

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Wednesday, May 6

Senior Menu: Kielbasa with mac and cheese, California blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Omelets.

School Lunch: Chicken alfredo, cooked broccoli.

Groton Chamber meeting, noon, City Hall

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Yard cleanup, 10:30 a.m.

Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

Pickleball, 5:30 p.m., Elementary Gym

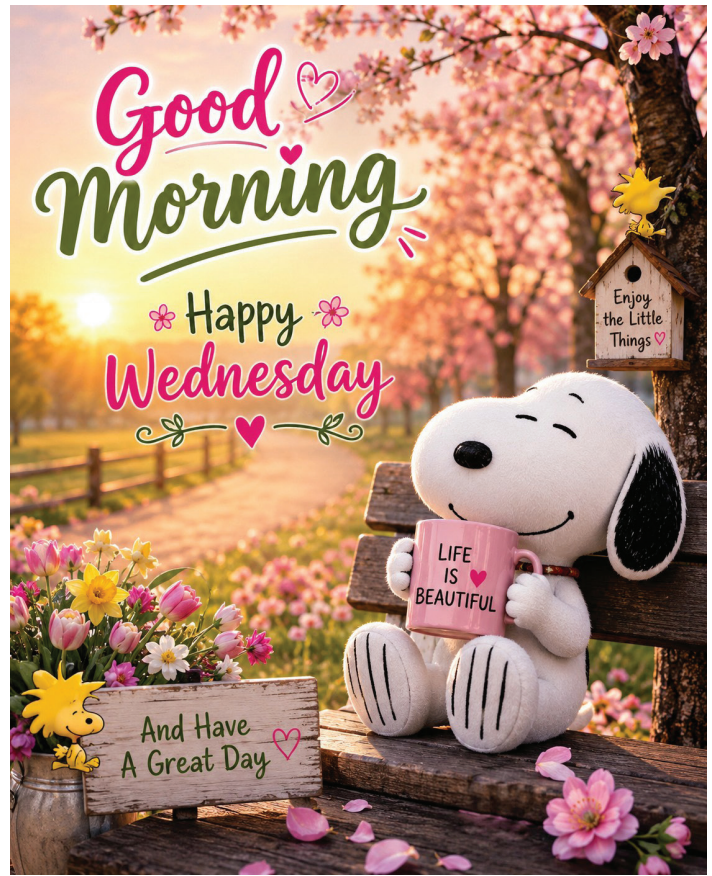
JVT Practice, 6 p.m., Arena

## Groton Daily Independent

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## Thursday, May 7

National Day of Prayer

Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato, green beans, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Biscuits.

School Lunch: Sloppy joes, square tots.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Girls Golf at Lee Park, Aberdeen, 10 a.m.

Middle School Track Meet at Hamlin, 3 p.m.

5th Grade Girls Basketball, 4 p.m., Elementary Gym

Girls Fastpitch Softball in Groton vs. Florence/Henry, varsity DH at 4 p.m.

Pickleball, 6 p.m., Elementary Gym

JVT Practice, 7 p.m., Arena

## Friday, May 8

Senior Menu: Chicken strips, tater tots, carrots, fruit.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Chicken ala king, biscuit.

Track Meet at Gene Brownell Complex in Aberdeen, 3 p.m.

JVT Practice, 6 p.m., Arena

High School Baseball: SBW JV DH at Groton, 5:30 p.m.

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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.**

## Hantavirus at Sea

The MV Hondius remains at sea near Praia as health authorities delay docking the Dutch cruise ship in the Canary Islands for three to four days amid a hantavirus outbreak that has killed three people and sickened at least four others.

The ship, carrying 88 passengers and 59 crew members, including 17 Americans, departed Argentina April 1 for Antarctica and remote South Atlantic islands. It has stayed at sea for days as authorities coordinate quarantine measures, testing, and medical evacuations. Early findings suggest limited person-to-person transmission—a rare development for hantavirus, which typically spreads through contact with infected rodent droppings or urine. Officials said no rats were reported onboard, raising the possibility that a now-deceased Dutch couple was infected before boarding.

Hantavirus can cause severe respiratory illness and is fatal in about 35% of US cases. The Andes strain found in South America can spread between people, though rarely, and carries a mortality rate of roughly 40%. No known treatment exists.

## Meta, Data

Meta will begin using AI to analyze users' bone structure and height as part of what it says is a broader push to help remove users under age 13 from its platforms. Meta announced yesterday that the approach will not involve facial recognition; the tech giant already scans text for signals of a user's age, including mentions of birthdays and school grades.

The announcement comes days after Meta threatened to shut down all platforms in New Mexico after being ordered to pay \$375M in civil penalties for endangering children's mental health and well-being. The state is now asking a judge to order Meta to pay \$3.7B, and calling for an end to infinite scroll features and push notifications, among other changes.

When Australia banned social media use for kids under age 16 in December, Meta says it removed about 550,000 accounts from its platforms.

## Orphan Masterpieces

Paris' Musée d'Orsay yesterday opened its first-ever gallery dedicated to orphaned artwork recovered from Nazi possession after World War II.

Roughly 2,200 pieces were retrieved from Germany and Austria, entrusted to French museums, and never claimed. Many are believed to have belonged to Jewish collectors. Adolf Hitler's deputy reportedly visited Paris 21 times, selecting works from their collections. After the Nazi regime collapsed, France recovered roughly 60,000 works, reconnecting about 45,000 with their rightful owners. Last month, the Musée d'Orsay created a team dedicated to finding the heirs of the roughly 225 works still in its possession, all by artists born between 1820 and 1870.

The Musée d'Orsay is displaying 13 works, including those by Edgar Degas and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. They are hung so that visitors can see the stamps and inventory marks that chronicle their passage from private to Nazi hands.

The high-stakes quest to rescue Nazi-looted art inspired the film "The Monuments Men."

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

"Lost Boys" and "Schmigadoon!" lead Tony nominations with 12 nods each, and June Squibb becomes the oldest nominee at age 96; see full list.

The Rolling Stones announce new album, "Foreign Tongues," slated for July 10 release.

"The Bear" stars reveal surprise hourlong prequel on Hulu ahead of anticipated season five premiere this summer.

First "Dutton Ranch" trailer drops ahead of the "Yellowstone" spinoff's May 15 air date (More, w/trailer)

Doris Fisher, who cofounded The Gap Inc. clothing chain with her husband Don, dies at age 94.

How Gap evolved from a denim-record store mashup to a fashion powerhouse.

## Science & Technology

OpenAI releases new default ChatGPT model aimed at reducing hallucinations in law, medicine, finance, and other technical fields.

Etsy launches app within ChatGPT to facilitate conversational shopping experience.

Single dose of psilocybin—the psychedelic found in magic mushrooms—may alter brain pathways responsible for emotional regulation; researchers say this could be why people with anxiety and depression report long-lasting benefits.

Indigenous Andean populations have the world's highest prevalence of a gene tied to starch digestion—likely an adaptation to potato-rich diets—highlighting how diet can shape the human genome.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close up (S&P 500 +0.8%, Dow +0.7%, Nasdaq +1.0%), with S&P 500 and Nasdaq notching fresh records.

Renewable energy firm Panthalassa raises \$140M in funding round led by Peter Thiel to deploy floating AI data centers.

America's largest cryptocurrency exchange, Coinbase, lays off 14% of workers, or roughly 700 people.

Elon Musk to pay \$1.5M to settle SEC lawsuit that accused him of failing to properly disclose his Twitter stock purchases in 2022, allegedly allowing him to underpay when he bought the company for \$44B later that year.

## Politics & World Affairs

Voters in Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan turned out for primary elections yesterday, impacting races for the US Congress, state legislatures, and governorships, with Vivek Ramaswamy winning GOP nomination for Ohio governor; see all storylines.

Ukraine's unilateral ceasefire is set to go into effect tonight; comes after Russia announced a ceasefire later in the week to mark Victory Day parades.

Republicans propose \$1B in security investments for the White House ballroom project.

See renderings of the ballroom (More, w/images)



## Thompson embracing opportunities as Teen Miss Rodeo South Dakota



Photo by Cardenas Captures

For Groton Area sophomore Taryn Thompson, serving as Teen Miss Rodeo South Dakota has been an experience filled with travel, personal growth and opportunities to promote the western lifestyle she loves.

Since earning the title, Thompson has represented South Dakota at events across the country, including the prestigious Miss Rodeo America pageant in Las Vegas, Nevada. She also attended Rodeo Rapid City in January, traveled to Queen Creek, Arizona, and represented her title closer to home at rodeos in places such as Huron.

"Being crowned as Teen Miss Rodeo South Dakota has been such an incredible honor and experience," Thompson said. "Each experience has

allowed me to meet new people and share my passion for rodeo and the western lifestyle."

While the opportunities have been exciting, Thompson said balancing her duties as a titleholder with school responsibilities has been one of her biggest challenges.

"At 17, managing a busy schedule while keeping up with academics isn't always easy, but it has taught me a lot about discipline and time management," she said.

Thompson, the 16-year-old daughter of Mark and June Thompson of Groton, attends Groton Area High School where she is a sophomore, Honor Roll student and member of the varsity trap team. She is currently studying to become a Certified Nursing Assistant.

In addition to rodeo queening, Thompson has already established herself as an accomplished mounted shooter. She is a professional-level mounted shooter and currently holds the world record in the Fast Five Pattern. Her accomplishments also include being named the 2022 AQHA Reserve World Champion and the 2024 CMSA Non-Pro Derby Reserve Champion.

Thompson said the experience of representing South Dakota has already had a major impact on her future.

"This experience is going to help me so much in the future," she said. "It's already improved my public speaking skills, taught me how to plan and manage events, and given me opportunities that not many people my age get to experience."

She added that she is thankful for the support she has received along the way, especially from her father.

Thompson also expressed gratitude to her sponsor, jokingly referring to her "loving father who just can't say no."

Looking ahead, Thompson said she is excited to continue educating others about rodeo while representing South Dakota throughout the remainder of her reign.



Photo J. Simon Photography



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## Tracy Named Boys MVP, Tigers Shine at Valley Queen Cheese Invite

The Groton Area Tigers turned in another strong performance Tuesday at the Valley Queen Cheese Invite in Milbank, highlighted by dominant distance running from Jayden Schwan and a standout sprint day from Keegen Tracy, who was named the Boys MVP of the meet as Groton placed second in the boys division and third in the girls division.

Milbank won the boys team title with 202 points, while Groton Area finished runner-up with 74 points ahead of Hamlin's 67. On the girls side, Clark/Willow Lake claimed the championship with 168.5 points while Groton Area totaled 80.5 points to finish third behind Clark/Willow Lake and Milbank.

Tracy led the way for the Tiger boys with a trio of victories in the sprints. The senior captured the 100-meter dash in 11.17 seconds, added the 200-meter title in 22.73, and also won the 400 meters with a time of 52.30 to earn MVP honors.

Schwan also had a huge day in the distance events, sweeping both the 800 and 1600-meter runs. He won the 800 in 2:05.98 before returning to claim the 1600 title in 4:40.95. Riley Shellenberger added points in the distance races by placing seventh in the 1600 at 5:19.06 and third in the 3200 with an 11:28.21 effort.

Groton also found success in the relays. The Tigers' 4x400 relay team of Jordan Schwan, Ethan Kroll, Jayden Schwan, and Jace Johnson placed third in 3:43.75, while the 4x100 relay team of Jordan Schwan, JJ Muller, Ethan Kroll, and Jace Johnson finished fourth in 47.04.

Kroll also earned a fourth-place finish in the triple jump with a leap of 38 feet, 11 inches.

For the Groton Area girls, the sprint relays once again proved to be a strength. The Tigers captured the 4x200 relay title as McKenna Tietz, Taryn Traphagen, Kella Tracy, and Makenna Krause crossed the line in 1:49.38. Groton also placed second in both the 4x100 and 4x400 relays.

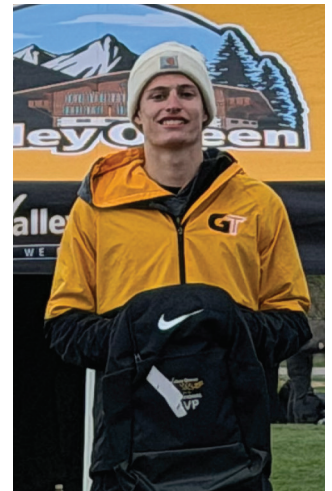
The 4x100 quartet of Tietz, Rylee Dunker, Kella Tracy, and Krause clocked a 52.28, while the 4x400 team of Tietz, Traphagen, Ashlynn Warrington, and Kella Tracy posted a 4:18.23.

Krause paced the Tigers in the individual sprints, placing second in the 100 meters with a time of 13.20. Raquel Tracy added a fourth-place finish in the same race at 13.46, while Dunker took eighth in 13.75.

Ryelle Gilbert delivered strong performances in the distance races, finishing third in the 800 meters in 2:32.62 and fourth in the 1600 meters at 5:49.68.

Groton also scored valuable points in the hurdles as McKenna Tietz placed fourth in the 100-meter hurdles with a 17.49 clocking, while Ella Kettner finished sixth in 18.48. Emerlee Jones later added a fourth-place finish in the 300-meter hurdles at 53.15.

In the field events, Rylee Dunker took second in the javelin with a throw of 101 feet, while Avery Crank earned third in the discus at 93-3 and also added an eighth-place finish in the javelin.



**Keegen Tracy was named the boys MVP at the Milbank Track Meet held Tuesday.** (Photo by Bruce

Babcock)

### Boy's Division

**Team Points:** 1. Milbank 202, 2. Groton Area 74, 3. Hamlin 67, 4. Webster Area 59, 5. Clark/Willow Lake 56, 6. Britton-Hecla 53.5, 7. Sisseton 50, 8. Border West 49.5, 9. Aberdeen Roncalli 39.5, 10. Great Plains Lutheran 34, 11. Wilmot 28, 11. Florence/Henry 28, 13. Tri-State 27, 14. Langford Area 5, 15. Tiospa Zina 1.5.

**100 Meters:** 1. Keegen Tracy, 11.17; 29. Tate Johnson, 13.33; 34. Sam Crank, 13.82.

**200 Meters:** 1. Keegen Tracy, 22.73; 13. JJ Muller, 24.92; 31. Tate Johnson, 28.41.

**400 Meters:** 1. Keegen Tracy, 52.30; 9. Jace Johnson, 57.71; 15. JJ Muller, 1:01.73.

**800 Meters:** 1. Jayden Schwan, 2:05.98.

**1600 Meters:** 1. Jayden Schwan, 4:40.95; 7. Riley Shellenberger, 5:19.06.

**3200 Meters:** 3. Riley Shellenberger, 11:28.21.

**4x100 Relay:** 4. Groton: (Jordan Schwan, JJ Muller, Ethan Kroll, Jace Johnson), 47.04.

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**4x200 Relay:** 9. Groton: (Tate Johnson, Wesley Borg, Riley Shellenberger, Jordan Schwan), 1:46.10.

**4x400 Relay:** 3. Groton: (Jordan Schwan, Ethan Kroll, Jayden Schwan, Jace Johnson), 3:43.75.

**Triple Jump:** 4. Ethan Kroll, 38' 11".

## Girl's Division

**Team Points:** 1. Clark/Willow Lake 168.5, 2. Milbank 107, 3. Groton Area 80.5, 4. Britton-Hecla 62, 5. Border West 60, 6. Webster Area 51, 7. Aberdeen Roncalli 46, 8. Langford Area 42, 9. Great Plains Lutheran 40.5, 10. Tri-State 32, 11. Florence/Henry 30.5, 12. Hamlin 26, 13. Sisseton 13, 14. Wilmot 2.

