforts to facilitate the entry of U.S. companies into the South American country, reported the Venezuelan government.

At Miami International Airport, American Airlines staff handed passengers small Venezuelan flags. Balloons with its colors — yellow, blue and red — adorned the gate door leading to the plane.

Flight AA3599 operated by Envoy Air, a subsidiary of American Airlines, departed Miami at 10:11 a.m. EDT (1411 GMT), five minutes ahead of its scheduled time, according to Miami International Airport flight departure information. It arrived around three hours later in the Venezuelan capital, returning to Florida later in the afternoon.

Earlier, the airline said that a second daily flight between Miami and Caracas will start on May 21.

In late January, U.S. President Donald Trump said that he informed Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodríguez that he would open up all commercial airspace over the country, allowing Americans to visit.

"American citizens will be very shortly able to go to Venezuela, and they'll be safe there," Trump said at the time.

The flights mark the resumption of nonstop travel between the U.S. and Venezuela for the first time since diplomatic ties were severed in 2019. For the past seven years, passengers have relied on international airlines and indirect routes through neighboring Latin American countries.

In January, when the airline announced the resumption of flights, it said it would give customers the opportunity to reunite with families and pursue new business opportunities.

American Airlines was the last U.S. airline flying to Venezuela. It suspended flights in 2019 between Miami and Caracas, as well as flights to the oil hub city of Maracaibo. Delta and United Airlines pulled out in 2017 amid a political crisis that forced millions to flee the country.

"Parents will be able to connect with children, grandparents with grandchildren, and entire families with a home that shaped and raised them," Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said at a news conference before boarding started. "Miami-Dade is home to the largest Venezuelan community in the United States."

US stocks rally to the finish of their best month since 2020, even as oil prices whipsaw

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. stock market motored to more records Thursday as profits keep piling up for Alphabet, Caterpillar and other big businesses. The gains came after the latest whipsaw moves for oil

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prices, which surged toward their highest levels since the war with Iran began only to quickly regress.

The S&P 500 rallied 1% and topped its prior all-time high to close out its best month in more than five years. The Dow Jones Industrial Average leaped 790 points, or 1.6%, while the Nasdaq composite climbed 0.9% to its own record.

Alphabet led the way and rallied 10% after the owner of Google and YouTube reported profit for the latest quarter that almost doubled analysts' expectations. Investments in artificial intelligence "are lighting up every part of the business," CEO Sundar Pichai said.

It's the latest company to deliver fatter profits for the start of 2026 than analysts expected, even with very high oil prices and uncertainty about the economy.

Wall Street's strength followed manic swings in the oil market, where prices surged overnight on worries that the Iran war will affect the flow of crude for a long time. Iran has closed the Strait of Hormuz to oil tankers, keeping them pent up in the Persian Gulf and away from customers worldwide, while a U.S. Navy blockade is preventing Iran from selling its own oil.

Traders are buying and selling contracts for different kinds of oil, going out for many months. In the most actively traded part of the market for Brent crude, for delivery in July, the price got as high as \$114.70 per barrel overnight. It then fell back toward \$107 before settling at \$110.40, nearly unchanged from the day before.

So far during the war, the peak price for the most actively traded Brent contract is \$119.50, which was set last month.

In a less actively traded corner of the Brent market, the price for a barrel to be delivered in June briefly went above \$126 overnight before pulling back toward \$114.

Brent's price is still much more expensive than its roughly \$70 level from before the war. But the morning's easing in prices and the continuing flood of better-than-expected profit reports from U.S. companies helped keep Wall Street at its records.

Caterpillar soared 9.9%, Eli Lilly jumped 9.8% and O'Reilly Automotive leaped 8.4% after all delivered profits for the latest quarter that topped analysts' expectations. That's big because stock prices tend to follow the track of corporate profits over the long term.

Still, a better-than-expected result isn't always enough to boost a stock's price if it's already shot much higher.

Meta Platforms tumbled 8.7% even though the company behind Facebook and Instagram made more profit last quarter than expected. Investors focused more on its increased forecast for how much it will spend on data centers and other investments as it builds out its AI capabilities.

Doubts are still high among some investors about whether all the AI spending by Meta and other companies will produce enough profit and productivity to make it worth it.

Microsoft fell 3.9% after likewise raising its forecast for investments and other capital spending. But analysts also said accelerating trends at its Azure business were encouraging.

Amazon rose 0.8% after swinging between gains and losses through the day. It blew past analysts' expectations for earnings in the latest quarter.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 73.06 points to 7,209.01. The Dow Jones Industrial Average jumped 790.33 to 49,652.14, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 219.07 to 24,892.31.

In the bond market, Treasury yields eased after oil prices gave up their big overnight gains. Reports also suggested the U.S. economy's growth accelerated by less in the first three months of the year than economists expected, while a measure of inflation worsened in March by about as much as expected.

A separate report said that fewer U.S. workers applied for unemployment benefits last week in an indication of fewer layoffs even though companies are announcing large cuts to workforces.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury eased to 4.38% from 4.42% late Wednesday.

In stock markets abroad, indexes rose in Europe following a weaker finish in Asia.

London's FTSE 100 jumped 1.6% after the Bank of England kept its main interest rate on hold. That followed similar decisions by the U.S. Federal Reserve on Wednesday and the Bank of Japan on Tuesday

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to keep their rates unchanged.

Germany's DAX returned 1.4%, and France's CAC 40 rose 0.5% after the European Central Bank also held its own interest rates steady.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 1.3%, while stocks added 0.1% in Shanghai after a report said China's factory activity slowed slightly in April but remained in expansion territory for the second month.

Senate bans its own members and staff from betting in prediction markets

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate has approved a bipartisan resolution to prevent its own members from using prediction markets, banning senators who are often privy to sensitive information from making bets on upcoming events.

The measure that passed unanimously by voice vote Thursday was written as a change to the Senate's rules, so it will go into effect immediately. It comes a week after a U.S. special forces soldier was charged with using classified information to bet on the January capture of Venezuela's then-president, Nicolas Maduro, and as lawmakers increasingly voice concerns about who might be making public wagers on the war with Iran.

"United States senators have no business engaging in speculative activities like prediction markets while collecting a taxpayer-funded paycheck, period," said Sen. Bernie Moreno, R-Ohio, who sponsored the resolution. An amendment by Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Calif., broadened the measure to include staff.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said the move was a "no-brainer." He encouraged the House and Trump administration to do the same.

"We must never allow Congress to turn into a casino where members representing the public can gamble on wars or economic crises or elections," Schumer said. "That would destroy the very principle of representative government."

Sens. Todd Young, R-Ind., and Elissa Slotkin, D-Mich., have introduced a bill to ban all federally elected officials and government employees from using insider information to make prediction market bets. Young said the resolution was "a good first step" and he encouraged the Senate to take up their bill.

Prediction markets, including the betting platform Polymarket and its chief rival Kalshi, have come under scrutiny as the business has expanded. Polymarket has received particular criticism as a venue for offshore trades that are beyond the reach of U.S. regulators.