**100 Meters:** 2. Makenna Krause, 13.20; 4. Raquel Tracy, 13.46; 8. Rylee Dunker, 13.75.

**200 Meters:** 10. Rylee Dunker, 29.05; 12. Raquel Tracy, 29.33.

**400 Meters:** 7. Taryn Traphagen, 1:04.86; 9. Ashlynn Warrington, 1:05.96; 23. Suri Jetto, 1:21.34.

**800 Meters:** 3. Rylee Gilbert, 2:32.62; 14. Suri Jetto, 3:17.39

**1600 Meters:** 4. Rylee Gilbert, 5:49.68.

**100m Hurdles - 33" / 0.838m:** 4. McKenna Tietz, 17.49; 6. Ella Kettner, 18.48; 15. Emerlee Jones, 20.06.

**300m Hurdles - 30" / 0.762m:** 4. Emerlee Jones, 53.15; 11. Ella Kettner, 57.22; 12. Teagan Hanten, 57.71.

**4x100 Relay:** 2. Groton: (McKenna Tietz, Rylee Dunker, Kella Tracy, Makenna Krause), 52.28.

**4x200 Relay:** 1. Groton: (McKenna Tietz, Taryn Traphagen, Kella Tracy, Makenna Krause), 1:49.38.

**4x400 Relay:** 2. Groton: (McKenna Tietz, Taryn Traphagen, Ashlynn Warrington, Kella Tracy), 4:18.23.

**Shot Put - 4kg:** 19. Avery Crank, 25' 8".

**Discus - 1kg:** 3. Avery Crank, 93' 3".

**Javelin - 600g:** 2. Rylee Dunker, 101' 0"; 8. Avery Crank, 86' 11".

**High Jump:** 13. Emerlee Jones, 4' 3".

**Long Jump:** 31. Teagan Hanten, 12' 7.75".

**Triple Jump:** 23. Teagan Hanten, 27' 5.25".

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## Tigers Drop Pair of Close Games to Clark Area

The Groton Area Tigers came up just short in both varsity and junior varsity baseball action Tuesday in Groton, dropping a pair of close contests to Clark Area Dinosaurs.

In the varsity game, Groton Area fell 2-1 despite outhitting Clark Area 6-5. The Tigers grabbed an early lead in the bottom of the first inning when Nick Groeblichhoff singled home a run, but Clark Area answered in the second inning, taking advantage of a Groton error to score what proved to be the game-winning runs.

Groton continued to pressure offensively throughout the night, collecting hits from Lincoln Krause, Karsten Fliehs, Tristin McGannon, Alex Abeln, Gavin Englund and Groeblichhoff, but the Tigers were unable to push across the tying run.

Englund turned in a strong performance on the mound for Groton Area, allowing just two unearned runs on five hits over 6 1/3 innings while striking out four and walking one. Clark Area pitchers Cooper Pommer, Teague Stevenson and Watson Grantham combined to hold the Tigers in check late, with Grantham earning the save.

Groeblichhoff finished 1-for-4 with the Tigers' lone RBI, while Groton also showed patience at the plate with six walks. Case Reints and Jarrett Erdmann each drew two free passes. The Tigers also turned a double play defensively.

In the junior varsity matchup, Groton Area built an early 3-1 lead before Clark Area rallied late for a 4-3 victory.

Clark Area scored first in the opening inning, but the Tigers answered quickly in the bottom half. RBI singles by Kason Oswald and Zach Fliehs helped Groton take control early.

Clark Area regained the lead in the third inning as Behrett Ahrens delivered a run-scoring double and another run crossed on a groundout to make it 4-3.

Groton Area managed four hits in the contest, with Oswald, John Bisbee, Lincoln Shilhanek and Fliehs each recording one hit. Oswald and Fliehs each drove in a run for the Tigers.

Isaiah Scepaniak worked three innings on the mound for Groton Area, striking out three.

The varsity Tigers are scheduled to travel to Madison/Chester on Saturday, while the junior varsity squad returns to action Wednesday at home against Sisseton-Britton-Webster Mallards JV.



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**'25-'26 Groton FFA President Logan Warrington Opening the Ceremonies**



**Lindsey Vanderwal presenting Logan Warrington with his State FFA Degree.**

## **Groton FFA Banquet**

Thanks to Nikki Kotzer for rounding up these photos and getting them identified



**Star Greenhand Degree: Sydney Holmes**



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**2026 Greenhand Degree:** In back, left to right, are Wesley Morehouse, John Bisbee, Bentley Zerr, Korbin McCain, ReAnn Dennert, Shaydon Wood; in front, left to right, are Kolton Antonsen, Porter Jones, Rowin JVR, Sydney Holmes, Adeline Kotzer.



**'25-'26 FFA Members:** In back, left to right, are Braden Wipf, Shaydon Wood, Korbin McCain, John Bisbee, Logan Warrington, Kolton Antonsen, Wesley Morehouse, ReAnn Dennert, Lindsey Vanderwal; in front, left to right, are Rowin JVR, Porter Jones, Bentley Zerr, Xavior Ellenbecker, Delayne Jones, Adeline Kotzer, Sydney Holmes

**Not Pictured:** Jackson Furman



**Installation of FFA Officers for '26-'27:** Lt to Rt: Sentinel John Bisbee, Treasurer Rowin JVR, Vice President Kolton Antonsen, Advisor Lindsey Vanderwal, President Wesley Morehouse, Secretary Adeline Kotzer, Reporter Sydney Holmes, '25-'26 Reporter Delayne Jones



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**'25-'26 Groton FFA Officers: Left to right are Vice President Wesley Morehouse, President Logan Warrington, Treasurer Kolton Antonsen, Reporter Delayne Jones, Advisor Lindsey Vanderwal; Not Pictured: Secretary Jackson Furman**



**'26-'27 Groton FFA Officers: Left to right are President Wesley Morehouse, Vice President Kolton Antonsen, Secretary Adeline Kotzer, Treasurer Rowin JVR, Reporter Sydney Holmes, Sentinel John Bisbee.**



## City Council discuss wastewater system plans, senior meal donation

by Elizabeth Varin

The Groton City Council covered both long-term infrastructure planning and immediate community needs during its Tuesday evening meeting, hearing updates on a major wastewater improvement project and taking action to support local senior meals.

Council members received an update on technical planning for the wastewater system improvement project.

Ken Hier with IMEG gave an overview of where the project engineering process stands for the project. "We've got a lot of things to iron out in the detail of it, but this is the rough idea of it," he said.

The new lift station will have two force mains, the current 6-inch line and a new 8-inch line. The new lift station will be about 8 feet deeper than the existing one with a submersible station instead of the current wet-well, dry-well, Hier said.

The new pond area is a 10-acre cell, though its debatable whether the pond will need to be that big, he said. The engineers have also been looking at types of lines to use in the pond.

One thing that is holding up the process is easement talks with property along the way. City Attorney Chad Locken has made initial contact with property owners that may be impacted.

Mayor Scott Hanlon asked when bid documents would be available to get construction started.

Hier replied that it will be fall at the earliest as there are still "a couple hurdles to jump." The contractor hired to build the lift station will want to work in the winter, so time is of the essence to get the project started sooner rather than later.

The more than \$6.5 million improvement project has been in discussion for years, with funds coming from a state Department of Natural Resources 30-year loan and consolidated grant.

### Council double downs on donations for senior meals

The council also heard from the executive director of Area IV Senior Nutrition Marla Kiesz, who requested a \$2,500 donation to help support senior meals in Groton.

The senior meals program in Groton is run from the Red Horse Inn. They provide meals on site for people 60-years-old and older as well as deliver meals to some 60 years and older who choose to stay at home. The number of home deliveries outpaces the number of people who go to the Red Horse Inn.

Since July 2025, 3,789 meals were served in Groton. That includes 2,317 meals delivered to homes, 1,472 meals served at the Red Horse Inn.

Area IV Senior Nutrition has a suggested donation price of \$6 per meal for those eating, though patrons are not turned away if they pay less than that. And those who have meals delivered tend to donate less per meal – about \$3.17 per meal on average from July 2025 to April 2026.

For those eating at the restaurant, donations average about \$6.09 per meal.

Recently a few donations have come from community groups and businesses. And many cities contribute a lump sum to help cover meal costs.

Kiesz asked the Groton council to consider a \$2,500 donation to help cover the gap between how much meals cost and how much patrons pay per meal.

In response, council members voted to go beyond the request, unanimously approving a \$5,000 contribution. In doing so, they also encouraged other community members and organizations to consider donating to help ensure local seniors continue to have access to nutritious meals.

"These folks raised us and took care of us," said Mayor Scott Hanlon. "We can take care of them."

- The council approved an estimate from Aberdeen Clean-All for duct cleaning at City Hall. The estimate totaled \$4,441.25.

- The council tabled discussion about airport hangar leases and forgiving an outstanding invoice from 2017.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Elk wander to eastern South Dakota, and the state responds with unlimited hunting licenses

**Committee also approves higher license cap in Custer State Park, where numbers are growing**

**BY: MEGHAN O'BRIEN**

PIERRE — Elk hunters in South Dakota will have more opportunities in Custer State Park and east of the Missouri River after a legislative committee approved rule changes Tuesday.

The committee, made up of three state senators and three state representatives, voted 4-2 in favor of a rules package that includes an unlimited elk hunting season on the eastern side of the river and increases the maximum number of elk licenses in the park.

Sen. Liz Larson and Rep. Erik Muckey, Democrats from Sioux Falls, cast the two no votes.



**Elk roam Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota.** (Courtesy of the National Park Service)

#### East River elk hunting

More elk are starting to appear in the East River region, said Tom Kirschenmann, director of wildlife for the Department of Game, Fish and Parks. The elk, which typically are more at home in the Black Hills and other rugged terrain of western South Dakota, are unwelcome guests in East River farm fields.

"They can create a lot of damage, and it's a very, very challenging management activity," Kirschenmann said. He added that the agency has no intention of managing a permanent East River elk population.

The estimated population of elk in the Black Hills is about 8,000. There could be up to 2,000 on the western South Dakota plains, Kirschenmann said. East River populations are "nowhere near those numbers," though he didn't provide an estimate.

East River elk are usually found between Pierre and Chamberlain, particularly on the Crow Creek reservation, which will be excluded from the unlimited hunting unit. Kirschenmann said the agency is in conversation with the tribe's wildlife department about its elk management strategy.

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Larson doesn't dispute that crops are being harmed, but she said it may be premature to declare open season on all East River elk.

"I don't see enough evidence that we know how this would affect the elk populations," she said. "I feel like this is a very new, new area that they're going into."

## More Custer State Park elk licenses

The elk population in Custer State Park, in the Black Hills of western South Dakota, is above what the agency prefers to manage at the park, Kirschenmann said. Populations are usually kept between 500 and 600, but a recent estimate placed the number between 750 and 775.

That's why the agency will increase the limit of antlerless elk hunting licenses for Custer State Park from 20 to 100. The agency will not offer all 100 licenses this year, Kirschenmann said. The number of licenses available will be decided based on the population and whether it's anticipated to grow or shrink.

Hunters can expect 50 licenses to be available this year. Twenty-five will be available for two weeks in October and the remainder will be available for two weeks in December.

Splitting up licenses over those time periods will "minimize congestion of the hunters on each other," Kirschenmann said.

Larson said she doesn't see evidence supporting "that number" for the license cap "should be the one that's pursued."

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

## Opponents win temporary order against drilling project near culturally significant Black Hills site

BY: SETH TUPPER

Tribes and environmental groups scored at least a temporary victory this week in their multipronged effort to stop exploratory drilling in culturally significant areas of South Dakota's Black Hills.

A federal judge in Rapid City granted a temporary restraining order Monday evening against exploratory drilling near the high mountain meadow known as Pe' Sla, or Reynolds Prairie, in the central Black Hills. The ruling came after a hearing that drew an overflow crowd of people opposed to the project.

Pe' Sla is one of several Black Hills sites that corresponds with celestial features in traditional Lakota spirituality. Lakota people use the area, some of which is tribally owned, for prayer, ceremonies and cultural activities.

The order requires Pete Lien & Sons to halt its project temporarily while the lawsuit against it continues. The company is exploring for graphite, which is used in electric vehicle batteries, lubricants, pencils and other products.

Two lawsuits are pending against the project, and the restraining order applies to both. The plaintiffs in one are nonprofits: the Black Hills Clean Water Alliance and an Indigenous rights group known as NDN Collective, both based in Rapid City, and Earthworks in Washington, D.C. Nine Native American tribes are the plaintiffs in the other lawsuit. The defendant in both cases is the U.S. Forest Service, which approved the drilling plan on federally managed land.

The company recently began drilling, according to the nonprofit plaintiffs' brief in support of their motion for the temporary restraining order. Sacred religious ceremonies in the Pe' Sla area began on Saturday, May 2, the motion stated, making the request for the temporary restraining order "especially urgent."

"These industrial operations irreparably harm plaintiffs' members' use of the Pe' Sla landscape," they said in their brief.

Drilling is halted under the restraining order as the plaintiffs seek a longer-term order known as an



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injunction. Ultimately, the plaintiffs want to overturn the Forest Service's approval of the project.

The federal agency said in a brief opposing the restraining order that the project is already "halfway complete," and said the agency properly considered and approved the drilling plan.

Meanwhile, some of the plaintiffs and their supporters are engaged in another struggle against exploratory drilling for uranium in the southern Black Hills. That proposed project is near Craven Canyon, where the rock walls are carved with Native American petroglyphs believed to be thousands of years old.

The state's Board of Minerals and Environment is scheduled to conduct a weeklong hearing beginning May 18 in Hot Springs on that project's permit application.

*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.*



**An overflow crowd waits to get through security on May 4, 2026, before a hearing at the federal courthouse in Rapid City, South Dakota. After the hearing, a judge granted a temporary restraining order against exploratory drilling for graphite near Pe' Sla in the Black Hills.** (Photo by Seth Tupper/South Dakota Searchlight)

## South Dakota stays at No. 46 in teacher pay rankings

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

South Dakota ranks 46th in the nation in a new report on average teacher salaries, the same as last year. The state's standing is its highest since the National Education Association started ranking states in 1943, according to the South Dakota Education Association.

South Dakota's average teacher salary during the 2024-25 school year increased to \$58,486 — a 3.8% increase from \$56,328 in last year's report. The increase outpaced the 2024 inflation rate of about 2.9%.

South Dakota lawmakers approved a 4% increase in education funding in 2024, 1.25% in 2025, and 1.4% this year. Education advocates warned the slight increase this year could cause teacher pay to fall behind inflation and drag South Dakota's ranking down in next year's report.

South Dakota's average teacher pay of \$58,486 is lower than all its neighboring states:

North Dakota: \$60,704.

Minnesota: \$76,234.

Iowa: \$65,312.

Nebraska: \$63,326.

Wyoming: \$65,668.

Montana: \$59,305.

States that rank lower than South Dakota are West Virginia, Missouri, Louisiana, Florida and Mississippi (there are 51 spots in the rankings, due to the inclusion of Washington, D.C.). Mississippi's average teacher salary of \$54,975 is the nation's lowest, according to the report, but is a 2.4% increase compared to the previous year's salary.

California reports the highest average salary at \$103,552 — a 2.4% increase from last year. Nevada teachers received the largest percent change in their salaries at 11.8%, increasing to 17th (\$74,812) from 25th in the rankings.

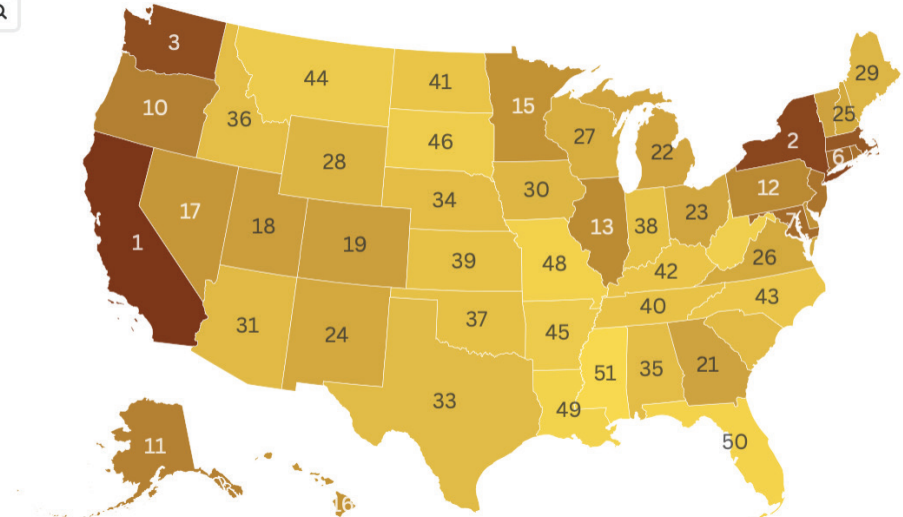
South Dakota's ranking for average starting salary fell to 27th in the nation — down from 25th. The state's average teacher starting salary increased from \$45,530 last year to \$47,196.

*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.*

## 2026 teacher pay rankings

South Dakota ranks No. 46, with an average teacher salary of \$58,486. The national average salary is \$74,495, according to National Education Association data.