Earlier this month, The Associated Press reported that a group of new accounts on Polymarket made highly specific, well-timed bets on whether the United States and Iran would reach a ceasefire on April 7, resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars in profits for the new customers. On the same day the AP published the report, the White House warned staff against using private information to trade on prediction markets.

The administration has been a key ally of the growing prediction market industry in a legal fight with states seeking to ban the platforms. Donald Trump Jr., the president's eldest son, is an adviser for both Polymarket and Kalshi. Trump's social media platform Truth Social is also launching its own cryptocurrency-based prediction market called Truth Predict.

"The whole world, unfortunately, has become somewhat of a casino, and you look at what's going on all over the world and Europe and every place, they're doing these betting things," Trump said this month.

Supreme Court hollows out a landmark law that had protected minority voting rights for 6 decades

By GARY FIELDS and KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Lyndon B. Johnson knew the legislation he was about to sign was momentous, one that took courage for certain members of Congress to pass since the vote could cost

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them their seats.

To honor that, he took the unusual step of leaving the Oval Office and going to Capitol Hill for the signing ceremony. It was Aug. 6, 1965, five months after the "Bloody Sunday" attack on civil rights marchers in Selma, Alabama, gave momentum to the bill that became known as the Voting Rights Act.

In the six decades since, it became one of the most consequential laws in the nation's history, preventing discrimination against minorities at the ballot box and helping to elect thousands of Black and Hispanic representatives at all levels of government.

On Wednesday, the U.S. Supreme Court knocked out a major pillar of the law that had protected against racial discrimination in voting and representation. It was a decision that came more than a decade after the court undermined another key tenet of the law and led to restrictive voting laws in a number of states. Voting and civil rights advocates were left fearful of what lies ahead for minority communities.

"It means that you have entire communities that can go without having representation," said Cliff Albright, a co-founder of the group Black Voters Matter. "It is literally throwing us back to the Jim Crow era unapologetically, and that's not exaggeration."

Kareem Crayton, vice president of the Brennan Center for Justice's Washington office, said the court's steady work to erode the Voting Rights Act, culminating in Wednesday's decision, amounted to "burying it without the funeral."

Hollowing out America's 'greatest legislative landmark'

The Supreme Court's ruling came in a congressional redistricting case out of Louisiana after the state created a district that gave the state its second Black representative to Congress.

It found that map to be an unconstitutional gerrymander because it took race into account to draw the lines. In an opinion written by Justice Samuel Alito, the court's conservative majority said the provision of the Voting Rights Act in question, called Section 2, was designed to protect voters from intentional discrimination.

Justice Elena Kagan in her dissent said the bar to show intentional discrimination is "an almost insurmountable barrier for challenges to any voting rights issues to prove discrimination."

Voting rights experts said the ruling leaves the Voting Rights Act only a shell of what it had been and will provide an open door for political mapmakers at every level — from local school districts to state legislatures to Congress — to undermine minority representation.

"We're witnessing the evisceration of America's greatest legislative landmark at the hands of a far right Supreme Court," Democratic U.S. Rep. Ritchie Torres of New York said.

Maria Teresa Kumar, president of Voto Latino, said the decision will allow more aggressive "cracking and packing" of populations to dilute their votes, "not just in congressional districts but also in state legislatures, county commissions, school boards and city councils."

On Thursday, several civil rights groups held a joint news conference to condemn the Supreme Court ruling and pledge to fight its impacts.

Marc Morial, National Urban League president and CEO, cautioned against framing the current moment as merely a battle for political control between Democrats and Republicans.

"This decision is a continuation of a frontal assault on the gains of the Civil Rights Movement that began in 1954 with the Brown versus Board of Education decision," he said.

VRA was the key tool to fight dilution of voting strength

Voting rights experts said there is no doubting the law's impact over the decades.

Sherrilyn Ifill, a law professor at Howard University and the former president of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, said there were about 1,500 Black elected officials throughout the country in 1970. Today, that stands at more than 10,000.

"And it isn't because of the goodness of people's hearts," she said.

She said that success was a direct result of Black communities, civil rights activists and lawyers having the tools, through the Voting Rights Act, to file challenges to efforts to diminish the voting strength of Black and Hispanic voters. Most of the Section 2 cases have been over representation in local governments.

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It's not just the numbers.

A loss of representation, especially in state legislatures and Congress, will translate into minority communities losing a voice on issues that matter to them, such as healthcare, education and needed public works upgrades, said Sophia Lin Lakin, deputy director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Voting Rights Project.

"States can now point to partisan objectives to justify maps that strip voters of color of representation, and federal courts will have little basis to intervene," she said.

A steady erosion by the court, a future in doubt

The landmark law signed by Johnson 61 years ago had been amended over the years, but the biggest change was in 2013, when the Supreme Court released its ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder*. That decision essentially ended a provision of the Voting Rights Act mandating the way states and local jurisdictions were included on a list of those needing to get advance approval, or preclearance, from the U.S. Justice Department for voting-related changes.

That decision paved the way for mostly Republican states to pass a wave of restrictive election legislation, especially after President Donald Trump, a Republican, falsely claimed widespread fraud cost him reelection in 2020 against Democrat Joe Biden.

In a surprise ruling in 2023, the Supreme Court upheld Section 2 in a redistricting case out of Alabama, a ruling that it essentially reversed on Wednesday.

The question now is what comes next, for minority representatives and the communities they represent.

In Louisiana, the decision puts Democratic Rep. Cleo Fields on the endangered list. The state's top elected leaders, all Republicans, already are planning to postpone the state's May 16 primary so they can redraw the congressional maps.

This isn't the first time redistricting has complicated Fields' political plans. He served for two terms in the 1990s before the state redrew his congressional district.

"I've been down this road before, you know, 33 years ago," he said.

Shomari Figures, who won the seat created in Alabama after the court's 2023 decision, said the decision doesn't make changes to that state's current congressional districts, but it has made proving future racial discrimination in redistricting cases significantly tougher.

"It will lead to states, primarily in the South, launching immediate efforts to redraw districts in ways that will dilute the impact of Black voters and drastically reduce the number of realistic opportunities to elect Black members to Congress," he said.

Shalela Dowdy, an Alabama resident who was a plaintiff in the lawsuit that resulted in the creation of a new district now represented by Figures, said she is worried the decision will lead to the rollback of the district created in 2023, which she said gave Black voters a greater voice.

"Putting it in the hands of the states on this level is dangerous," Dowdy said. "There's just been a history of the states not doing the right thing based off their state population."

With mass evacuation warnings, Israel upends lives and reshapes south Lebanon

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

HARET SAIDA, Lebanon (AP) — The warnings to flee come suddenly: Texts pinging thousands of phones, automated calls from strange numbers, hard-to-read maps shared on social media by an Israeli military spokesperson.

Some maps cover broad swaths of Lebanon; others show specific buildings. Sometimes there is no warning at all before strikes, which have continued despite a nominal ceasefire between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group.

The warnings cause a rush to collect children and older relatives, and leave families with agonizing choices as they race for the blurry edges of the red-shaded maps. Entire villages have emptied, with over a million people fleeing at the height of the fighting. Unlike Israel, Lebanon has no air raid sirens or missile

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defenses, and no designated bomb shelters.

Israel says the warnings aim to keep civilians out of harm's way. It says Hezbollah has positioned fighters, tunnels and weapons in civilian areas across southern Lebanon, from which it has launched hundreds of drones and missiles — without warning — into northern Israel.

International law experts say Israel's warnings are inconsistent and often overly broad and open-ended. They also come as Israel says it plans to occupy a 10 kilometer (6-mile) wide buffer zone along the border and prevent people from returning until the threat from Hezbollah has been eliminated.

Alerts spark panicked flights

The latest war erupted on March 2, when, after holding its fire since a 2024 truce, Hezbollah launched a surprise barrage of missiles into northern Israel in retaliation for the United States and Israel attacking Iran.

Israel has posted 132 online alerts since then — including seven covering over 50 towns in southern Lebanon since the ceasefire took effect on April 17.

Residents say the narrowly targeted warnings often come with short notice, causing chaos and confusion.

Ward Zein al-Din, 56, said that she heard glass shatter from shrapnel just minutes after her father received a call from the Israeli military that made him scream. They have since fled their southern village and taken shelter in a school. "I didn't think we would survive," she said.

Then there are the maps shared on social media by Israel's Arabic-speaking military spokesperson, Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee, urging the entire population to relocate north of the Litani River, some 30 kilometers (20 miles) from the border, and in some cases even further north.

His blanket warnings also emptied out Beirut's crowded southern suburbs, where Hezbollah has a strong presence, though many people have since returned. Large numbers of people remain displaced across the country, including over 115,000 in collective shelters, according to United Nations spokesperson Stephane Dujarric.

"A legal tool is being used to achieve forced displacement," said Hussein Badreddine, a Lebanese expert in international law at the University of Sydney. "When you evacuate entire areas and keep the orders open-ended, that's when the legality comes into question."

In response to numerous questions, the Israeli military said it issues warnings by phone, text, radio broadcast, social media and leaflets dropped from the air, in accordance with the "principles of distinction, proportionality and feasible precautions" under international law.

No warning before strikes that killed more than 350 people

There was no warning on April 8, when Israel struck a hundred targets in rapid succession, killing more than 350 people, including in downtown Beirut. It was one of the deadliest attacks in Lebanon's troubled history.

The military said Hezbollah commanders and operatives "were expected to be present at many of the sites." It remains unclear how many Hezbollah members were killed. More than 100 of those killed were women and children.

There have also been warnings without strikes. Earlier this month, Israel warned it would attack the main border crossing between Lebanon and Syria, forcing it to close for several days. The strike never came.

A dreaded late-night post

Airstrikes shook the village of Kafr Tebnit when the war broke out. Adraee posted on X that residents should move to "no less than 1,000 meters (yards) outside the village."

Hussein Farran headed to the city of Nabatiyeh, where he works for an electricity company. His wife, Rola Nahleh, and their 4-year-old daughter, Amal, joined relatives in Kfar Hatta, some 17 kilometers (10 miles) outside Adraee's red zone.

A month later, at 11:29 p.m. on April 4, Adraee called on residents to leave Kfar Hatta. It was one of 26 urgent warnings throughout the war posted between 10:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m.

"When warnings are issued in the middle of the night, on platforms that not everyone uses, you can't expect everyone to get up and leave immediately," said Kristine Beckerle of Amnesty International. "You have people stuck on the road for 12, 13 hours trying to leave. You have elderly people who can't move quickly."

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Nahleh told her husband by phone that hundreds of people were fleeing, many wearing their pajamas. They agreed it was safest to wait out the chaos until daybreak.

Two Israeli missiles hit their apartment at around 3 a.m., killing Nahleh, her mother, father, brother, sister and Amal, who had just started kindergarten.

"Even if they gave us a warning, how does it justify killing a civilian family?" Farran asked, gazing at their graves — cardboard signs smeared with handwritten Arabic because the war has made a proper burial in their village impossible.

"They weren't given a real chance," he said.

'No safety,' even after the truce

At first, Ali al-Salim thought it was a prank call, or a scammer trying to rob his abandoned house, as happened to his family during a previous war. The country code said Germany, but the caller identified himself as an Israeli officer and told al-Salim to evacuate north immediately.

As airstrikes inched closer, al-Salim, his wife and three sons fled their southern village of Siddiqin and arrived at a school in Haret Saida after 18 hours in bumper-to-bumper traffic.

Analysts say the Israeli military often uses randomly generated international numbers since phone calls are not permitted between the two countries, technically at war for decades.

"There is no way to know if a call is real or fake," said Roland Abi Najem, a Lebanese cybersecurity expert. "The Israeli military benefits from the chaos that helps create a mass exodus."

The military declined to comment on how it calls Lebanese numbers.

Several days after fleeing, al-Salim heard that his home was hit by an Israeli missile. The shelter proved just as dangerous.

One of the targets that Israel hit without warning on April 8 was a neighboring Shiite mosque, where displaced people took showers. The explosion knocked al-Salim's 14-year-old son, Ali, unconscious and shredded his left leg.

"The bombing can happen at any moment. There is no safety at all," said Ali, now using crutches. "I've never felt this kind of fear."

The ceasefire has done little to dispel it.

Forced to flee his southern hometown of Shaqra at the start of the war, Mohammad Shahadat waited a week into the ceasefire to return. Encouraged by neighbors who said the situation was calm, he made the journey home last week.

Days later, he was back in a flimsy tent in Beirut after another Israeli warning.

"We didn't know where to go," he said.

Zelenskyy says he's seeking details of Putin's May 9 ceasefire proposal

BY SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is seeking details of a short-term ceasefire Russia proposed to U.S. President Donald Trump, he said in a post on Telegram on Thursday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed a May 9 ceasefire to coincide with Victory Day in Russia in a phone call with Trump the previous day, according to the Kremlin.

"We have instructed our representatives to contact the United States president's team and clarify the details of the Russian proposal for a short-term ceasefire," Zelenskyy said.

Meanwhile, Russian attacks overnight killed one person in the central Ukrainian city of Dnipro and wounded dozens more in the southern port city of Odesa, as Ukraine continued to strike industrial facilities inside Russian territory for a second day in a row.

A ship that created a brief diplomatic scuffle between Israel and Ukraine has departed Israel without unloading what Zelenskyy said were grains Russia stole from occupied areas of Ukraine, Ukrainian officials said.

Potential short-term ceasefire

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Putin's aide Yuri Ushakov said that the Russian president had discussed a ceasefire for the May 9 holiday, when Russia celebrates victory over Nazi Germany in World War II, during a phone call with Trump Wednesday.

But Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Thursday that no definite decision had been made, and that it would be for Putin to decide on the specific terms.

"For now, no concrete decision has been made," Peskov said.