\$54,975 ————— \$103,552



Source: [2026 educator pay data, NEA](#)

Made with Flourish • Create a map

## Suspect in D.C. press dinner shooting indicted for attempt to assassinate Trump

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — The alleged White House Correspondents' Dinner shooter was indicted by a grand jury Tuesday on four federal charges, including attempting to assassinate President Donald Trump and assaulting an officer or employee of the United States with a deadly weapon.

The three-page indictment alleges 31-year-old Cole Tomas Allen, of California, "knowingly and by means and use of a deadly and dangerous weapon" forcibly assaulted, intimidated or interfered with an unidentified U.S. Secret Service agent who was hit with one bullet in his protective vest while working a security checkpoint outside the annual dinner. The agent was uninjured.

The indictment does not specify whether Allen fired the shot that hit the agent.

Allen was also indicted on transporting a firearm over state lines with intent to commit a felony, and using, brandishing or discharging a firearm during a crime of violence.



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**Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche speaks as FBI Director Kash Patel and Acting Assistant Director for the Criminal Investigative Division at the FBI Darren Cox listen at a press conference at the Department of Justice on April 27, 2026 in Washington, D.C., about the shooting at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner.** (Photo

by Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images)

## **Shotgun, pistol and wire cutters**

The indictment specifies Allen transported a 12-gauge pump action shotgun with 45 rounds of ammunition, and a .38 caliber semi-automatic pistol with 55 rounds of ammunition.

Government prosecutors in a court filing prior to the indictment alleged Allen also had on him "two knives, four daggers, multiple sheaths, multiple holsters, needle nose pliers, (and) wire cutters."

The Department of Justice initially charged Allen on three of the grand jury indictment counts, with the exception of assaulting a federal officer or employee.

Allen is scheduled to be arraigned in federal

district court Monday in Washington, D.C.

He faces up to life in prison if convicted of attempting to kill the president.

## **Black-tie dinner**

Allen allegedly rushed a security checkpoint one level above the Washington Hilton ballroom on April 25 where Trump, Vice President JD Vance and several Cabinet officials were among thousands of journalists, government officials and celebrities attending the black-tie event that dates back a century.

Shortly before he ran through a magnetometer, with a long gun in hand, at 8:40 p.m., Allen sent an email to friends and family explaining he intended to target "administration officials ... prioritized from highest-ranking to lowest."

Trump, first lady Melania Trump and Cabinet members all safely evacuated the ballroom.

The Secret Service agent, whose vest protected him from gunfire, is referred to in court filings as V.G.

Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche told reporters April 27 that a ballistics investigation had not yet been completed, and would not answer whether Allen fired the bullet that hit the agent.

V.G. fired five rounds from his service weapon in Allen's direction, but did not hit the suspect who fell to the ground and sustained minor injuries, according to a signed affidavit from law enforcement filed in court April 27.

Trump publicly shared photos on his social media platform Truth Social the day following the dinner of a shirtless and handcuffed Allen face down on the hotel carpet Saturday night.

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



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## Iconic landmarks, federal buildings in D.C. increasingly show fealty to Trump

BY: DAVID LIGHTMAN

WASHINGTON — Get off the train at Union Station, walk outside and gasp at that iconic view of the Capitol dome in front of you.

Cross the street and the first thing you run into is a construction site surrounding walled-off Columbus Circle. On the wall is a huge poster of President Donald Trump wearing a hard hat (and a coat and tie).

"Thank you, PRESIDENT TRUMP," the sign says.

That's just the start of what a tourist will encounter as they sightsee in the heart of the nation's capital. Or these days, the nation's capital as brought to you by Donald Trump.

The Trump reminders are all over. Walk the tourist walk from the Capitol down and around Pennsylvania Avenue, past the White House and on to the Lincoln Memorial and it's clear who's in charge.

Whether or not this is affecting tourism is unclear. Destination DC, a nonprofit organization that markets the area as a global tourist destination, doesn't keep month-to-month data. It found in 2024, before the Trump boom, a record 27.2 million people visited the city.

"Tourists who are pro-Trump will be drawn to his eponymous sites. Those who oppose him will not. Most tourists will pay no attention to his projects but will enjoy all the historic and exciting venues and exhibits in Washington," said Barbara Perry, professor in Presidential Studies at the University of Virginia's Miller Center

She said Trump's propensity to "destroy, rebuild, construct, and name numerous sites and institutions for himself is most unusual."



**A banner showing President Donald Trump hangs from the U.S. Department of Justice on Feb. 20, 2026.** (Photo by Shauneen Miranda/States Newsroom)

### Trump likenesses

Trump detailed his plans in a March, 2025, executive order, "Making the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful."

"Its highways, boulevards, and parks should be clean, well-kept, and pleasant," he said of the nation's capital. "Its monuments, museums, and buildings should reflect and inspire awe and appreciation for our Nation's strength, greatness, and heritage. Our citizens deserve nothing less."

Previous incumbent presidents' pictures were usually confined to 8-by-10 portraits hanging in post offices

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or deep inside other federal buildings, as they were careful not to splatter their names and likenesses so publicly.

"Typical presidents want to avoid looking arrogant by honoring themselves while in office or even after—except for their presidential libraries, starting with FDR. They usually feel humbled if a Navy ship, for example, is named for them while they are extant: Bush I and Ford come to mind," Perry said of former Presidents George H.W. Bush and Gerald Ford.

Both served in the Navy and saw combat in the South Pacific.

Democrats are furious about the Trump makeover. Sen. Bernie Sanders, a Vermont independent, calls Trump's actions "narcissism" and is pushing the "Stop Executive Renaming for Vanity and Ego Act."

"Donald Trump doesn't get to slap his name on any public institution he chooses. We don't have kings or dictators in America, and this legislation stops him or any future sitting president from creating monuments to glorify themselves," said Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md.

The bill is likely to go nowhere in the Republican-run Congress.

So for now, tourists can stroll around the Mall and see how Trump has tried to transform the nation's capital.

Starting at the Capitol and heading south down Constitution Avenue until it splits off to Pennsylvania Avenue, here goes:

## Albert Pike statue

Status: Installed at Judiciary Square, about four blocks from the Capitol.

Details: "The only public sculpture in DC to commemorate a Confederate general," says the DC Historic Sites team website. Pike was a slave owner and a senior officer in the Confederate Army.

The memorial was "toppled and burned on Juneteenth of 2020, as protests continued across the country in response to the murder of George Floyd," the website says. Floyd was a Black man killed by a white policeman in Minneapolis, sparking protests around the country.

Last year, the Trump administration had the Pike statue restored and placed at its present location.

The action was part of an executive order Trump issued in March 2025. He ordered a review of memorials or statues that had been "removed or changed to perpetuate a false reconstruction of American history, inappropriately minimize the value of certain historical events or figures, or include any other improper partisan ideology."

The order also affected the Smithsonian Institution, which Trump said "has, in recent years, come under the influence of a divisive, race-centered ideology."

## Trump banners on federal buildings

Status: Huge banners with Trump's face hang from the Judiciary and Labor Departments.

Details: "American Workers First" says the Labor banner, with Trump's vastly enlarged face atop the saying. Another banner features President Theodore Roosevelt.

The banners, which cover almost three stories of the building, are visible from both heavily-trafficked Constitution and Pennsylvania avenues.

About six blocks away, on Pennsylvania Avenue at the Justice Department — which a few years ago investigated Trump for possible crimes — there's a new, three-story banner where he looks down at the street atop the saying "Make American Safe Again."

When the Labor banner went up, then-Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer told Trump about it at a Cabinet meeting, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported.

"Mr. President, I invite you to see your big, beautiful face on a banner in front of the Department of Labor because you are really the transformational president of the American worker," she told him.

Bonus sighting: As you walk along Pennsylvania Avenue, don't miss another "Thank You, President Trump" banner hanging on a construction wall across from the National Gallery of Art near 4th Street.

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## White House ballroom

Status: Walk up Pennsylvania Avenue starting at the 1500 block and you'll see the White House East Wing is gone. It's a rubble-laden construction site now, where Trump is trying to build a 90,000 square foot ballroom with a military installation underneath. The project is to be privately funded, though Senate Republicans are seeking \$1 billion for security in an immigration bill.

Details: The project is embroiled in a still-evolving legal battle. The April 25 assassination attempt at the White House Correspondents' Dinner, where a gunman threatened the president and top officials, may be changing minds.

Sen. Tim Sheehy, R-Montana, last month introduced legislation to authorize the ballroom. "A President of any party should be able to host events in a secure area without attendees worrying about their safety. This is common sense. Let's get it done," he tweeted.

Last week, Justice sought to have the lawsuit dismissed. "This (ballroom) project will ensure that events like the horrific attack on Saturday night do not happen again," it argued.

## Reflecting Pool

Status: Keep walking toward Constitution Avenue. You'll see the Reflecting Pool between the World War II Memorial and the Lincoln Memorial. Renovations are underway and expected to be completed by July 4. The pool is being cleaned and painted blue.

Details: The pool has often been criticized for being dirty and leaking.

Trump's effort is going a step farther than others who have launched renovation and cleaning projects. He said the project will cost \$2 million, far less than other recent refurbishing efforts, according to his TruthSocial website.

"It was filthy dirty and it leaked like a sieve for many years," Trump said in a video posted to the site. He's having it painted "swimming pool blue," a color that appalls many preservationists.

## Kennedy Center

Details: The city's premier cultural center is about a 20-minute walk away. Perhaps no Trump change has provoked more outrage among his Washington critics than his renaming of the capital's cultural center.

He said during a visit to the center in March 2025 that "it needs a lot of work," adding it should have better seats and more "Broadway hits."

The president overhauled its governance, creating a board that named him the center's chairman, changed programming to suit his tastes, and announced the center would close this summer for two years for renovations.

Status: While the center's board renamed the site the Trump-Kennedy Center, Rep. Joyce Beatty, D-Ohio, an ex officio member of the board, has taken legal action in federal court seeking to stop the name change, saying only Congress can do so. The case is pending.

## Monumental Arch

Details: Trump wants to build a 250 foot arch — taller than the nearby Lincoln Memorial and the tallest in the world — at the traffic circle at the entrance to Arlington National Cemetery on the Virginia side of the Potomac River. The circle leads to the Memorial Bridge across the Potomac, connecting to the Lincoln Memorial.

Status: The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, packed with Trump appointees, approved the arch's concept design in April.

The arch, the commission said in its approval letter, "would contribute positively to the honorific landscape of Washington, D.C., for many generations." It requested more information for the next phase, including plans for better pedestrian access and sculptures.

Court battles await, notably from a group of Vietnam veterans and others.

They say the arch would distort the clear view from the cemetery to the Lincoln Memorial, as well as disrupt the symbolism of the bridge, designed to join the North and South.



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## Off the usual paths

Go away from the main tourist routes and there's yet more evidence of the Trump rebranding. The United States National Institute of Peace is now the Donald J. Trump National Institute of Peace. The change is meant "to reflect the greatest dealmaker in our nation's history," said a State Department tweet.

Then there's what tourists won't see.

"Visitors who take the garden tour of the White House this spring will miss the beautiful Rose Garden outside the West Wing and the Jackie Kennedy Garden outside the East Wing, of blessed memory," said Perry. "Both gardens, planned by the Kennedys, plus the East Wing itself have been obliterated by the incumbent."

The Rose Garden, the White House says, "was turned into a patio with roses lining the perimeter, developing a space dedicated to hospitality and entertaining. Today, the Rose Garden is used to host many guests of the president for events and dinners."

## East Potomac Golf Course

While the East Potomac Golf Course isn't right on the main tourist route, it's just off to the side on an island not far from the Jefferson Memorial, with a view of the Washington Monument. The Trump administration has reportedly wanted to close and then revamp the historic site. Preservationists and local folks are furious.

Reports say he wants to convert it to a championship golf course — one that some think will make it an exclusive club, instead of the current affordable public setup that's popular with locals. NOTUS wrote that the National Park Service is scheduled to start landscaping.

The links currently have two nine-hole courses, an 18-hole par 72 course, miniature golf, a driving range and a restaurant.

The D.C. Preservation League and two local residents Sunday asked a District Court judge to halt any Trump project.

"Trump is taking a public park away from the American people while spending their hard-earned taxpayer dollars to build a private, elite club from which he'd personally profit," Democracy Defenders Fund Executive Chair Norm Eisen said in a statement.

U.S. District Judge Ana Reyes on Monday did not stop the project, saying reports about the course's overhaul did not provide enough evidence for her to act, but she warned that if she sees that certain renovations are underway she could reconsider.

National Mall Superintendent Kevin Griess said Monday there were no plans to begin renovation work but a safety assessment was underway, The Associated Press reported.

*David Lightman has been a reporter or editor for more than 50 years. He's worked for the Hagerstown (Md.) Morning Herald, Riverside (Calif.) Press Enterprise, and then 10 years at the Baltimore Evening Sun, covering local news and, for six years, state government and the legislature. He spent 23 years as the Hartford Courant's Washington Bureau Chief, and 18 years at McClatchy's Washington bureau, where he covered the White House and Congress. He also served as regional editor, supervising the bureau's seven regional reporters. He was president of Washington's Gridiron Club in 2018 and won the David Lynch award for regional reporting in 2007.*

## US Senate GOP wants \$1 billion for security for Trump's ballroom in immigration bill

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senate Republicans released a roughly \$70 billion spending package Monday night that will keep Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol operating for the rest of President Donald Trump's term without any of the new constraints Democrats have demanded.

The legislation also includes \$1 billion "to support enhancements by the United States Secret Service relating to the East Wing Modernization Project, including above-ground and below-ground security features."

Trump, who had the East Wing of the White House bulldozed to make way for his \$300 or \$400 million ballroom project, had said it would be funded by private donors and not taxpayers. White House officials have said the ballroom is critical for national security when top officials are gathered, following an April 25 incident in which a gunman opened fire at a dinner at the Washington Hilton attended by Trump.

Iowa Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, said in a statement the panel "is taking action to help provide certainty for federal law enforcement and safer streets for American families."

"We will work to ensure this critical funding gets signed into law without unnecessary delay," he added.

Senate Budget Committee ranking member Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., said in a statement the package shows "Republicans are ignoring the needs of middle-class America and instead funneling money into Trump's ballroom and throwing billions at two lawless agencies."

He noted the Department of Homeland Security has more than \$100 billion from Republicans' signature tax and spending cuts package it hasn't spent.

"Throughout this process, Democrats will continue to show the American people that we are for bringing



**Demolition work continued where the East Wing once stood at the White House on Dec. 8, 2025 in Washington, D.C. President Donald Trump ordered the 123-year-old East Wing and Jacqueline Kennedy Garden leveled to make way for a new 90,000-square-foot ballroom that he says will cost around \$300 million and will be paid for with private donations. A U.S. Senate Republican bill released May 4, 2026, asks for \$1 billion in taxpayer funds for security for the project.** (Photo by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

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down costs, making it easier to get ahead, and building an economy where families thrive and billionaires pay their fair share," Merkley said. "It is clear that the country has had enough of the Republican 'families lose, billionaires win' agenda."

## Billions for immigration enforcement

The package's release follows a record-setting shutdown at the Department of Homeland Security that began after the two parties were unable to reach a compromise on new guardrails for immigration operations after federal agents shot and killed two U.S. citizens in Minneapolis in January.

The Judiciary Committee's bill includes \$30.725 billion for ICE, \$3.47 billion for Customs and Border Protection and \$1.457 billion for the Department of Justice.

The bill from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs allocates \$19.1 billion for CBP to hire Border Patrol staff and \$7.45 billion for ICE to hire Homeland Security Investigations agents.

CPB will receive an additional \$3.45 billion to purchase new technology "to combat the entry or exit of illicit narcotics at ports of entry," to upgrade border surveillance technology and to conduct initial screenings of unaccompanied children.

Another \$2.5 billion would go to the Homeland Security secretary for any additional border security needs.

All of the funding would last through Sept. 30, 2029.

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Rand Paul, R-Ky., said in a statement the panel plans to vote later this month to advance the bill.

"Senate Democrats refuse to vote for a single dollar to secure our borders or enforce our immigration laws, even against the most violent illegal aliens," Paul said.

## 60 votes not needed in Senate

Republicans plan to pass the bill using the same complex budget reconciliation process they used last year to enact their "big, beautiful" law that provided DHS with \$170 billion.

GOP lawmakers voted last month to approve the budget resolution that unlocks the process that comes with many rules and restrictions but avoids the need to get 60 votes in the Senate to end debate.