Zelenskyy said that Ukraine is proposing a longer-term ceasefire. "We will find out exactly what is being discussed, whether it's a few hours of security for a parade in Moscow or something more," he said in a post on Telegram.

Controversial ship does not unload

The ship that Ukrainian officials said was carrying stolen grain had anchored close to the Haifa port for several days, but departed from Israel on Thursday morning, according to MarineTraffic.com, which tracks ships.

The Israel Grain Importers Association said that the country's largest grain import company rejected the shipment, due to the sensitive situation with Ukraine, Israeli media reported. "The Russian supplier of the wheat cargo will be forced to find another destination to unload the cargo," the association said.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said the development was welcome.

"This demonstrates that Ukraine's legal and diplomatic actions have been effective," he said in a post on X.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had threatened sanctions against Israel on Tuesday if the vessel unloaded. Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said earlier in the week that the country's tax authority had opened an investigation into the ship.

Russian attacks continue in Ukraine

In Dnipro, a drone attack killed one person and injured five, Dnipropetrovsk regional head Oleksandr Hanzha said in a post on Telegram. He said a shop, a residential building and vehicles were damaged.

In Odesa, region head Oleh Kiper said Russian forces launched waves of drone attacks on residential buildings and civilian infrastructure in Odesa overnight, wounding 20 people.

He added that Ukrainian air defenses had downed many of the incoming targets but hits and falling debris damaged residential buildings, a hotel, a kindergarten and an administrative building. They also caused fires at several locations which were later extinguished.

Ukraine strikes inside Russia

Units of Ukraine's Security Service, or SBU, struck Russia's Perm region in the Ural Mountains for a second day in a row, according to a security official.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly, said the drone attack disrupted the Lukoil-Permnefteorgsintez refinery, located over 1,500 kilometers from Ukraine.

Gov. Dmitry Makhonin said an industrial facility was hit, and there were no casualties or any significant damage. He didn't provide any further details.

Separately, Krasnodar regional governor Veniamin Kondratyev said in an online statement that a fire caused by a Ukrainian drone attack on a Russian oil refinery at the Black Sea port of Tuapse has been put out after raging for almost two days, with oil products spilling out on the streets of the city.

Ukraine's Navy said it struck two Russian vessels in the Kerch Strait using sea drones overnight into Thursday.

It said as a result of the strike, a Russian patrol boat called "Sobol" and another vessel named "Grachonok" were hit.

The Kerch bridge which was completed in 2018 links mainland Russia to the Crimean Peninsula, which was illegally annexed by Russia in 2014.

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Tax refunds and AI boom have offset some US economic pain from Iran war and high gas prices, so far

By PAUL WISEMAN and CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans are paying for the war in Iran with every visit to the gas station, but some of the damage to the U.S. economy is being offset — for now anyway — by big tax refunds and an investment boom driven by artificial intelligence.

Prices rose at the fastest pace in almost three years last month, U.S. economic growth is steady and layoffs fell last week, according to a slew of economic data released Thursday.

The inflation gauge favored by the Federal Reserve — the Commerce Department's Personal Consumption Expenditures price index — rose 0.7% from February to March and 3.5% from a year earlier. The year-over-year gain was the biggest since May 2023.

No secret what was driving the increase: Gasoline prices shot up 21% in March from February after Iran responded to U.S. and Israeli attacks by closing the Strait of Hormuz and creating the biggest disruption of oil supplies in history.

The same data showed that prices outgrew American incomes — wages, business income and government benefits — for the second straight month in March.

The Commerce Department also reported Thursday that U.S. gross domestic product — the output of goods and services — grew at a steady 2% annual pace from January through March, slower than economists expected, but a rebound from lackluster 0.5% growth during the final three months of 2025. In the October-December quarter, the 43-day federal government shutdown had slashed more than a percentage point off growth.

Business investment is surging because of the AI boom. Excluding housing, business investment surged 10.4% in the first quarter, biggest jump in nearly three years.

From January through March, consumer spending — accounting for 70% of U.S. economic activity — expanded at a 1.6% annual pace. Americans were helped by big tax refunds, the result of President Donald Trump's 2025 tax cuts.

But the boost might not last long. "Rising tax refunds were outpacing the increased burden of gasoline spending two to one in March and most of April," wrote Michael Pearce, the chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics. "With tax refund season winding down and gas prices still climbing, the hit to consumer spending will become more evident from May."

The average price for a gallon of regular gasoline jumped another 7 cents overnight to \$4.30. The price on this date last year was \$3.18. In each of the past three days, gasoline prices have set new multi-year highs.

Forced to spend more on gasoline, consumers are likely to cut back their spending on other goods and services. Economists are already expecting GDP to take a hit as they do. Joe Brusuelas, chief economist at RSM, a tax and advisory firm, has downgraded his forecast for U.S. economic growth this year to 1.7% from the 2.4% he'd expected earlier.

"A year that was set to benefit from tail winds associated with a large tax cut and boom in artificial intelligence-led investment has been partially derailed by the impact of what as of today is an adverse and growing supply shock caused by the war in Iran," Brusuelas said. "Unfortunately, war and the supply shock that ensued has altered the probable growth path this year."

The combination of rising prices — and the threat to economic growth — has put the Fed and other central banks in a bind. Should they cut interest rates to help their economies? Or hold off — or even consider raising rates — to combat the threat of inflation?

So far, they are staying put. The Bank of England kept its main interest rate on hold at 3.75% Thursday and hinted of hikes to come as policymakers assess the war's economic impact. Likewise, the Fed, the Bank of Japan and the European Central Bank, with all opting for no change as they assess the economic fallout from the conflict.

Still, U.S. workers enjoy considerable job security. The Labor Department reported Thursday that the

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number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits — a proxy for layoffs — tumbled last week to the lowest level in more than 50 years.

Companies aren't letting workers go — but they aren't necessarily eager to hire much either. Job growth last year was the weakest outside a recession since 2002. And it's been up and down so far this year — strong in January (160,000 new jobs) and March (178,000) but weak in February when employers slashed 133,000 jobs.

Economists describe "no-hire, no-fire" scenario that locks young applicants out of the job market. At the same time, there are growing worries that AI is taking entry-level jobs.

Key inflation gauge jumps to highest level in 3 years as Iran war spikes gas prices

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A key inflation measure jumped in March as gas prices soared, the latest sign that the Iran war is pushing up the cost of living and delaying any interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve.

An inflation gauge monitored by the Fed rose 0.7% in March from February, up sharply from the previous month, the Commerce Department said Thursday. Compared with a year ago, prices rose 3.5%, the biggest increase in almost three years.

Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core inflation rose 0.3% in March from February, and it was 3.2% higher than a year earlier. The annual figure is above February's reading of 3%.

The jump in gas prices has pushed inflation further away from the Fed's 2% target. Outgoing Fed Chair Jerome Powell signaled at a news conference Wednesday that the central bank would likely be on hold for months as it evaluates the impact of the Iran war. The Fed has kept its key short-term interest rate unchanged after cutting it three times last year. The central bank typically keeps rates elevated — or even raises them — to combat higher inflation.