Senate Republican leaders chose to separate funding for ICE and Border Patrol from the annual Homeland Security appropriations bill after the two political parties made little progress toward restrictions on immigration agents.

The stalemate led to a 76-day shutdown for the Department of Homeland Security, which ended in late April after the House sent Trump the annual funding bill the Senate had approved a month earlier.

*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.*

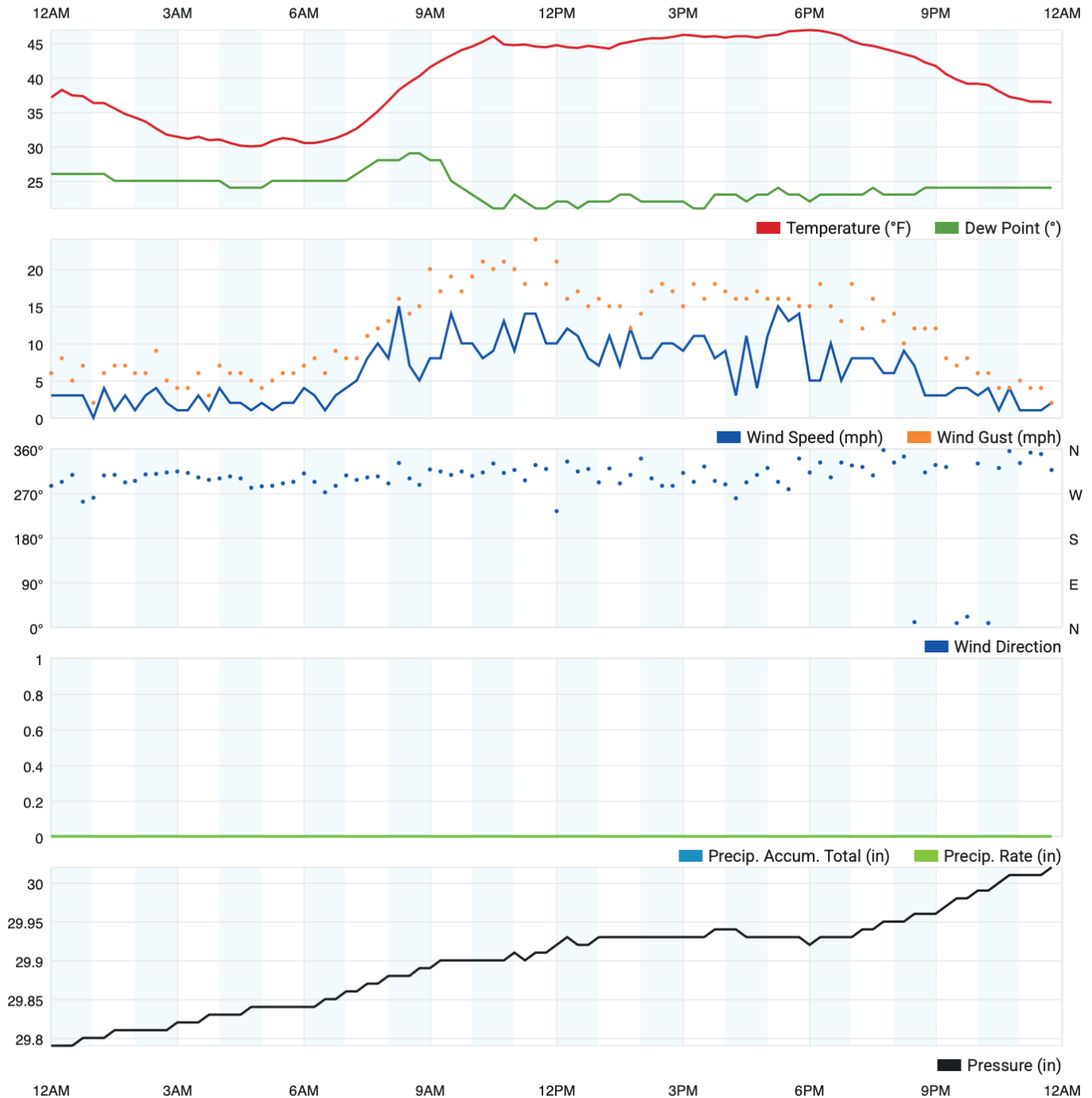


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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

May 5, 2026



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Today



High: 50 °F

Partly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 29 °F

Decreasing  
Clouds

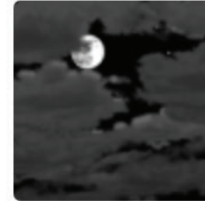
Thursday



High: 63 °F

Sunny

Thursday  
Night



Low: 35 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Friday



High: 71 °F

Mostly Sunny

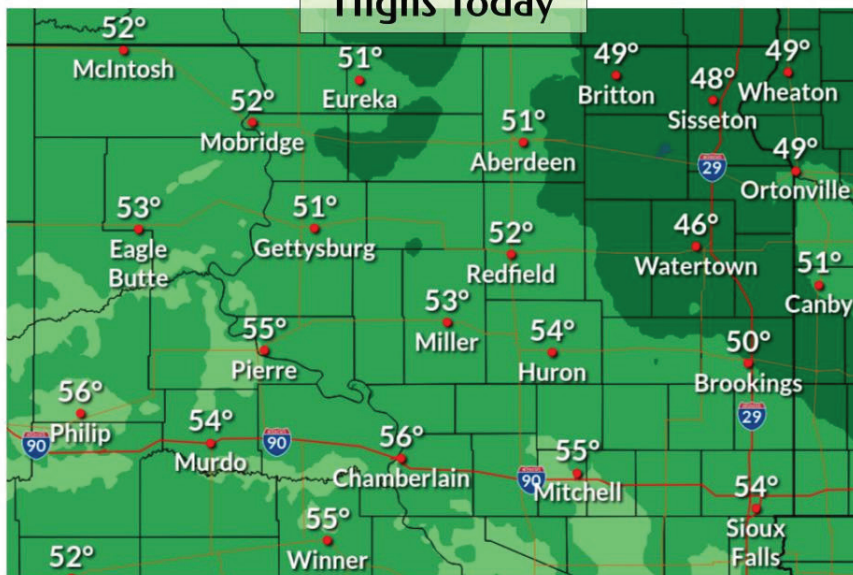


## Continued Cool Today

...then a warming trend through Friday

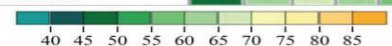
May 6, 2026  
3:33 AM

### Highs Today



### Maximum Temperature (°F) Forecast

	5/6	5/7	5/8	5/9	5/10
	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Aberdeen	51	65	72	65	63
Britton	49	61	68	61	59
Chamberlain	55	67	74	68	66
Clark	48	59	67	61	59
Eagle Butte	53	63	71	64	65
Eureka	51	63	70	63	63
Gettysburg	51	63	71	65	63
McIntosh	52	63	70	62	64
Milbank	50	60	68	62	57
Miller	53	65	72	67	65
Mobridge	52	66	73	65	65
Murdo	54	65	71	65	66
Pierre	55	67	75	69	68
Redfield	52	66	72	67	64
Sisseton	48	60	68	61	57
Watertown	49	60	67	61	57
Webster	46	58	65	59	57
Wheaton	49	60	67	61	57



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

The area will see another cool day as temperatures remain 10-20 degrees below normal. Surface high pressure shifting southeast across western SD and NE today will maintain a northwest wind. These winds won't be quite as strong compared to the last couple days, but gusts will approach 25 mph at times. Parts of central SD have a better chance at seeing a bit more sunshine today with thicker clouds hanging tough across eastern SD and western MN. After today, warmer temperatures are expected later this week into the upcoming weekend. Dry conditions look to be quite common across most of the area the next several days.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 48 °F at 5:56 PM**

**Low Temp: 30 °F at 4:36 AM**

**Wind: 25 mph at 11:29 AM**

**Precip: : 0.00**

## Today's Info

Record High: 93 in 2016

Record Low: 23 in 1931

Average High: 67

Average Low: 40

Average Precip in May.: .65

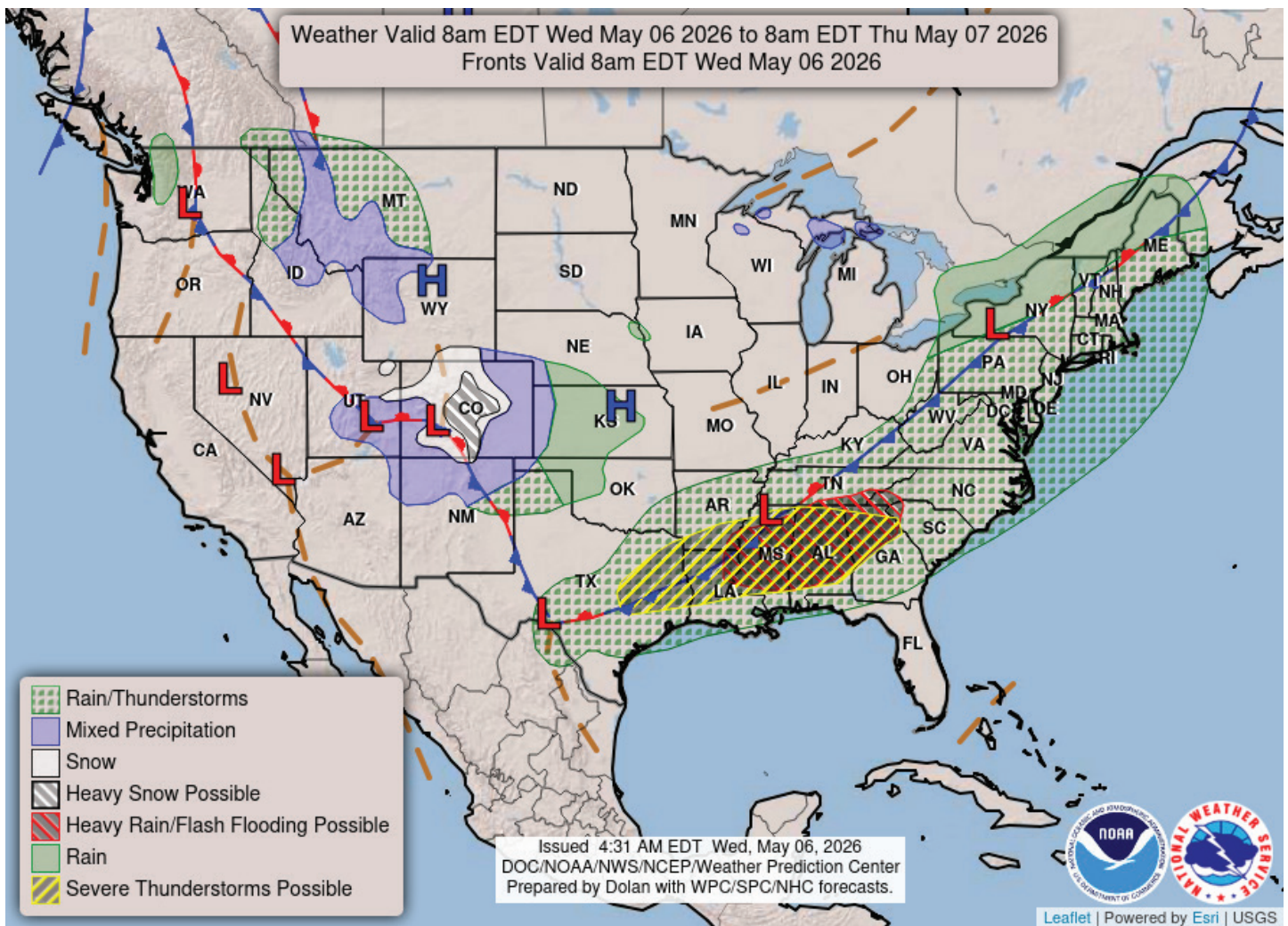
Precip to date in May.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 4.62

Precip Year to Date: 3.12

Sunset Tonight: 8:44 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:11 am





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## Today in Weather History

May 6th, 1988: High winds produced blowing dust, reducing visibility to less than one-half mile in north-eastern South Dakota. Wind gusts of 62 mph were reported at Aberdeen. A small building was destroyed in Gettysburg, and a building was damaged near Timber Lake. Winds also blew over a tractor-trailer, injuring a man in Okaton.

May 6th, 1999: High winds of 35 to 50 mph, gusting to over 60 mph, blew across central and north central South Dakota from the early morning to the late evening hours, causing some damage. In Pierre, the high winds blew a large tree down and tore loose a piece of the sheet metal cornice atop a downtown building. The high winds knocked the centerfield lights to the ground at the Legion Memorial Park in Mobridge. In Jones County, a semi-tractor trailer was blown over and damaged. A fishing tournament at Lake Oahe had to be postponed due to the high winds.

1933 — Charleston, SC, was deluged with 10.57 inches of rain, an all- time 24 hour record for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1975 — A massive tornado hit Omaha, NE, killing three persons, injuring 133 others, and causing 150 million dollars damage. The tornado struck during the late afternoon moving northeastward through the industrial and residential areas of west central Omaha, and lifting over the northern section of the city. The twister, which cut a swath ten miles long and as much as a quarter of a mile wide, was the mostly costly in U.S. history up til that time. (David Ludlum)

1987 — Eighteen cities in California and Oregon reported record high temperatures for the date. Highs of 91 degrees at Portland OR, 101 degrees at Medford OR, and 104 degrees at Sacramento CA, were the warmest of record for so early in the season. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — A major storm brought high winds to the western half of the country. A wind gust of 74 mph at Pueblo CO broke their May record established just four days earlier, and winds in the Arapahoe Ski Basin area of Colorado reached 85 mph. In North Dakota, the high winds reduced visibilities to near zero in blowing dust closing many roads. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Sixteen cities in the north central U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Morning lows of 17 at Bismarck ND and 26 at Minneapolis MN were the coldest of record for so late in the season. A reading of 43 degrees at the start of the Kentucky Derby was the coldest in 115 years of records. Light snow was reported in the Upper Midwest, with an inch reported at Chicago IL. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 — Snow and high winds prevailed behind a Pacific cold front crossing the northwestern U.S. Wind gusts above 50 mph were reported in southeastern Idaho, and heavy snow blanketed the Cascade Mountains of Washington State, with twelve inches reported at Stampede Pass. (The National Weather Summary)

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Daily Devotion

## Time Well Spent

**Discover how slowing down to meditate on  
God's Word can deepen your walk with Christ.**

Joshua 1:6-8: 6 ``Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

7 ``Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.

8 ``This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

God told Joshua how the Israelites would take possession of the Promised Land. He included a vital instruction: to meditate on His law day and night and to obey everything it said.

The psalmist teaches us the importance of meditating on Scripture (Psalms 1:2-3). We should dwell on it daily, focusing our attention on God's character and ways. This involves prayerfully reading His Word, being silent before Him so we can hear His voice, and applying biblical truth.

Of course, these things don't just happen. Distractions take away from our ability to focus, so it is necessary to set aside a time when we can be still and listen. Consider the benefits of doing so. Meditation ...

Quiets our spirit and provides space for God to purify us.

Improves our discernment about direction for our life.

Sharpens our awareness of God's presence.

Develops our hunger for the Word so we can gain deeper understanding of Jesus and greater sense of His power.

Meditation may require you to get up earlier or surrender some free time during the day. But living a Christ-centered life filled with peace and joy depends upon our commitment to focus our mind and heart on Him regularly.

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



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## Winning Numbers

### MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.05.26

14 20 23 30 55 2

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 30 Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.05.26

12 22 50 51 55 10

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$215,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 15 Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.04.26

9 10 12 50 52 3

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$24,710,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 30 Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.02.26

6 11 21 22 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$79,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 45 Mins 18 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.04.26

20 32 35 51 60 7

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 14 Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.04.26

30 36 42 60 63 13

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$30,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 14 Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)



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

### **Indigenous people honor and raise awareness for relatives who are missing or have been killed**

By SAVANNAH PETERS and NANCY MARIE SPEARS Associated Press/The Imprint

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Across the country, Indigenous people are gathering this week to honor loved ones who are missing or have been killed and to call for better data collection, law enforcement response and reforms to make their communities safer.

From U.S. state capitols and tribal community spaces to the streets of major cities, hundreds of marches, rallies, talking circles, self-defense classes and candlelight vigils are planned for the week of May 5, which is observed as a national day of awareness for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples movement.

The day reflects both the collective grief and the resilience of Indigenous communities, where the federal government has a legal responsibility to ensure public safety. All too often, resources to prevent and respond to violence are in short supply.

Many events call for participants to wear red, a color that has become synonymous with honoring Indigenous victims of violence in the U.S. and Canada.

A hidden crisis

Native Americans face disproportionate rates of violence in the U.S., a crisis that advocates say is rooted in the systematic removal of Native people from their land and the federal government's efforts to rid them of their cultures.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Native Americans and Alaska Natives are more than twice as likely than the general population to be victims of a violent crime, and Native women are twice as likely to be victims of homicide. At the end of 2025, the FBI's National Crime Information Center recorded just under 1,500 active federal cases involving missing Native Americans.

Experts say that's likely an undercount because of jurisdictional confusion, racial misclassification and inconsistent data collection.

Abigail Echo-Hawk, director of the Urban Indian Health Institute, said that there's been progress in accounting for the true scope of the crisis but that law enforcement resources have been slow to follow.

"Don't look at the numbers and feel sorry for us," Echo-Hawk said, a citizen of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma. "Look at the numbers and say, 'How do we ensure that this doesn't continue?'"

Federal action

In 2020, President Donald Trump signed Savanna's Act and the Not Invisible Act into law, both aimed at solving and preventing cases of violent crime in Indian Country with improved data collection and law enforcement reforms.

But implementation of those laws has been slow and erratic. Under the Biden administration in 2022, a federal commission to study the crisis convened two years behind schedule. Its extensive recommendations — ranging from expanding authority for tribal law enforcement to improving communication with the victims' families — were made public in 2023.

The recommendations were removed from government websites last year amid the Trump administration's purge of initiatives it associates with diversity, equity and inclusion.

Federally recognized tribes are sovereign nations within the U.S.

Meanwhile, Trump's Department of Justice has continued its Operation Not Forgotten initiative, surging dozens of FBI agents, analysts and other personnel to field offices near tribal lands on a rotating, temporary basis. The FBI says those assignments have yielded more than 200 arrests and convictions in homicide, domestic abuse and sexual assault cases since 2023.

On Tuesday, the U.S. Interior Department announced the creation of a task force to prevent violent crime in Indian Country. Among other things, officials say the effort aligns investigative resources to improve case management and prosecution outcomes, while refocusing efforts on solving missing persons and

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homicide cases.

Michael Henderson, director of public safety for the Navajo Nation, said there are “pros and cons” to a bigger FBI footprint in Indian Country. Federal officers can bring fresh eyes and high-tech forensic tools to cold cases. But Henderson said many of these agents arrive with little experience working in tribal communities or investigating violent crime.

“More manpower from the FBI on reservations, that’s not a good solution in my mind,” Henderson said, adding that federal funds could be better spent staffing and funding tribal police departments.

Families advocate for their relatives

At a Saturday prayer walk in Colorado Springs, Colorado, marchers chanted, “No more stolen lives on stolen land” and carried signs with the photos and stories of dozens of Indigenous people who have been killed or have disappeared.

Among the marchers was Denise Porambo. Her daughter, Destiny Jeriann Whiteman, was killed last August where she lived on the Ute Mountain Ute reservation in southwest Colorado. She was 24 and had an infant son.

“It hurts every day,” Porambo said, her voice breaking.

Crowds gathered in Madison, Wisconsin, and in Duluth, Minnesota, to raise awareness. Outside City Hall in Duluth, trees were decorated with red dresses.

In Oklahoma, family members and supporters donned red shirts and ribbon skirts to mark the day, and carried photographs of their loved ones. Some painted red hands over their mouths — a symbol of solidarity.

At a prayer walk in Albuquerque, marchers shouted the names of Emily Pike, Ella Mae Begay, Zachariah Shorty and others who have gone missing or been killed.

Jessica Montoya drove three hours from the Jicarilla Apache Nation to highlight her son Jamian Reval’s 2023 killing. He was 16 when family members say he was robbed and shot by a classmate on the first day of his junior year of high school.

“He had a lot of goals. He had a lot to look forward to,” Montoya said, carrying a sign calling for an end to gun violence.

Navigating a maze of tribal and federal law enforcement agencies has left Montoya and her family feeling ignored and left out, compounding their grief.

In the absence of a nationwide strategy for handling these cases, advocates in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples movement say the burden of searching for loved ones and investigating their disappearances often falls to family members.

Grace Bulltail’s 18-year-old niece, Kaysera Stops Pretty Places, was found dead several days after she disappeared from her home on the Crow Reservation in Montana in August 2019. Her family organizes marches, vigils and courthouse demonstrations and tirelessly pesters law enforcement for action and answers.

No arrests have been made, and the cause of death was ruled inconclusive.

“We have had to advocate for ourselves and for Kaysera every step of the way,” Bulltail said.

## Global shares advance and oil prices slip as hopes grow for ending war with Iran

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Global shares mostly gained on Wednesday and oil prices fell as hopes rose for progress in ending the war with Iran.

France’s CAC 40 added 1.6% to 8,192.68, while the Germany DAX rose 1.5% to 24,767.57. Britain’s FTSE 100 surged 1.9% to 10,408.98. U.S. futures gained 0.6%.

News that Iranian officials were traveling to China ahead of a summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping lifted market sentiment.

Trump said he was pausing a U.S. effort to guide stranded ships out of the Strait of Hormuz to allow space for finalizing a deal with Iran on ending the war. The American forces’ blockade of Iranian ports

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remains in place.

In Asian trading, South Korea's Kospi gained 6.5% to 7,384.56, surpassing the 7,000 level for the first time. Samsung Electronics' stock jumped 14% in a rally driven by expectations of strong growth in artificial intelligence.

Shares in SK Hynix, another major Korean computer chipmaker, shot up nearly 11%. Both Samsung and SK Hynix are major manufacturers of the memory chips vital for AI applications.

Tokyo trading was closed for a holiday.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 gained 1.3% to 8,793.60. Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 1.2% to 26,213.78, while the Shanghai Composite index rose 1.2% to 4,160.17.

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude slipped \$3.55 to \$98.72 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, lost \$3.43 to \$106.44 a barrel, extending declines that erased big jumps earlier in the week. The prices still remain well above their roughly \$70 price before the war with Iran began.

A ceasefire with Iran is in effect, U.S. military leaders say, although uncertainties clearly remain. The U.S. military is trying to force open a path in the Strait of Hormuz, which would allow oil tankers to resume shipments from the Persian Gulf.

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar inched down to 156.18 Japanese yen from 157.89 yen. The euro cost \$1.1752, up from \$1.1693.

## Russia snubs Ukraine's unilateral ceasefire, firing dozens of drones

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia fired dozens of drones at Ukraine in nighttime attacks, Ukrainian officials said Wednesday, disregarding a unilateral ceasefire announced by Kyiv that began at midnight.

The Russian Defense Ministry claimed that Ukraine hadn't abided by its own ceasefire, saying that air defenses shot down 53 Ukrainian drones over Russian regions, the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula and the Black Sea between Tuesday evening and dawn Wednesday.

Five people were killed by a Ukrainian drone strike on the city of Dzhankoi in Crimea, according to Russia-installed Gov. Sergei Aksyonov. He reported the casualties just after midnight, but posted about the attack itself more than 90 minutes earlier.

There had been no official sign from Moscow that it would heed Kyiv's ceasefire, and there was little hope for a pause in hostilities as the war stretches into its fifth year following Russia's all-out invasion of its neighbor. U.S.-led diplomatic efforts to stop the war over the past year have come to nothing.

On Tuesday, Russian drone and missile strikes on Ukraine killed 27 people and wounded 120 others, all of them civilians, according to Ukrainian Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko. The war has killed more than 15,000 civilians, according to the United Nations.

Both sides have kept up long-range strike campaigns. On the roughly 1,250-kilometer (800-mile) front line, meanwhile, Russia's bigger army remains engaged in a slow-moving and costly slog against Ukraine's drone-heavy defenses.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had announced the unilateral ceasefire after Russia said it would hold its own pause of hostilities over two days later this week while it marks the 81st anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. The Ukrainian leader said any breach of the ceasefire would trigger a military response.

European officials had welcomed Ukraine's unilateral move as a goodwill gesture illustrating its readiness for a peace settlement.

Russian forces launched 108 drones and three missiles overnight, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said, with attacks continuing throughout the night and into Wednesday morning.

"Moscow once again ignored a realistic and fair call to end hostilities, supported by other states and international organizations," Sybiha said in a post on X.

Moscow's proposal to stop fighting on Friday and Saturday follows a pattern of Russia declaring short unilateral ceasefires during the war timed to coincide with various holidays, most recently Orthodox Easter.



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Those suspensions of combat don't produce any tangible results amid deep mistrust between the warring sides.

Sybiha said Russia's actions exposed its calls for a separate ceasefire around May 9 as insincere. "Putin only cares about military parades, not human lives," he said.

The diplomat called for increased international pressure on Moscow, including new sanctions, diplomatic isolation, accountability measures for war crimes and expanded military and civilian support for Ukraine.

## South Carolina joins Southern redistricting push after US Supreme Court ruling on minority districts

By JEFFREY COLLINS, TRAVIS LOLLER, KIM CHANDLER and DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — An election-year redistricting movement has spread to South Carolina as Republicans attempt to redraw majority-Black congressional districts that have suddenly become susceptible because of a U.S. Supreme Court ruling upending protections for minority voters.

Urged on by President Donald Trump, South Carolina Republicans are attempting to redraw a district long held by a Black Democratic lawmaker in their quest for a clean sweep of the state's seven congressional seats.

Lawmakers already are meeting in special sessions in Alabama and Tennessee in a bid to change their U.S. House districts. And Louisiana lawmakers also are making plans for new congressional districts after the Supreme Court last week struck down the state's current map.

The high court's ruling said Louisiana relied too heavily on race when creating a second Black-majority House district as it attempted to comply with the Voting Rights Act. The ruling significantly altered a decades-old understanding of the law, giving Republicans grounds to try to eliminate majority-Black districts that have elected Democrats.

The ruling revved up an already intense national redistricting battle ahead of a November midterm election that will determine control of the closely divided House.

Since Trump prodded Texas to redraw its U.S. House districts last year, a total of eight states have adopted new congressional districts. From that, Republicans think they could gain as many as 13 seats while Democrats think they could gain up to 10 seats. But some of the new districts could be competitive in November, meaning the parties may not get all they sought.

South Carolina to test its will for redistricting

Democratic U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn has represented South Carolina's 6th Congressional District since it was redrawn to favor minority voters in 1992. He's running for an 18th term. But it could get harder for him to win reelection if Republicans redraw his district.

Leaders in the state House and Senate said a redistricting effort needs to start with a two-thirds vote in each chamber. The issue could come up as soon as Wednesday. But if only a few Republicans aren't on board, it can't succeed.

Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey has warned that redistricting could backfire because of thin political margins, resulting in a second Democrat in the U.S. House. Massey told reporters Tuesday that he had a cordial conversation with Trump about redistricting, each laying out their concerns.

The state's primaries are June 9 and early voting starts in three weeks.

Alabama looks at setting a new primary

The House on Wednesday could debate legislation that would allow Alabama to hold a special congressional primary, if the Supreme Court clears the way for the state to change its U.S. House districts.

In light of the court's ruling on Louisiana's districts, Alabama officials have asked courts to set aside a judicial order to use a U.S. House map that includes two districts with a substantial number of Black voters. Republicans instead want to use a map passed in 2023 by the Legislature that could help the GOP win at least one of those two seats currently held by Democrats.

Alabama's primaries are scheduled for May 19. If the Supreme Court grants the state's request after or too close to the primary, the legislation under consideration would ignore the results of that primary and

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direct the governor to schedule a new primary under the revised districts.

Democrats denounced the legislation as a Republican power grab that harkens back to the state's shameful history of denying Black residents equal rights and representation.

Republicans are "working to secure an electoral victory by taking Alabama back to the Jim Crow era, and we won't go back," Democratic U.S. Rep. Terri Sewell told a crowd gathered outside the Alabama Statehouse.

Tennessee plan targets Memphis district

Republican Gov. Bill Lee called Tennessee lawmakers into a special session to consider a plan urged by Trump that could break up the state's lone Democratic-held U.S. House district, centered on the majority-Black city of Memphis. Republicans didn't say much about the plan Tuesday.

But as the Senate began work Tuesday, shouts of "shame, shame, shame" could be heard inside the chamber from protesters gathered in the hallways. On the chamber floor, Sen. Raumesh Akbari, a Black Democrat from Memphis, called the redistricting "an act of hate."

Martin Luther King III sent a letter to Tennessee legislative leaders expressing "grave concern" about the plan to divide Memphis, saying the move could undermine the work for voting rights carried out by his father, Martin Luther King Jr.

The candidate qualifying period in Tennessee ended in March, and the primary election is scheduled for Aug. 6.

Thousands had already voted in Louisiana

After last week's Supreme Court decision, Republican Gov. Mike Landry postponed the state's May 16 congressional primary to allow time for lawmakers to approve new U.S. House districts. State Sen. Caleb Kleinpeter, a Republican, said a redistricting committee he leads plans to hold a public hearing Friday.

Louisiana voters had already sent in more than 41,000 absentee ballots by last Thursday, when Landry suspended the House primaries, according to the Secretary of State's Office. That's about a third of all the absentee ballots sent out to voters. Around 19,000 were from registered Democrats, 17,000 from registered Republicans and the remainder belonged to neither party.

Democrats and civil rights groups have filed several lawsuits challenging the suspension of Louisiana's congressional primary.

## China's top envoy tells his Iranian counterpart a 'comprehensive ceasefire' is needed

By E. EDUARDO CASTILLO Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China's foreign minister called for a comprehensive ceasefire in the Iran war and said his country was "deeply distressed" by the conflict that has lasted two months.

Wang Yi made the comments Wednesday after meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who was visiting Beijing for the first time since the war with the U.S. and Israel started Feb. 28.

The Chinese comments could inject new energy into stalled efforts to push for an agreement between the United States and Iran that would end the war. They followed an earlier statement by U.S. President Donald Trump that he was pausing his short-lived U.S. effort to guide stranded vessels to guide commercial ships out of the Strait of Hormuz in hopes that a deal could be finalized.

Iran's effective closure of the strait, a vital waterway through which major oil and gas supplies, fertilizer and other petroleum products passed before the war, has sent fuel prices skyrocketing, rattled the global economy and put enormous economic pressure on countries including major powers like China.

"We believe that a comprehensive ceasefire is urgently needed, that a resumption of hostilities is not acceptable, and that it is particularly important to remain committed to dialogue and negotiations," Wang said, according to a video of the meeting.

The Chinese foreign minister said the conflict "has already lasted for more than two months. It has not only caused serious losses to the Iranian people, but also had a severe impact on regional and global

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peace. China is deeply distressed by this.”

China’s close economic and political ties to Tehran give it a unique position of influence. The Trump administration is pressing China to use that relationship to urge the Islamic Republic to open the Strait of Hormuz.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio expressed a hope that Beijing would reiterate the need for Iran to release its chokehold on the strait, which would deny its main source of leverage as Trump demands a major rollback of Tehran’s disputed nuclear program.

China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said Beijing has made clear that the relevant sides must act “with prudence” and resolve the conflict through dialogue in order to restore peace. He added that China has been actively promoting peace talks and will continue to do so.

Araghchi’s visit comes a week before Trump is expected to arrive in Beijing for a high-profile summit. The May 14-15 trip with Chinese President Xi Jinping would be Trump’s first visit to China during his second term and the first by a U.S. president since Trump visited in 2017.

“I hope the Chinese tell him what he needs to be told,” Rubio said during a White House briefing Tuesday. “And that is that what you are doing in the strait is causing you to be globally isolated. You’re the bad guy in this.”

## Local elections could hasten the exit of Britain’s embattled prime minister

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British voters will cast ballots Thursday in elections that could hasten the end of Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s troubled term and confirm that an increasingly fractured United Kingdom has entered an era of messy multiparty politics.

Starmer’s center-left Labour Party is expected to take a battering in elections for local authorities across England and for semiautonomous legislatures in Scotland and Wales.

With the prime minister’s popularity in the doldrums from a weak economy and repeated questions about his judgment, rival parties are framing Thursday’s votes as a referendum on Starmer and his 2-year-old government. “Vote Reform, Get Starmer Out” is the campaign slogan of the hard-right party Reform UK.

The next national election does not have to be held until 2029, but a wipeout on Thursday could tip a restive Labour Party into revolt against its unpopular leader.