At the same time, Thursday's report showed that Americans' incomes — wages, business income, and government benefits — increased 0.6%, a solid increase but slower than the rate of inflation, for the second straight month.

The decline illustrates the other risk created by higher gas prices: The extra costs will likely siphon away spending that would have gone to other products and services, potentially slowing the economy. For now, consumers have been bolstered by healthy tax refunds, which were lifted by last year's tax cut legislation, but much of that benefit is being eaten up by higher prices at the pump.

"A year that was set to benefit from tail winds associated with a large tax cut and boom in artificial intelligence-led investment has been partially derailed by the impact of what as of today is an adverse and growing supply shock caused by the war in Iran," said Joe Brusuelas, chief economist at RSM, a tax and advisory firm. "Unfortunately, war and the supply shock that ensued has altered the probable growth path this year."

Brusuelas now expects the economy to expand just 1.7% this year, down from an earlier estimate of 2.4%.

Gas prices jumped nearly 21% in March from the previous month, the report said, while grocery prices actually slipped 0.1%. Clothing costs climbed 1% just in March.

The average price of gas nationwide rose to \$4.30 a gallon Thursday, according to AAA, up from \$2.98 before the war began. U.S. oil prices cooled a bit Thursday morning but still topped \$105 a barrel, up from about \$67 before the war.

Still, the Fed typically pays more attention to core prices, and how much higher energy costs feed through to core inflation in the coming months will be a major factor in how the central bank decides on its next moves.

"We're very well aware that people are experiencing higher gas prices all over the country now," Powell said Wednesday. "And that hurts."

Thursday's report also showed that consumer spending soared 0.9% last month, with most of the increase reflecting the sharp jump in prices. But it also indicates Americans lifted their spending a bit even

after adjusting for inflation, a sign of consumer resilience.

The economy expanded at a modest 2% annual rate in the first three months of the year, the Commerce Department also said Thursday, up from an expansion of just 0.5% in last year's final quarter, when growth was held back by the six-week government shutdown. Still, consumer spending growth slowed compared with the final three months of last year.

Prediction markets say they're different from sportsbooks. Gambling addicts say it's all the same

By JAY COHEN and CORA LEWIS Associated Press

The soccer coach had blocked himself from sportsbooks by the time he found prediction markets.

The tax accountant said he "got the same high" on those platforms that he got from gambling. "That was how I relapsed — with Kalshi and Polymarket. I lost a bunch of money."

The rapid growth of prediction markets has sparked a high-stakes debate that is playing out in courts and legislatures all over the country. Operators of those companies believe they should be regulated like the stock exchange, while sportsbooks and state officials think they should be supervised the same way as sports gambling platforms.

While that argument continues with no sign of resolution, the clinicians who treat gambling disorders are more concerned about what they are seeing with their patients. In their spaces, when it comes to sports gambling and prediction markets, the end result is virtually the same.

Two gambling addicts who spoke to The Associated Press — the soccer coach and tax accountant — say they had relapses on prediction markets after they took legal action to protect themselves from the allure of sports betting. They are being identified by their occupations because of the sensitivity of their situations. Their stories reflect what experts say they see with some of their clients.

"There may be real differences in how these products are defined or regulated, but in the therapy room, we are often seeing the same cycle of anticipation, action and reaction play out again and again," said Dr. Cynthia Grant, the vice president of clinical for Birches Health, which operates a national network of providers for treating gambling addiction.

The road from sportsbooks to prediction markets

Sportsbooks and prediction markets offer a lot of similar options. But the format is different.

Sportsbooks have in-house experts who set odds that dictate payouts for winning bets. It's the house versus the gamblers. Traders on predictions markets swap contracts of yes-or-no questions, and profits and losses are dictated by the market. The platforms generally make money through fees on contracts.

The soccer coach who spoke to the AP started gambling when he was 16. Small bets against friends in his New York neighborhood. When he turned 18, he started going to casinos and making bets at sportsbooks. Amid mounting losses, he turned to prediction markets.

"I would be in all this debt and get a paycheck for \$2,000 on a Friday and it would be gone by Saturday or Sunday," said the coach, 21. "I wouldn't have money to fill up my gas tank."

He eventually joined Gamblers Anonymous, and he was told he had to stop associating with people who gamble.

"For a younger crowd, that's difficult because it's everywhere," the coach said. "My friends from childhood — most of them all gamble."

The coach and the tax accountant had formally self-excluded from sportsbooks before they started trading on prediction markets. Self-exclusion programs provide an opportunity for gamblers to ban themselves from gambling facilities and betting apps. They are offered in many states as part of gambling regulations, but there is no widely adopted national system.

Kalshi started a voluntary opt-out program in March 2025, and it's one of several platforms — including Polymarket — collaborating on a national self-exclusion program for prediction markets. But it's not clear if that program would ever overlap with the systems used by state gambling regulators.

The accountant, 33, said his gambling problems started after New York launched legalized mobile sports

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betting in January 2022. He had "a boatload of debt" in August 2023 when he told his then-fiancée about what was going on with him.

She married him anyway. Looking to save money after the wedding, they moved into a rental house owned by his parents. He self-excluded from sportsbooks. Then, after the couple lost their first pregnancy, the accountant started day-trading before signing up for Kalshi.

"Prediction markets are the same thing packaged in a different way," the accountant said. "It's a dangerous loophole. ... How can you do all that and say you're not a sportsbook?"

While there has been no substantive research into the effect of prediction markets on sports gambling addiction, the experiences of the coach and the accountant are not uncommon for treatment experts.

"You're seeing a lot of the same behaviors, whether it's a prediction market or it's gambling," said Jody Bechtold, the CEO of The Better Institute, a Pennsylvania practice that works with people impacted by gambling disorders.

Kalshi spokeswoman Elisabeth Diana highlighted its programs for responsible trading and said its working on other measures to further facilitate healthy behavior. Compared to casinos, Diana said, Kalshi is "fairer, more transparent, and less predatory."

A message was left seeking comment from Polymarket.

Event contracts are increasingly popular on prediction markets

Sports have become a major category for prediction markets. The U.S. market for sports-focused event contracts could grow to approximately \$1.1 trillion in annual volume, according to a Bank of America report.

"A year ago, if you said prediction markets, I mean I don't know what that is, I don't see it," said Dr. Timothy Fong, the co-director of the UCLA Gambling Studies Program. "Now we're starting to see it more and more in our patients that come into the clinic."

There are multiple ongoing lawsuits involving states and prediction markets, and the ramifications are being felt on a variety of levels.

Marlene Warner, the CEO of the Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health — a private nonprofit health organization that provides educational programs on gambling along with other services — said the situation with prediction markets "feels a bit like the wild, wild west right now."

In most states with legal sports gambling, it is limited to ages 21 and older, while prediction markets are open for 18- to 20-year-olds with some exceptions. Prediction markets also have a presence in states where sports betting is illegal, including Texas and California.

"I can't tell you whether they're more less or exactly the same in terms of risk level," Warner said. "But what I do know is they're in a very gray, unregulated space and that alone makes it difficult."

Prediction markets fall under the jurisdiction of the federal Commodity Futures Trading Commission. Chairman Michael Selig is backing prediction markets in their legal proceedings against several states, asserting the commission's "exclusive jurisdiction over these markets."

While that argument continues, the soccer coach and tax accountant are rebuilding their lives — while doing their best to stay vigilant with their addictions.

"You have to face this stuff or it just keeps getting worse," the coach said.

U.S. economy grew 2% from January-March, recovering from federal shutdown; Iran war clouds outlook

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy accelerated at the start of 2026, expanding at a modest 2% pace from January through March after recovering from last fall's 43-day federal government shutdown. But the outlook is clouded by the Iran war.

The Commerce Department reported Thursday that gross domestic product — the nation's output of goods and services — rebounded from a lackluster 0.5% expansion the last three months of 2025. The federal government's spending and investment grew at a 9.3% annual rate in the first quarter, adding more than half a percentage point to growth after lopping off 1.16 percentage points in fourth-quarter 2025.

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Growth in consumer spending, which accounts for 70% of U.S. economic activity, slowed to 1.6% in the first quarter from 1.9% at the end of 2025. Spending on goods, including food and clothing fell slightly. Spending on services slowed.

But business investment, likely driven by spending in artificial intelligence, rose at an 8.7% pace. A weak housing market continues to weigh on the economy. Residential investment fell at an 8% annual pace — the fifth straight quarterly drop and the biggest since the end of 2022. Excluding housing, nonresidential investment surged 10.4%, biggest jump in nearly three years.

An uptick in imports, which rose at an annual rate of 21.4% from January-March, slashed more than 2.6 percentage points off first-quarter growth.

"This is a split-screen economy," Heather Long, chief economist at the Navy Federal Credit Union, wrote. "Companies and investors involved in AI are on fire. Meanwhile, middle and moderate income households are struggling with high gas prices ... Consumption is slowing as people are struggling to manage all their bills and growing more concerned about the future."

Still, a category within the GDP data that measures the economy's underlying strength grew at a solid 2.5% clip, accelerating from 1.8% in fourth-quarter 2025. This category includes consumer spending and private investment, but excludes volatile items like exports, inventories and government spending.

The first quarter included about a month of the clash in Iran. Iran has blocked the Strait of Hormuz through which a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas passes. That has driven energy prices higher, fueling inflation and hurting consumers. The Federal Reserve, announcing Wednesday that it was keeping its benchmark interest unchanged, cited "a high level of uncertainty" arising from the conflict.

Carl Weinberg, chief economist at High Frequency Economics, did not even bother to forecast first-quarter GDP growth. "The truth is that we do not have any defensible basis for trying to project how these indicators will print," Weinberg wrote in a commentary Monday. President Donald "Trump's war with Iran has led to a total blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. We do not know how to model the impact of that event, as we have never seen anything quite like it."

Thursday's report was the first of three Commerce Department estimates.

Prediction markets say they're different from sportsbooks. Gambling addicts say it's all the same

By JAY COHEN and CORA LEWIS Associated Press

The soccer coach had blocked himself from sportsbooks by the time he found prediction markets.

The tax accountant said he "got the same high" on those platforms that he got from gambling. "That was how I relapsed — with Kalshi and Polymarket. I lost a bunch of money."

The rapid growth of prediction markets has sparked a high-stakes debate that is playing out in courts and legislatures all over the country. Operators of those companies believe they should be regulated like the stock exchange because of federal law and their customer-to-customer structure, while sportsbooks and state officials think they should be supervised the same way as sports gambling platforms.

While that argument continues with no sign of resolution, the clinicians who treat gambling disorders are more concerned about what they are seeing with their patients. In their spaces, when it comes to sports gambling and prediction markets, the end result is virtually the same.

Two gambling addicts who spoke to The Associated Press — the soccer coach and tax accountant — say they had relapses on prediction markets after they took legal action to protect themselves from the allure of sports betting. They are being identified by their occupations because of the sensitivity of their situations. Their stories reflect what experts say they see with some of their clients.

"There may be real differences in how these products are defined or regulated, but in the therapy room, we are often seeing the same cycle of anticipation, action and reaction play out again and again," said Dr. Cynthia Grant, the vice president of clinical for Birches Health, which operates a national network of providers for treating gambling addiction.

"I sometimes think of it like different doors into the same room. The label on the door may change, but

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once someone's inside, the experience can feel very familiar."

The road from sportsbooks to prediction markets

Sportsbooks and prediction markets offer a lot of similar options. Wagers on games, individual performances and other possibilities. But the format is different.

Sportsbooks have in-house experts who set odds that dictate payouts for winning bets. It's the house versus the gamblers. Traders on predictions markets swap contracts of yes-or-no questions, and profits and losses are dictated by the market. Win a "yes" holding on an event contract where most of the market guessed "no," and the payout is bigger. Prediction markets generally make money through fees on contracts.

For addicts, they are two paths to the same result.

The soccer coach who spoke to the AP started gambling when he was 16. Small bets against friends in his New York neighborhood, everything from cards to basketball and tennis. When he turned 18, he started going to casinos and making bets at sportsbooks. Amid mounting losses, he turned to prediction markets.

"I would be in all this debt and get a paycheck for \$2,000 on a Friday and it would be gone by Saturday or Sunday," said the coach, 21. "I wouldn't have money to fill up my gas tank."

He was struggling with loans and maxed-out credit cards while working and going to college before he stepped away in January to confront his addiction problems, which also included smoking marijuana.

He joined Gamblers Anonymous, and he was told he had to stop associating with people who gamble.

"For a younger crowd, that's difficult because it's everywhere," the coach said. "My friends from childhood — most of them all gamble."

The coach and the tax accountant had formally self-excluded from sportsbooks before they started trading on prediction markets. Self-exclusion programs provide an opportunity for gamblers to ban themselves from gambling facilities and betting apps. They are offered in many states as part of gambling regulations, but there is no widely adopted national system.

The landscape for self-exclusion programs becomes even more fragmented when predictions markets are included. Kalshi started a voluntary opt-out program when it launched a customer protection hub in March 2025, and it's one of several platforms — including Polymarket — collaborating on a national self-exclusion program for prediction markets. But it's not clear if that program would ever overlap with the systems used by state gambling regulators.

The accountant, 33, said his gambling problems started after New York launched legalized mobile sports betting in January 2022. He had "a boatload of debt" in August 2023 when he told his then-fiancée about what was going on with him.

She married him anyway. Looking to save money after the wedding, they moved into a rental house owned by his parents. He self-excluded from sportsbooks. Then, after the couple lost their first pregnancy, the accountant started day-trading before signing up for Kalshi.

"Prediction markets are the same thing packaged in a different way," the accountant said. "It's a dangerous loophole. ... How can you do all that and say you're not a sportsbook?"

Tennis was his go-to sport — he liked the speed of the matches — before he went to rehab in Virginia last year.