Less than two years after winning a landslide election victory, “Keir Starmer has become a vessel for people’s disappointment (and) disillusionment,” said Luke Tryl of pollster More in Common.

Polling day could be Starmer’s judgment day

Starmer’s popularity has plunged after repeated missteps since he became prime minister in July 2024. His government has struggled to deliver promised economic growth, repair tattered public services and ease the cost of living — tasks made harder by the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran, which has choked off oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz.

The prime minister has been further hurt by his disastrous decision to appoint Peter Mandelson, a scandal-tarnished friend of Jeffrey Epstein, as Britain’s ambassador to Washington.

Forecasters suggest Labour will lose well over half of the 2,500 seats it is defending on English local councils. It is expected to lose votes to parties on both left and right — especially to the Green Party in London and Reform UK in working-class, former Labour strongholds in England’s north.

“These elections are a perilous, perilous moment for Keir Starmer,” said Tony Travers, professor in the Department of Government at the London School of Economics. He said that after a series of policy U-turns and in an economy where “there isn’t much money to spend on anything ... his opponents are lining up.”

Starmer has already survived one crisis in February, when some Labour lawmakers, including the party’s leader in Scotland, urged him to quit over the Mandelson appointment.

An election rout could trigger a snap leadership challenge from a high-profile rival such as Health Secretary Wes Streeting, former Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner or Greater Manchester Mayor Andy



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Burnham. Any challenger would need the support of 80 lawmakers, one-fifth of the party in the House of Commons, to trigger a contest. In Burnham's case he would have to win election to Parliament before he could take over.

Alternately, Starmer could face pressure from the party to set a timetable for his departure after an orderly leadership contest.

"His parliamentary party are unsure as to whether now is the right time to unseat him," said Tim Bale, professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London. "So there might be a stay of execution."

But, Bale added, "it's a case of when rather than if he goes."

Polls point to fragmented politics and a fractured country

For decades, Labour losses would have been good news for its main rival, the right-of-center Conservative Party. But the Conservatives are tarnished by 14 tumultuous years in power that ended in 2024. In these elections, it's Nigel Farage-led Reform UK, the left-leaning Greens and nationalist Welsh and Scottish parties that will likely be the main beneficiaries.

Opponents have heightened their scrutiny of Reform and the Greens in an effort to stop their rise. Farage is facing questions over a 5 million pound (\$6.8 million) donation from a cryptocurrency billionaire that he accepted in 2024 but did not declare. He says it was a personal gift.

The environmentalist Greens, who have stressed their pro-Palestinian credentials under self-described "eco-populist" leader Zack Polanski, have fired several candidates for antisemitic social media posts.

Travers said Britain is moving from being a "two-and-a-half party system" — with the Liberal Democrats as the usual third party — "to something more like a five-party one."

That is excellent news for Rhun ap Iorwerth, who leads Plaid Cymru (the Party of Wales) and stands a strong chance of leading that country's semiautonomous government.

"The old politics is gone," he said. "Labour is not going to win this election."

A possible seismic shift on the horizon

Labour has dominated Welsh politics for a century and has held power in Cardiff since the Welsh government was established in 1999. Polls suggest Labour will be pushed into third place behind Plaid Cymru and Reform UK, who are running neck-and-neck.

A Plaid victory would give three of the four parts of the U.K. pro-independence leaders. Northern Ireland is governed by Irish nationalist party Sinn Féin in a power-sharing arrangement with the pro-British Democratic Unionist Party.

The Scottish National Party, which has governed in Edinburgh since 2007, says it will push for a new referendum on independence if it wins a majority on Thursday. Scottish voters rejected leaving the U.K. in a 2014 vote.

Plaid Cymru says a secession vote isn't on the agenda in the next few years, though independence remains the party's ultimate goal. In the short term, it wants more power to raise taxes and more control over how money is spent.

"We need a fundamental redesign of Britain," ap Iorwerth said. "This is an unequal union."

## US military strike on alleged drug boat kills 3 in the eastern Pacific

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military launched another strike Tuesday on a vessel suspected of transporting drugs in the eastern Pacific Ocean, killing three men.

The attack came a day after U.S. forces struck an alleged drug boat in the Caribbean Sea, killing two people.

The Trump administration's campaign of blowing up alleged drug-trafficking vessels in Latin American waters has persisted since early September and killed at least 191 people in total.

Despite the Iran war, the strikes have ramped up again in recent weeks, showing that the administration's aggressive measures to stop what it calls "narcoterrorism" in the Western Hemisphere are not letting up. The military has not provided evidence that any of the vessels were carrying drugs.

The attacks began as the U.S. built up its largest military presence in the region in generations and

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came months ahead of the raid in January that captured then-Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. He was brought to New York to face drug trafficking charges and has pleaded not guilty.

In the attack Tuesday, U.S. Southern Command once again said it had targeted the alleged drug traffickers along known smuggling routes. It posted a video on X showing a boat cruising along the water before a huge explosion left the vessel in flames.

President Donald Trump has said the U.S. is in "armed conflict" with cartels in Latin America and has justified the attacks as a necessary escalation to stem the flow of drugs into the United States and fatal overdoses claiming American lives. But his administration has offered little evidence to support its claims of killing "narcoterrorists."

Critics, meanwhile, have questioned the overall legality of the boat strikes.

## Antarctica's tourism boom raises concerns about contamination and disease

By SAM McNEIL Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Driven in part by fears that the frozen landscapes of Antarctica may be irreversibly melting away because of climate change, tourism to the bottom of the world is soaring. And experts warn that with more visitors comes an increased risk of contamination, illness and other damage to the continent.

While visitor numbers are still small — in part due to the high costs and time it can take — they are growing so fast that scientists and environmentalists are sounding alarms.

A deadly outbreak of the rare hantavirus aboard a Dutch ship on a weekslong polar cruise has brought attention to the growing tourism trend.

Most expeditions head to the Antarctic Peninsula, one of the fastest-warming places in the world. From 2002 to 2020, roughly 149 billion metric tons (164 billion tons) of Antarctic ice melted per year, according to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

A common route is to voyage south from Argentina toward Antarctica before heading north up the coast of Africa — the same route taken by the cruise ship MV Hondius.

"The sites you will see in Antarctica are extremely unique and not replicable anywhere else on the planet — the whales, the seals, the penguins, the icebergs — it's all really stunning and it makes a huge impression on people," said Claire Christian, executive director of the environmental group Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition.

Explosive growth of trips to the southern continent

In 2024, more than 80,000 tourists touched down on the vast ice-cloaked continent and 36,000 viewed from the safety of ships, according to data collected by the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators.

The International Union of Concerned Scientists estimates that tourism to Antarctica has grown tenfold in the past 30 years.

That number could rise further in the next decade as costs fall with more ice-capable hulls hitting the water and technological advances, said Hanne Nielsen, a senior lecturer of Antarctic law at the University of Tasmania. Her colleagues at the university estimate the annual figure could triple or quadruple to over 400,000 visits in that time.

Some tourists come to Antarctica for "last chance tourism," knowing the melting landscape is rapidly changing, Nielsen said.

Risks of contamination

Officials have not indicated any evidence of contamination from the MV Hondius.

However, flocks of migratory birds brought avian flu from South America to Antarctica in recent years, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That outbreak prompted the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators and others to harden rules for tourists' conduct and hygiene to protect visitors from being contaminated. To protect the fragile ecosystem from invasive species large and microscopic, visitors are told to stay away from animals and

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to avoid touching the ground with anything but their feet.

"There are rules that people are bound by when they're heading south," Nielsen said, describing her five voyages as a former guide. Crews and passengers use vacuums, disinfectants and brushes to scrub shoes and equipment clear of bugs, feathers, seeds and microbe-carrying dirt.

"Between the tongues and the laces of the boots you can find a lot of things," she said.

Cruise ships have been struck by outbreaks of diseases like norovirus, which can spread quickly in a ship's close quarters. In 2020, a COVID-19 outbreak on the Diamond Princess turned the cruise ship into an incubator for the then-mysterious virus.

Hantavirus usually spreads by inhaling contaminated rodent droppings.

The Hondius' island hopping cruise

The World Health Organization said Tuesday that MV Hondius left Ushuaia, Argentina, on April 1 and visited Antarctica and several isolated islands.

WHO is investigating possible human-to-human transmission on the cruise ship, said Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO's director of epidemic and pandemic preparedness. Officials suspect the first infected person likely contracted the virus before boarding, she said, and officials have been told there are no rats on board.

Antarctica is governed by the Antarctic Treaty, which in 1959 enshrined the territory as a scientific preserve used only for peaceful purposes. A series of rules that followed "aim to ensure that all visits, regardless of location, do not adversely impact the Antarctic environment or its scientific and aesthetic values," according to the treaty's secretariat.

Companies and scientific ventures voluntarily comply with biosecurity guidelines and submit environmental impact assessments for Antarctic operations.

The treaty was written when tourism numbers were much lower, Christian said.

"Activity needs to be regulated appropriately, as you would with any of the world's sensitive and precious ecological sites," Christian said from Hiroshima, Japan, where she was preparing for an Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting. There she'll join calls to strengthen protections for Antarctica's penguins, whales, seabirds, seals and krill — tiny creatures at the base of the food chain.

For now, the lure of the frozen frontier continues to draw visitors.

"You can put a footprint in Antarctica and it's still there 50 years later," Christian said.

## The Venice Biennale previews in chaos as war follows art into the world's oldest exhibition

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

VENICE, Italy (AP) — The Venice Biennale previewed its 61st and most chaotic edition ever on Tuesday, just days after the unprecedented resignation of its jury over the participation of Israel and Russia undermined the very structure of the world's oldest contemporary art exhibition.

Tensions were evident as Ukrainian artists stood by a truck that had brought a statue of an origami deer from the war-ravaged eastern front to the Biennale's storied Giardini. Just meters (yards) away, a handful of participants in the Russian Pavilion danced to house music played by an Argentine DJ.

At the same time, a group of Palestinians marched through the Giardini wearing the names of artists who have been killed in Gaza. More protests were expected as the preview week continued.

Chaos puts national pavilions in the spotlight

Few inside the Biennale were surprised that global politics were spilling over into the international art exhibition, putting new pressure on its structure of national pavilions alongside a curated exhibition and raising old questions: Is the representation of nations outmoded in a globalized system where artists often operate internationally, and does it give states an undue platform for propaganda?

"I think what has been contested very much is the existence of the nation state within the space of the exhibition," said Marie Helene Pereira, one of the five curators of the main exhibition "In Minor Keys," who have taken up the mantle of the late curator Koyo Kouoh.



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"We can see how much that can bring tension, especially in the midst of the political chaos (in which) we find ourselves," Pereira said.

"It's important to be able to rethink structure, rethink institutions, in a way that allows for them to cater more to artists and artmaking," Pereira said, adding that didn't mean that art should be devoid of politics.

Ahead of its resignation, the jury had said it would not award prizes to countries whose leaders were under investigation by the International Court of Justice. The move isolated Russia and Israel.

Israeli artist Belu-Simion Fainaru said he thought the jury's decision was "a fair one."

"I should be treated as an equal artist, and I should not be discriminated because of my race, that I am a Jew, and not because of my nationality or passport. I have to be seen as I am. I am an artist that wants to show my art, and I have the right to be evaluated," he said standing in front of his installation rooted in the Kabbalah.

The Biennale, he said, should be "a place where you can feel safe to create and do whatever you believe in."

Giardini on the front lines

Ukrainian artist Zhanna Kadryova created "The Origami Deer" to take the place of a nuclear-capable Soviet fighter jet that had long stood in a park in Pokrovsk, in the Donbas region of Ukraine.

Curators of the Ukrainian Pavilion — its third since Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion — evacuated the statue from the park in 2024, with the front line just 5 kilometers (3 miles) away.

Co-curator Ksenia Malykh fiercely opposed the Biennale's decision to allow Russia to open its pavilion, calling it "a false attempt to stay neutral."

"You can't stay neutral in these times. You can't be neutral when people are dying every day because of Russians," Malykh said. "They say that art is beyond politics, but they are using art as a weapon in a hybrid war in Europe."

Instead of talking about Russian art, Malykh said, the focus is on the statement of their participation. "I am absolutely sure this was their goal," she said.

The Russian Pavilion will only be open to visitors during previews that run through Friday and will not be open to the public after the Biennale opens for its 6 ½-month run on Saturday. The pavilion has organized a series of performers for this week, and had an open bar upstairs near a flowering tree. Curators were not available for interviews.

Russia's opening cost the Venice Biennale 2 million euros (\$2.3 million) in EU funding over three years. The Biennale has defended the decision, saying that any country with relations with Italy was free to open a pavilion, a position that has put it at odds with the government in Rome.

Still, the official catalog had a place-saving entry where the Russian text should have been, noting that Russia's participation was "under review" at the time of publication.

No jury, no Golden Lions

Without a jury of peers, there will be no Golden Lion for best national pavilion or best participant in the main curated exhibition — a highly prestigious prize has led some to liken the Biennale to the Olympics of art.

Instead, visitors to both the Giardini and Arsenale sites will choose two winners, for best national participant and best main show participant, to be awarded Nov. 22, the closing day of the Biennale.

The Ukrainian artist Malykh said that lack of professionally awarded prizes damaged the Biennale.

"It's an important moment. If the prize is given by the public, it's as if the Biennale came to Eurovision. It's not a professional institution after that," Malykh said.

## Inside the cruise ship at the center of a deadly hantavirus outbreak

By CHINEDU ASADU and ANNIE RISEMBERG Associated Press

PRAIA, Cape Verde (AP) — Footage obtained by The Associated Press of a cruise ship at the center of a rare-virus outbreak shows deserted decks and gathering areas, medical teams in protective gear, and

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a still landscape ahead as the vessel and its nearly 150 passengers and crew waited another day off the coast of West Africa.

Three passengers have died and at least four people have been sick in what health officials say is an outbreak of hantavirus, which usually spreads by inhaling contaminated rodent droppings. The World Health Organization said passengers are isolating in their cabins.

The company that operates the vessel — currently anchored in the Atlantic off Cape Verde — said it plans to move to Spain's Canary Islands once three people have been medically evacuated and put on specially equipped planes to the Netherlands. Earlier Tuesday, Spanish officials said that they were monitoring the situation and hadn't made a decision.

The MV Hondius, a Dutch ship on a weekslong polar cruise, departed April 1 from Argentina for Antarctica and several isolated islands in the South Atlantic.

"Our days have been close to normal, just waiting for authorities to find a solution," passenger Qasem Elhato, 31 — who sent AP the video footage — said via WhatsApp. "But morale on the ship is high and we're keeping ourselves busy with reading, watching movies, having hot drinks and that kind of things."

Helene Goessaert, another passenger, told Belgian broadcaster VRT that everyone on board is "in the same boat, literally."

"You don't embark on a trip with the idea that one of your fellow passengers won't make it," she said.

"We receive information at regular intervals. It is accurate. For the rest, it is a waiting game," she added. "Today we received fresh fruit and fresh vegetables. That was very important to us."

Evacuation plans are still unclear

Authorities in Cape Verde have said they sent teams of doctors, surgeons, nurses and laboratory specialists to the Hondius. They were seen in Elhato's video footage — wearing white overalls, boots and face masks as they disembarked to a smaller vessel.

Officials in Cape Verde's capital of Praia, a city of less than 200,000 people, said they have stepped up safety protocols, particularly near the port, as a precautionary measure against the rodent-borne illness — which doesn't usually spread person to person, though health authorities say it might be possible.

Elhato said passengers were wearing masks and social distancing — practices that became hallmarks of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ship operator Oceanwide Expeditions said it had implemented its highest level of response, with isolation measures, hygiene protocols and medical monitoring.

Oceanwide Expeditions said Tuesday evening that two specialized aircraft were flying to Cape Verde to evacuate two people who need urgent medical care and one person who was traveling with a German woman who died on board Saturday. They were to be taken to the Netherlands, though exactly when that would happen was not immediately clear.

Once the medical evacuation happens, the ship plans to sail to the Canary Islands, either Gran Canaria or Tenerife, a voyage of some three days, the company said in its statement, adding that "discussions are ongoing with relevant authorities."

Spanish health officials had said in an earlier statement that they were monitoring and that "the most appropriate port of call will be decided. Until then, the Ministry of Health will not adopt any decision, as we have informed the World Health Organization."

WHO notes 7 cases in all in its latest update

WHO said Tuesday that it's looking at seven cases in all — three people who have died, one critically ill passenger who was previously taken off the ship, and three on board reporting mild symptoms.

Two of the cases — a woman who died and the evacuated man — tested positive for hantavirus.

A Dutch man was the first death, on April 11. His body was taken off the vessel nearly two weeks later, on the British territory of St. Helena, some 1,200 miles (1,900 kilometers) off the African coast, according to South Africa's Department of Health.

His wife traveled by plane from St. Helena to South Africa; she collapsed at a Johannesburg airport and died at a hospital on April 26, according to WHO and the South African Department of Health.

The ship sailed on to Ascension Island, an isolated Atlantic outpost about 800 miles (1,300 kilometers)

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to the north, where a sick British man was taken off the ship and evacuated first to Ascension Island and then to South Africa by plane. He is in intensive care in a South African hospital, according to WHO.

Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO's director of epidemic and pandemic preparedness, said the organization is investigating possible human-to-human transmission on the ship, and that officials suspect the first infected person likely contracted the virus before boarding. She said officials have been told there are no rats on board.

Officials in Argentina — where hantavirus led to 28 deaths nationwide last year, according to the health ministry — said they confirmed no passengers had symptoms when the Hondius departed. Symptoms can appear up to eight weeks after exposure, officials have said.

In South Africa, authorities said they have started contact tracing — another practice used extensively in the coronavirus pandemic. But officials have emphasized that the chance of a major public health threat is low.

## Ohio set for marquee races in the fall. US Senate contest seen as crucial for control of the chamber

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Tuesday's primary in Ohio set up two marquee matchups in November — a U.S. Senate race that will help determine control of the chamber and a governor's race in which Democrats see their best chance of victory in two decades.

Another stunningly expensive Senate race — the state's third in four years — is expected as Republicans try to hold their majority during a difficult midterm cycle. Former Sen. Sherrod Brown easily defeated a challenger in the Democratic primary and will now attempt to unseat Republican Sen. Jon Husted.

Democrats are counting on Brown's previous popularity with voters to flip the seat, even as the Senate Leadership Fund — a top GOP super PAC — has pledged \$79 million to defend Husted.

Brown, who served three Senate terms before losing a bitter reelection bid in 2024, pledged at his victory party to fight for working-class Ohioans.

"No one in the Senate is standing up to these corporations who raise your prices and who game the system," Brown said as attendees booed. He continued, "Ohioans don't have anyone fighting for you, until November."

Husted, who did not hold an election night party, was unopposed in his primary, a special election to fill the remainder of the six-year Senate term that Vice President JD Vance won in 2022.

In a statement earlier in the day, Husted said Brown has no room to talk about failures in Washington.

"Over the next six months, Ohioans will hear a lot from Sherrod Brown about his so-called solutions," Husted said. "The truth is, after 32 years in Washington, he created the very problems he now blames others for. His record is indefensible."

In the governor's race, biotech billionaire Vivek Ramaswamy clinched the Republican nomination over internet personality Casey Putsch to face Dr. Amy Acton, the COVID-era health director, this fall. Acton was unopposed in the Democratic primary.

Both candidates for governor are widely known across the state

A newcomer to state politics, Ramaswamy aggressively positioned himself for the job early with the help of an endorsement from President Donald Trump — who praised him on social media Tuesday as "Young, Strong, and Smart!"

"We have an historic opportunity to lead Ohio to be the top state in the country — to raise a young family, to give our kids a world-class education and to be the state where we will revive this quaint idea that we call the American Dream," Ramaswamy told supporters in Columbus.

Acton, speaking at her victory party, said she is running because people are struggling, working harder than ever and still not getting ahead.

"I refuse to look the other way," she said.

Trump's endorsement continues to carry weight in Ohio, which favored him three times for president,



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but Ramaswamy could face headwinds amid the president's lagging popularity over the war in Iran and the rising cost of living.

Acton's high public profile and robust early fundraising have made Democrats hopeful of winning back the governor's office for the first time since 2006.

Ramaswamy, a 2024 GOP primary presidential candidate, swept onto the state's political scene early last year as a mad shuffle left an opening at the top of Republicans' statewide ticket. Then-Sen. Vance was ascending to the vice presidency and Husted — then the front-running candidate for governor — was being appointed to replace him in Washington.

With his national profile, tech industry connections and proximity to Trump, he quickly cleared a prospective field that included the sitting state attorney general, state treasurer and lieutenant governor.

National economy, COVID-19 pandemic set early tone for governor's race

But Democrats saw opportunity with the open governors seat, even as the state, a former bellwether, has tipped convincingly toward Republicans during the Trump era.

Acton became a household name across Ohio in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic as she stood alongside Republican Gov. Mike DeWine during daily coronavirus broadcasts. Her comforting presence during the crisis made her a beloved figure with many Ohioans.

Her campaign also has highlighted her rough childhood, overcoming poverty, homelessness and sexual abuse while growing up in Youngstown.

"I just think she's real," said Aaron Weiner, a Cincinnati real estate agent who voted for Acton. "She has had struggles, so I think she can empathize with people who are struggling to get ahead."

But the administration's aggressive pandemic actions — including shuttering businesses, closing schools and canceling an election — also earned Acton plenty of enemies and made her the occasional target of people upset about the policies, with some armed protesters showing up outside her home.

Ramaswamy's campaign sought to capitalize on lingering anger over the restrictions with attacks on Acton's role early in the crisis, but he also has connections to the government's response. Ramaswamy was advising the lieutenant governor at the time — Husted — on virus-related economic issues and founded a company that profited off its role developing vaccines.

Cincinnati voter Paul Mussman, who backed Ramaswamy, said he considers it an asset that he is a relative newcomer to politics.

Ramaswamy would look at issues "in a fresh way and not based on what their party affiliation is," Mussman said.

Republicans see some Democratic-held House seats as vulnerable

In the wake of a new round of redistricting that slightly favored Republicans, the state also had numerous partisan congressional primaries.

The most heated GOP primary was in the Toledo area's 9th District for the chance to take on Democratic U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur, the longest-serving woman in Congress.

Former state Rep. Derek Merrin, whom Kaptur defeated by less than a percentage point in 2024, bested an Air National Guard veteran, a healthcare industry worker, a sitting state representative and the former deputy director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Madison Sheahan.

In Democratic U.S. Rep. Greg Landsman's Cincinnati-area 1st Congressional District, which his party considers a "must-hold," the three-way Republican primary went to Eric Conroy, a CIA and Air Force veteran who was endorsed by Trump, Vance and Moreno.

Landsman beat back a primary challenge of his own Tuesday from Damon Lynch IV, the grandson of a prominent civil rights leader. Lynch had criticized Landsman for his initial vote against a war powers resolution on the war in Iran, which Landsman later followed up with a favorable vote.

In the Akron area's 13th District, Republican Carey Coleman defeated four others for the opportunity to face Democratic U.S. Rep. Emilia Sykes.

Democrats think new House maps give them a shot to regain seats

As a Trump-backed national effort to remake congressional maps in Republicans' favor was underway,

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Ohio Democrats took a could-have-been-worse approach and passed the map they were given unanimously. Now party candidates crowded congressional primaries across the state for the chance to take on sitting Republican representatives, who hold 10 of Ohio's 15 seats.

The newly redrawn 7th District in the Cleveland area attracted five Democrats hoping to challenge Republican U.S. Rep. Max Miller, a former senior Trump adviser, in November. Brian Poindexter, a union ironworker and city councilman endorsed by Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, emerged as the winner in a race that also included former Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald, the Democratic nominee for governor in 2014.

In northeast Ohio's 14th District, PR professional and former Euclid City Council member Maria Jukic won the Democratic primary over former Ohio Supreme Court Justice William O'Neill and others and will face Republican U.S. Rep. Dave Joyce.

## Takeaways from Indiana, Ohio and Michigan: Trump's flex pays off and Democrats win special election

By JONATHAN J. COOPER, HUMERA LODHI and SIMRAN PARWANI Associated Press

Elections in Indiana, Ohio and Michigan on Tuesday reinforced a picture that's becoming increasingly clear — while President Donald Trump still dominates the Republican Party, Democrats seem to have the momentum ahead of November's midterm elections.

The biggest test of Trump's power came in Indiana, where he backed primary challenges against seven Republican state senators who rejected his redistricting plan in December. Five of the president's candidates won with the help of an avalanche of cash.

Meanwhile in Michigan, a Democrat comfortably won a state Senate race in a bellwether district, the latest in a string of special election victories.

Over in Ohio, primaries locked in candidates for two major races with national implications.

Here are some takeaways from Tuesday night.

Trump's influence on the Republican Party remains strong

Trump took aim at seven Republican state senators in Indiana who opposed his plan to redraw congressional district boundaries to help the party gain seats in the U.S. House. His intervention mostly paid off.

Groups allied with the president spent more than \$8.3 million on advertising, an extraordinary surge of money into races that are typically low-profile.

Five Trump-backed challengers won. One incumbent won. A seventh contest was too close to call on Tuesday night.

The races were a test of Trump's enduring grip over his party as Republicans grow increasingly anxious about the midterm elections.

By winning most of them, Trump sent a signal to Republicans everywhere that they can still get thrown out of office if they distance themselves from him even as his popularity fades. And they show the president that he can still credibly threaten consequences for Republicans who cross him.

The Trump-targeted state senators all represent districts he carried in 2024, mostly by 20 percentage points or more.

"Historic night for Indiana as Republicans stood with me and President Trump to nominate some great America First conservatives," Republican Gov. Mike Braun, who backed Trump's challengers, wrote on social media.

Ohio races now get started in earnest

The state's primary was the wind-up to the big show. Although Ohio has become increasingly conservative, Democrats believe their path back to a U.S. Senate majority runs through the state.

They're putting their hopes behind former Sen. Sherrod Brown, who lost Ohio's other Senate seat to Bernie Moreno in 2024. Brown easily won the Democratic nomination Tuesday and will face off with Republican Sen. Jon Husted, who was appointed last year to fill the vacancy created when JD Vance became

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vice president.

The race is a special election to fill the last two years of Vance's term.

Brown has consistently done better in Ohio than Democratic presidential candidates as the state has shifted to the right. Even in 2024, when Democrat Kamala Harris lost Ohio to Trump by 11 points, Brown lost by less than 4 points.

In the campaign for governor, Republican Vivek Ramaswamy has parlayed his national name recognition, tech industry connections and alliance with Trump into a record fundraising haul. He largely ignored Republican rival Casey Putsch, focusing his rallies and television ads on the general election, and won the primary decisively.

An engineer and vehicle designer who calls himself "The Car Guy," Putsch attracted fans with provocative YouTube videos that trolled Ramaswamy and criticized national Republicans over their handling of the Epstein files, positions on energy-guzzling data centers and support for Israel.

Ramaswamy will face Amy Acton, Ohio's former public health director, who ran unopposed for the Democratic nomination. She played a key role in the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another special election, another big swing toward Democrats

Special elections have swung almost universally toward Democrats since Trump returned to the White House, and the trend continued Tuesday in central Michigan.

Democrat Chedrick Greene won a state Senate seat in a closely matched district where Harris bested Trump by less than 1 point in 2024.

It's just one special election months out from the midterms, but in a preeminent battleground like Michigan, all political tea leaves are carefully analyzed. The state has one of the top U.S. Senate contests this November and is crucial in deciding presidential elections.

The race carries outsized importance for another reason, too. Greene's victory gives Democrats a firm majority in the state Senate, while a Republican win would have deadlocked the chamber in a 19-19 tie.

The seat has been vacant for more than a year, since Democrat Kristen McDonald Rivet resigned to take a seat in Congress.

Democrats are showing surprising strength in special elections and off-year contests across the country, winning races in unexpected places and significantly narrowing the gap, even when they fall short.

There's no guarantee the trend will continue through the midterms, when turnout will be much higher, but it has nonetheless energized Democrats and spooked Republicans worried about keeping their congressional majorities.

## Spring plans meet snow in Denver as a late storm could be the season's biggest

By MEAD GRUVER and KATHY McCORMACK Associated Press

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (AP) — While some Americans were gazing at tulips and mowing lawns, people in Colorado and Wyoming were getting out their snow shovels.

A late snowstorm swept over the Rocky Mountains and into the High Plains on Tuesday, bringing heavy, wet accumulation north of Denver into southeastern Wyoming.

In Fort Collins, Colorado, heavy snow fell throughout the day on ground that was still too warm for significant accumulation. Slushy snow clung to leaves, grass and flowers, and homeowners shut off yard sprinklers lest sub-freezing temperatures damage their plumbing.

Boulder, nestled against the mountains, could get upward of a foot (30 centimeters) of snow. While the Denver area experienced mostly rain on Tuesday, that turned into snow by early evening. Forecasts predict up to 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snow is possible into Wednesday.

Even as Denver imposed lawn-watering restrictions to address what have been low mountain snows, the city was facing what may be its biggest snowfall of the season.

"We just had our driest winter on record," Kenley Bonner, a meteorologist in the weather service's Denver office, said. "We were kind of joking earlier in the season that winter's not going to come until spring,



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and it did exactly that.”

Big snow and a fast drop in temperature

More accumulation was expected with temperatures plunging overnight and the heaviest snow continuing into Wednesday morning. Warmer temperatures are expected to return Thursday, the National Weather Service said.

The state’s largest school district, Denver Public Schools, and other major districts and colleges in the region canceled Wednesday classes due to severe weather.

Accumulated snow could snap tree branches and knock out power, Bonner said. Utilities were preparing, with Xcel Energy putting 165 employees on standby across the state.

Highways remained open Tuesday for the time being. Interstate 80 across southern Wyoming, including a high-elevation stretch between Cheyenne and Laramie that closes often, was open but webcams showed heavy snowfall.

Others along northern Colorado mountain highways also showed deteriorating conditions.

The ominous forecast did not deter thousands from attending the David Guetta show at Red Rocks Amphitheatre, though organizers moved the start time up by an hour in hopes of getting fans home before the worst of the storm.

Concertgoers bundled up in furry winter coats and beanies while waiting in line to enter the outdoor venue.

Wait, snow in May?

The forecast is somewhat unusual but not unheard of.

Denver typically sees its last snowfall around April 28, although May storms do happen. The “Mile High City” recorded half an inch of snow (1.2 centimeters) on May 21, 2022, while nearby Boulder got 4.5 inches (11.4 centimeters).

Historically, Denver has seen at least five May storms with snowfall over 10 inches (25 centimeters). The biggest, in 1893, dropped 15.5 inches (39.3 centimeters). The city’s most recent double-digit snow was May 25-26, 1950, with 10.7 inches (27 centimeters).

A light dusting on June 2, 1951, was the latest time in the year it snowed.

The worsening storm caused the Colorado Rockies to reschedule two games against the New York Mets. But that happens more often than not during Denver’s spring baseball season, including four times in 2015, according to MLB.

May snows are even more common in the Wyoming capital of Cheyenne, which is almost 1,000 feet (300 meters) higher than Denver and cooler year-round. Wyoming is also windier than Colorado, pushing snow into drifts that must be re-plowed if gusts persist.

The storm is welcome during a drought, but not a fix

April was warmer than usual and short on precipitation, with Denver missing an inch of rain (2.5 centimeters) and 2.8 inches of snow (7 centimeters) last month compared to normal.

For some farmers, who have felt the pressure from Colorado’s ongoing drought, the snow was an opportunity.

Adam Jones, who runs Unsung Family Farms in Longmont, told KMGH-TV that he had planted carrot seeds days before to take advantage of the precipitation.

“You can’t get as even distribution with driplines or sprinklers,” he said. “There’s nothing like starting seeds with snow or water.”

Jones had to move the more weather-sensitive crops inside, however, with a heater to keep them warm.

But one storm won’t solve the West’s water problems.

A report from the National Drought Mitigation Center said recent precipitation helped boost topsoil moisture and reduced irrigation demands, but hasn’t changed a “mostly bleak” water outlook heading into the summer.

Wildfires also thrive in the dry conditions. Firefighters across the West have been turning to artificial intelligence and other technology to catch small fires before they expand.

Storms elsewhere, too

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The unsettled weather isn't limited to the Rockies.

Thunderstorms are expected from northeast Texas into western Tennessee, with Arkansas facing the greatest risk of large hail, damaging winds and possible tornadoes, according to the Storm Prediction Center. Isolated strong storms could also reach parts of the Northeast.