He had a relapse in December when he downloaded Polymarket and made a free \$10 wager. He was confronted by his wife, who had his email connected to her phone and reached out to his sponsor.

While there has been no substantive research into the effect of prediction markets on sports gambling addiction, the experiences of the coach and the accountant are not uncommon for treatment experts.

"You're seeing a lot of the same behaviors, whether it's a prediction market or it's gambling," said Jody Bechtold, the CEO of The Better Institute, a Pennsylvania practice that works with people impacted by gambling disorders. "You're seeing, you know, wagering more and more. Chasing losses, so 'Oh, today was a bad day, I have to work tomorrow at the prediction markets to get my money back.' ... The lies, the secrecy, and that it's impacting everyday life."

Kalshi spokeswoman Elisabeth Diana highlighted its programs for responsible trading — such as trading breaks and self-limits — and said it's working on other measures to further facilitate healthy trading behavior.

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Compared to casinos, Diana said, Kalshi is "fairer, more transparent, and less predatory."
"There is no house that wins when customers lose," she said. "This means that Kalshi doesn't hook losers and penalize winners."

A message was left seeking comment from Polymarket.

Event contracts are increasingly popular on prediction markets

Sports have become a major category for prediction markets. Kalshi had more than \$2 billion in total trading volume on this year's NCAA men's basketball tournament, according to Diana. Michigan's 69-63 victory over Connecticut in the championship had \$10.6 million in volume on Polymarket.

The U.S. market for sports-focused event contracts could grow to approximately \$1.1 trillion in annual volume, according to a Bank of America report.

"A year ago, if you said prediction markets, I mean I don't know what that is, I don't see it," said Dr. Timothy Fong, the co-director of the UCLA Gambling Studies Program. "Now we're starting to see it more and more in our patients that come into the clinic. And it's usually not one, it's multiple platforms they're betting on, right? ... When you have something that's available, that's accessible, that's anonymous, is super easy to use, multiple times in a day, of course that's going to raise the risk of addiction for any human on Earth."

There are multiple ongoing lawsuits involving states and prediction markets, and the ramifications of the legal dispute are being felt on a variety of levels.

Marlene Warner, the CEO of the Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health — a private nonprofit health organization that provides educational programs on gambling along with other services — said the situation with prediction markets "feels a bit like the wild, wild west right now."

"We're very used to like going to our state regulator or, you know, seeing a process go through where all of a sudden now you're like, 'OK, a piece of legislation has outlined what is appropriate for a licensed sports betting operator to do,'" Warner said. "And then you see the regulation come into place. And so you can track it. But right now, nobody knows kind of what the limits are."

In most states with legal sports gambling, it is limited to ages 21 and older, while prediction markets are open for 18- to 20-year-olds with some exceptions. Prediction markets also have a presence in states where sports betting is illegal, including Texas and California.

"I don't know enough frankly, we don't know enough, nothing's been studied about them, I can't tell you whether they're more less or exactly the same in terms of risk level," Warner said. "But what I do know is they're in a very gray, unregulated space and that alone makes it difficult."

Prediction markets fall under the jurisdiction of the federal Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which has a regulation that prohibits an event contract "that involves, relates to, or references terrorism, assassination, war, gaming, or an activity that is unlawful under any state or federal law."

CFTC chairman Michael Selig is backing prediction markets in their legal proceedings against several states, asserting the commission's "exclusive jurisdiction over these markets."

While that argument continues, the soccer coach and tax accountant are rebuilding their lives — while doing their best to stay vigilant with their addictions.

"You have to face this stuff or it just keeps getting worse," the coach said.

The Black Caucus is the 'conscience of Congress.' Supreme Court ruling has it bracing for a big hit

By TERRY TANG Associated Press

Black members of Congress are bracing for a crippling shake-up of their ranks after a Supreme Court ruling gutted a key section of the Voting Rights Act that had protected minority communities in political redistricting and helped boost their representation.

Wednesday's decision clears the way for Republican-led states to redraw U.S. House districts without regard to race, potentially creating many more GOP-friendly seats.

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Rep. Yvette Clarke, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, told reporters that its members and Democrats would fight the effects of the ruling.

"The Supreme Court has opened the door to a coordinated attack on Black voters across the country," Clarke said. "This is an outright power grab."

Under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, voters could challenge electoral maps that appeared to dilute the ability of minority communities to elect representatives of their choosing. The expected wave of congressional redistricting by Republican-controlled states after Wednesday's ruling, especially for the 2028 election and beyond, is likely to result in a much smaller Black Caucus.

Changes are coming, but how quickly is unknown

Clarke was joined by over a dozen of the 60 Black Caucus members, including Democratic House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries. Their responses to the court's decision ranged from outrage to defiance to mourning.

It's not clear how many seats will ultimately be affected by the ruling, but redistricting experts predict that more than a dozen now held by minorities could be swept away.

Rep. Troy Carter, one of two Black Democrats from Louisiana, the state at the center of the case, called the ruling "a devastating blow to our democracy, plain and simple."

Republican leaders in several Southern states already have been discussing how to apply the ruling and create new GOP-friendly congressional maps. In Florida, Republicans wasted no time approving a new U.S. House map, part of which redrew one district created to elect a Black representative.

"I would be surprised if we do not see former slave-holding states moving at lightning speed to target districts that provide Black voters and other voters of color an equal opportunity to elect candidates," said Kristen Clarke, general counsel for the NAACP and the first Black woman to be assistant attorney general in the U.S. Department of Justice's civil rights division.

It's not clear whether state-level voting laws or constitutional prohibitions against racial discrimination will provide any protection, she added.

Republican officials and Black conservatives praised the decision as a victory against race-based mandates. Linda Lee Tarver, of the Project 21 Black Leadership Network, said in a statement civil rights laws were not intended "to institutionalize racial line-drawing as a default feature of our political system."

Voting Rights Act expanded Black representation

The Congressional Black Caucus was formed in 1971 as court-ordered redistricting under the Voting Rights Act, passed just six years earlier, sent more minorities to Congress.

The number of Black representatives in Congress jumped from nine to 13. Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to Congress, decided to expand the Democracy Select Committee created in the 1960s by Democratic Rep. Charles Diggs into the more formal Congressional Black Caucus.

The CBC raised its profile in its first year when it boycotted President Richard Nixon's State of the Union address after he refused to meet with the group. Nixon eventually acquiesced. The group created a list of over 60 recommendations to help the Black community, including counteracting racism and building adequate housing. It earned the nickname the "conscience of the Congress."

"That caucus has had such an important voice in American politics — the things that we've been able to achieve together, the creation of equity and access," Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock of Georgia said during a separate news conference Wednesday. "And I'm afraid that with this ruling, we could see that caucus shrink in a hugely significant way."

What can Black constituents do

The ruling upset Thomas Johnson when he heard about it while visiting Louisiana's Capitol in Baton Rouge. Johnson, who is Black, is from New Orleans and represented by Carter. He fears Republicans could redraw the state's congressional map in a way that dismantles predominately Black districts.

"I feel like this is an embarrassing attack upon the minorities, particularly the Black community," Johnson said. "We have very little (voice) in Congress."

Antjuan Seawright, a Democratic strategist who advises the Black Caucus, said he expects the group will

be involved in multiple legal fights for members whose districts will be targeted after the Supreme Court ruling. He also said the ruling makes voter turnout efforts even more important "if we want to change course on some of the things that are likely to happen because of this decision."

Democratic Rep. Terri Sewell of Alabama, whose state was at the center of a major Voting Rights Act case decided in favor of Black representation nearly three years ago, agreed that the party now needs to focus on getting voters motivated ahead of this year's midterm elections.

"Now more than ever, we need communities across this nation to mobilize — in state legislatures, in the courts and at the ballot box," Sewell said. "We need to vote like we've never voted before." ____ Associated Press writers Leah Askarinam, Matt Brown and Ali Swenson in Washington and Sara Cline in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, contributed to this report.

Teens embrace social media and influencers for news but remain skeptical

By DAVID BAUDER and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Teenagers are more inclined than their elders to get news from nontraditional sources such as social media and influencers, heralding a generational shift in how people seek out information.

A national study by the Media Insight Project finds 36% of U.S. adults say they get news from social media at least once a day. But for people ages 13 to 17, that number rises to 57%.

Similarly, 43% of adults say they get information on national issues and events from influencers or independent content creators at least "sometimes," compared with 57% of teenagers. The project is a collaboration among The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, the American Press Institute and journalism schools at Northwestern University and the University of Maryland.

The new poll points to the pervasiveness of social media in teenagers' lives and shows how more teens are consuming their news from these platforms or independent content creators, rather than directly from national or local news sources.

While Americans haven't abandoned traditional journalism, they are reevaluating what sources they trust, said Robyn Tomlin, executive director of the American Press Institute.

"Traditional national and local outlets continue to stand out as a trusted source, but people, especially younger audiences, are also building relationships with younger creators they believe are transparent and authentic," Tomlin said. "That reality has enormous implications for the future of news."

More teens turn to social media and search for news

Besides social media, teenagers are also more likely to turn to search engines and artificial intelligence chatbots as they hunt for news.

The survey found that about 4 in 10 teens get news daily from search, while about 2 in 10 say that about AI chatbots.

There's little difference among age groups in people who said they get news from digital sites or apps, and television and streaming, the survey found. About 4 in 10 U.S. adults and a similar share of teenagers are getting news from TV at least once a day, with a similar share tuning into digital news sites.

"The idea that television is going away is a misapprehension," said Tom Rosenstiel, journalism professor at the University of Maryland who worked on the survey. "Watching news through video is not going away. It's changing. The way you see it on YouTube is different than on the 'CBS Evening News.'"

Many teens approach AI and influencers with some doubts

Despite the fact that many teenagers are getting news from influencers and AI, many have a healthy dose of skepticism.

Though teens are more likely than adults to say they have "a great deal of confidence" in the information they are getting from AI chatbots, relatively few have high confidence in AI's output. Just 11% of teenagers have a high level of certainty in the information coming from AI, compared with 4% of adults.

Teens are also more confident in their ability to determine whether something was made by a human or

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AI. About one-third of teens expressed a high level of confidence in their ability to distinguish AI-generated content from human-generated content, compared with about 2 in 10 adults.

When it comes to influencers, there are similar doubts. Only 12% of teenagers also have "a great deal of confidence" in the information they get from independent creators or influencers, whether that's coming from TV, social media or other sources. That's higher than the 6% of U.S. adults who say the same, but still very low.

Teens are more engaged with celebrity and gaming news

Not surprisingly, the survey also found that teenagers are more interested in news about celebrities, music, movies, sports and other entertainment. Adults have more interest in political news, business issues or the economy.

For teenagers and adults alike, there's a significant news fatigue, particularly around political news, Rosenstiel said. Most U.S. adults and teenagers say they "often" or "sometimes" try to avoid news stories about national government and politics, and about 6 in 10 say they try to sidestep news related to President Donald Trump.

"People are tired of the feeling that things are spinning out of control that they're very judicious in what they're spending their time on," Rosenstiel said.

Rosenstiel said many teens also hunt for news and information in different ways. They are much less likely than adults to say they avoid celebrity news or news that is delivered via social media. It's possible, Rosenstiel added, that the most important journalism for some people is what helps them live their lives, even if it falls outside conventional news sources.

"Part of the problem for traditional journalism," Rosenstiel said, "is the traditional journalism definition of what is real news."

Today in History: May 1, Obama announces killing of Osama bin Laden

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, May 1, the 121st day of 2026. There are 244 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 1, 2011, President Barack Obama announced the death of Osama bin Laden during a U.S. commando operation, which took place in Abbottabad, Pakistan in the early morning hours of May 2 local time.

Also on this date:

In 1866, three days of race-related rioting erupted in Memphis, Tennessee, as white mobs targeted Black people, 46 of whom were killed, along with two whites.

In 1931, the Empire State Building was dedicated in New York City; it would be the world's tallest building for four decades.

In 1960, the Soviet Union shot down an American U-2 reconnaissance plane and captured its pilot, Francis Gary Powers.

In 1963, Jim Whittaker, joined by Sherpa mountaineer Nawang Gombu, became the first American to summit Mount Everest.

In 1964, the computer programming language BASIC (Beginner's All-Purpose Symbolic Instruction Code) was first run by its inventors, Dartmouth College professors John G. Kemeny and Thomas E. Kurtz.

In 1971, the national passenger rail service Amtrak went into operation to bolster the declining privately-run intercity rail market.

In 2003, President George W. Bush declared that "major combat operations in Iraq have ended" in a speech aboard the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, which bore a banner reading "Mission Accomplished." (The last U.S. combat troops would not withdraw from Iraq until December 2011.)

In 2011, Pope Benedict XVI beatified Pope John Paul II, moving his predecessor a step closer to sainthood in a Vatican Mass attended by some 1.5 million pilgrims. (John Paul II would be declared a saint by

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Pope Francis at a canonization ceremony in 2014.)

In 2015, six Baltimore police officers were charged with felonies ranging from assault to murder in connection with the death of Freddie Gray, a Black man who'd suffered a spinal injury while riding in a police van. (None of the officers would ultimately be convicted.)

In 2020, U.S. regulators allowed emergency use of remdesivir, the first drug that appeared to help some COVID-19 patients recover faster.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Judy Collins is 87. Singer Rita Coolidge is 81. Filmmaker John Woo is 80. Actor Dann Florek is 76. Musician Ray Parker Jr. is 72. Hall of Fame jockey Steve Cauthen is 66. Singer-actor Tim McGraw is 59. Filmmaker Wes Anderson is 57. Football Hall of Famer Curtis Martin is 53. Actor Jamie Dornan is 44. Singer Victoria Monét is 37. Singer Rema is 26. Actor Lizzy Greene is 23. Social media personality Charli D'Amelio is 22.