## China's top envoy meets with Iran's in Beijing as Trump pauses US effort in the Strait

By AAMER MADHANI, ADAM SCHRECK, BEN FINLEY and ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump said Tuesday evening he was pausing the U.S. effort to guide stranded vessels out of the Strait of Hormuz to allow time for a deal to end the Iran war, but that the American forces' blockade of Iranian ports would remain in place.

Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, in Beijing on Wednesday morning, the official Xinhua news agency reported, without providing further details.

It was the first time since the start of the war that Araghchi has traveled to China, whose close economic and political ties to Tehran give it a unique position of influence.

Earlier in Washington, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio had expressed hope that Beijing would reiterate to Tehran the need to release its chokehold on the strait, which is a vital waterway for global energy.

Iran's effective closure of the strait, through which major oil and gas supplies passed before the war, along with fertilizer and other petroleum products, has sent fuel prices skyrocketing and rattled the global economy. Breaking Iran's grip would deny its main source of leverage as Trump demands a major rollback of Tehran's disputed nuclear program.

US to pause latest efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz

Trump announced the decision in a social media post, saying the latest effort — which started Monday — would pause for a short period to see whether an agreement with Tehran on ending the war in the Middle East could be finalized.

Trump said the move was based "on the request of Pakistan and other Countries, the tremendous Military Success that we have had during the Campaign against the Country of Iran and, additionally, the fact that Great Progress has been made toward a Complete and Final Agreement with Representatives of Iran."

The White House did not respond to a request for comment or further detail on the progress in negotiations that Trump mentioned. They had appeared to have largely stalled in the conflict that started Feb. 28 when the United States and Israel launched strikes against Iran.

US officials say ceasefire is holding, despite attacks on UAE

The United Arab Emirates, a key U.S. ally in the Persian Gulf, said it came under attack from Iranian drones and missiles for a second day Tuesday.

But U.S. military leaders and Rubio insisted the nearly month-old ceasefire was still holding and that — while the conflict is not resolved — the initial major U.S. military operation against Iran has concluded.

Before the Trump announcement, Rubio told a White House press briefing that for peace to be achieved, Iran must agree to Trump's demands on its nuclear program and also agree to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

"We would prefer the path of peace," Rubio said.

Rubio also described the day-old U.S. push to reopen the strait to maritime traffic as a defensive operation, aimed at helping thousands of civilian sailors stranded there by the war.

"They're sitting ducks, they're isolated, they're starving, they're vulnerable," Rubio said. "At least 10 sailors have already died as a result."

On Monday, the U.S. said it had opened a lane and sunk six small Iranian boats that had threatened commercial ships. So far, only two merchant ships are known to have passed through the new U.S.-guarded route, with hundreds more bottled up in the Persian Gulf.

Iran says the new US effort violates ceasefire

U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Gen. Dan Caine, the U.S. military's top officer, told a news conference that Iran's renewed attacks had not reached the threshold of what Caine called "major combat

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operations." He said Tuesday was a "quieter" day in the strait.

At the White House, Rubio said clashes with Iran related to American efforts to reopen the straight were "defensive in nature."

"There's no shooting unless we're shot at first, OK?" Rubio said. "We're not attacking them."

Iran's parliament speaker and chief negotiator, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, signaled that Iran has yet to fully respond to the U.S. attempt to reopen the waterway.

"We know full well that the continuation of the status quo is intolerable for America; while we have not even begun yet," he said in a post on X. His statement did not mention negotiations with the U.S. that are now in the form of passing messages via Pakistan.

Disputing Washington's claim of sinking six Iranian boats, an Iranian military commander said two small civilian cargo boats were hit Monday, killing five civilians, Iran's state TV reported.

Caine, the top U.S. general who serves as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said more than 100 U.S. military aircraft are patrolling the skies over the strait. The U.S. has imposed a naval blockade on Iranian ports since April 13, depriving Tehran of oil revenue it needs to shore up its ailing economy.

The Trump administration has cited the April 8 ceasefire in asserting that the president does not have to give a formal update to Congress on the war under the War Powers Resolution. That law typically requires presidents to seek formal approval from Congress for war activities 60 days after beginning military action.

Shippers remain wary

So far, just two civilian vessels, both U.S.-flagged merchant ships, are known to have passed through the strait as part of the lane the U.S. says it has created. Shipping company Maersk said one of them, a vehicle carrier that it operates, exited the strait safely Monday with U.S. military assistance.

Former military officers who have served on the strait have said opening the waterway that is just 21 miles (34 kilometers) wide would be dangerous and highly challenging, even with military escorts, which the U.S. is not providing now.

Hapag-Lloyd AG, one of the world's largest container shipping companies, said in a statement that its risk assessment "remains unchanged" and that transits through the strait "are for the moment not possible for our ships."

Iran has attacked ships that try to transit without going through its own route in the northern part of the strait along the Iranian coastline. That involves being vetted by Iran's Revolutionary Guard and in some cases making a payment.

The U.S.-approved route goes through territorial waters of Oman to the south.

The UAE bore the brunt of Iran's retaliation

The UAE's Defense Ministry said it was responding to another Iranian drone and missile attack on Tuesday, though there were no reports of damage or casualties. A day earlier, it said Emirati air defenses had engaged 15 missiles and four drones from Iran, one of which sparked a fire at a key oil facility, wounding three Indian nationals.

The British military reported two cargo vessels ablaze off the UAE, also on Monday. On Tuesday, it reported that a cargo vessel in the strait had been struck by an "unknown projectile," without further details.

Iran denied striking the UAE "in recent days," according to a statement by Ebrahim Zolfaghari, a spokesman for Iran's joint military command, that was read Tuesday on state TV.

## Former Patriots receiver Stefon Diggs is found not guilty of assaulting his private chef

By LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Former New England Patriots receiver Stefon Diggs was found not guilty Tuesday of assaulting his personal chef in a case marked by conflicting accounts of what happened inside his home after disputes over money and their relationship.

His trial lasted two days and the jury deliberated for less than two hours.

The charges stemmed from a Dec. 2 incident at his house in Dedham, where Jamila Adams, a former



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live-in personal chef known as Mila, testified that Diggs slapped and choked her during an argument. He had pleaded not guilty to a felony strangulation charge and a misdemeanor assault and battery charge.

Diggs' attorneys said the alleged assault never happened and challenged Adams' credibility, arguing the dispute was about money or relationship tensions — including a disagreement over a planned trip to Miami — rather than a violent attack.

They pointed to financial demands she made and testimony from friends and employees who said she did not appear injured in the days after the encounter, while prosecutors argued the case rests on her account of what happened inside the home.

Defense attorney Andrew Kettlewell told jurors during closing arguments that prosecutors had not presented "a single shred of credible evidence" that an assault occurred. He said Adams made the accusation to "leverage and humiliate and to punish" Diggs.

"There was no assault, no strangulation, no incident at all on that day or any other day," he said.

Assistant District Attorney Drew Virtue said Adams' behavior should be viewed in the context of her relationship with Diggs, whom he described as "a sometimes lover, a boss, landlord," pointing to the imbalance in that relationship as a factor in how she responded afterward.

"He was an athlete, a celebrity, financially powerful, surrounded by people that were all on his payroll that liked him," Virtue said. "And when you put that all in consideration, her behavior does make sense."

He urged jurors not to dismiss Adams' testimony because she was not "a perfect witness."

"She was argumentative, avoidant, difficult. But does that mean you should throw away everything she said? No," he said, adding that jurors should give her testimony "the attention, the scrutiny, the weight it deserves."

**Money vs. motive**

Earlier in the trial, Adams became emotional on the stand while describing an alleged encounter with Diggs on in which she said he entered her room following an argument over text.

Adams, who said she lived in the NFL star's home and prepared all of his meals, testified that Diggs "smacked me with an open hand" before wrapping his arm around her neck and choking her, leaving her struggling to breathe. She described what she called a "complicated" relationship, saying it had previously been sexual but was not at the time of the alleged assault.

Adams said she met Diggs in 2022 on Instagram and that the two became friends — at times "friends with benefits," as one of his attorneys described it — before she was later hired to live in his home and prepare his meals during the football season.

Defense attorneys pressed Adams about money she said she was owed after working as a live-in chef. She testified she was paid about \$2,000 a week and believed she had not been fully compensated after being sent home. They pointed to a \$19,000 demand and said the amount increased over time, with her attorney later seeking \$5.5 million.

When asked about the \$5.5 million claim, Adams said, "I can't speak on that," and at other points told jurors, "I don't understand the question" and "I don't know how to answer the question."

At one point, Adams said Diggs had offered her \$100,000 to recant her statement to the police, but that remark was struck from the record after the judge called the attorneys to a sidebar.

At times during her second day on the stand, Adams was instructed by the judge to answer questions directly and not include additional details beyond what was asked. Portions of her responses were struck from the record as nonresponsive, with jurors told to disregard them.

"This is not an opportunity for you to interject your own narrative and evade answering questions," Judge Jeanmarie Carroll told her at one point, warning that continued nonresponsive answers could result in her testimony being stricken.

**Witnesses describe accuser's appearance after alleged attack**

Kenneth Ellis, the Dedham police officer who took Adams' initial report, testified that she arrived at the station visibly upset, telling jurors she "sat down on the bench and she was crying." He said Adams initially asked to speak with a female officer before later agreeing to give a statement and identifying Diggs as the person involved.

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Under cross-examination, Ellis said he did not observe visible injuries, collect photographs or speak with other witnesses, and that his investigation relied largely on Adams' account and text messages she provided.

Defense attorneys also sought to challenge Adams' account through testimony from people in Diggs' orbit and evidence they said reflected her demeanor in the days after the alleged incident.

His chief of staff, massage therapist, a nurse who provided IV treatments and his hairstylist all testified that they saw her around the time of the attack and that she said nothing about being assaulted.

His hairstylist, Xia Charles, testified that she spent time with Adams in New York in the days after the alleged incident and did not notice any injuries. She said Adams appeared normal and that she did not see marks on her neck or elsewhere.

Defense attorneys also showed jurors cellphone videos of Adams socializing, including clips of her in a car listening to music and dancing, which they suggested showed her demeanor in the days following the incident.

Jeanelle Sales, Diggs' chief of staff, who also goes by "Sunni," testified she saw Adams at the home on the day she alleged she was assaulted and did not see visible marks, redness or swelling on her neck or face. She said Adams appeared to be in normal spirits.

"She was walking around looking for a piece of paper and a pen to write a card — I guess, write a note to him for his birthday gift," Sales said.

Prosecutors pushed back on that testimony, suggesting the witnesses' livelihoods were tied to Diggs and that they had a financial interest in the outcome of the case.

In a written statement after the verdict was read, Diggs' attorney Mitch Schuster said "fame and financial success shouldn't strip someone of their presumption of innocence, but too often, it does exactly that."

"Professional athletes have a target on their back. When someone sees a uniform and a contract, they see leverage; they see a settlement," he said. "And they're counting on that pressure in the court of public opinion to drive a default decision to settle— regardless of the facts of the matter."

## **The Latest: Brown wins Ohio Senate Democratic primary, Ramaswamy wins GOP nomination for governor**

By The Associated Press undefined

The primary election Tuesday in Ohio set up what is expected to be one of the most expensive races for U.S. Senate this year as Republicans try to hold on to the chamber, while biotech billionaire Vivek Ramaswamy will face a challenge from the state's former health director as he seeks to keep the governor's office in GOP hands.

In what promises to be one of November's most high-profile races, former Sen. Sherrod Brown easily defeated a challenger in the Ohio Democratic primary and will now attempt to unseat Republican Sen. Jon Husted.

And in primary elections in Indiana, a majority of the incumbent GOP state senators who opposed a plan backed by President Donald Trump to gerrymander the state's congressional districts effort have lost their primaries to Trump-backed candidates. The redistricting effort hit a snag last year in Indiana when half of the state's Republican senators sided with Democrats to defeat the plan. That set up a bellwether primary season that was seen as a test of the president's sway with Republican voters.

And in Michigan, Chedrick Greene won a special election, ensuring Democrats will maintain control of the state Senate through the remainder of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's term at year's end. The race has been closely watched as a potential indicator for November's midterms in this battleground state. A Republican victory would have deadlocked the state Senate.

Here is the latest:

Greene thanks supporters after Michigan special election victory

Green made the remarks in a speech after Republican Jason Tunney conceded the race, which ensures Democrats maintain control of the state Senate through the end of the year.

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"I just want you to know who's had your back for 31 years and you can be sure I'll still have your backs in Lansing," Greene said, referring to the state's capital city.

Indiana state Senate race too close to call

An Indiana state Senate Republican primary where Trump has endorsed a challenger is too close to call.

The Associated Press has not called the race between incumbent state Sen. Spencer Deery and Paula Copenhaver, who had Trump's support. Deery held a lead of three votes, or 0.02 percentage points, late Tuesday.

Deery was one of the state lawmakers who opposed the president's call to redistrict Indiana's congressional seats to boost GOP chances in the midterms.

Chedrick Greene wins Michigan special election

His victory ensures Democrats maintain control of the state Senate through the remainder of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's term at year's end.

The firefighter and former Marine defeated Republican Jason Tunney in the race for Michigan's 35th Senate District, which includes Saginaw and Bay City and is surrounded by more rural areas. Democrats had held a one-seat majority in the chamber, putting control at stake.

The race has been closely watched as a potential indicator for November's midterms in this battleground state. The district is seen as reflective of the entire state and includes part of Saginaw County, the only county in Michigan to back the winning presidential candidate in each of the last five elections.

Brown touts his economic populist message in victory speech

The three-term U.S. senator from Ohio who lost his seat in the 2024 election thanked supporters at an election night party before pivoting to his longtime economic message.

"No one in the Senate is standing up to these corporations who raise your prices and who game the system," Brown said to boos from the crowd. "Instead, the people who are supposed to be representing you in Washington, they play the stock market, they cycle through the revolving door, they lobby for special interests the moment they leave the United States Congress."

He denounced major banks, insurance and pharmaceutical companies, as well as "big corporations" that build data centers in Ohio. He also took aim at Husted, his rival in the general election.

"Ohioans don't have anyone fighting for you, until November," Brown told the crowd.

Acton says it's time to make Ohio affordable again

Amy Acton, who won the uncontested Democratic primary in the Ohio governor's race, said during a victory speech that she was running to make the state more affordable again.

She cited rising costs for gas, electricity and child care as hurdles for families in the state. She said people were doing the right things but still struggling.

"It shouldn't be this hard," she said. "It is time to put working families first."

Indiana Republican US Rep. Jim Baird survives primary challenge

Baird, who was endorsed by Trump, won his primary in Indiana's 4th Congressional District, overcoming a tough challenge from a state lawmaker.

Baird defeated state Rep. Craig Haggard, who was endorsed by state Attorney General Todd Rokita, a vocal Trump supporter. Political newcomer John Piper also ran.

Baird is seeking a fifth term in the west-central Indiana district that has been under Republican control for more than 30 years. Baird was hospitalized in January after another vehicle struck his SUV, severely injuring his wife, who died three months later.

Indiana US senator, Turning Point USA leader tout Trump-endorsed candidate wins in Indiana

GOP U.S. Sen. Jim Banks declared it was a "Big night for MAGA in Indiana" after multiple Trump-backed challengers won their party's nomination for state senate over incumbent lawmakers who crossed the president.

Conservative activists also touted the election results.

"It's clear the Trump Team delivered," Andrew Kolvet, a spokesperson for Turning Point USA, wrote on social media. Kolvet was a confidant of the late conservative activist Charlie Kirk and producer for his



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podcast.

Kolvet also congratulated activists from the conservative youth group, who he said "worked so hard mobilizing on the ground in Indiana."

Holdman says 'it's OK' that opposing redistricting cost him his job

Indiana Sen. Travis Holdman, an 18-year senator from the Fort Wayne area, attributes his loss not to his vote against state redistricting in December but the more than \$1.3 million in attack advertising that was bankrolled by super PACs organized by Indiana Gov. Mike Braun and Sen. Jim Banks.

"Welcome to D.C. politics in Indiana because this means that's what's coming," he said. "I did what my constituents asked me to do and it cost me my job," he said. "But that's OK"

Indiana Democratic US Rep. André Carson survives primary

Carson survived his toughest primary challenge in nearly two decades in Indiana's 7th Congressional District.

Carson won the four-person primary for the Indianapolis-area district. Carson has been in Congress since winning a special election in 2008 triggered by the death of his grandmother, former Rep. Julia Carson. He is one of four Muslims in Congress.

André Carson on Tuesday defeated George Hornedo, an attorney and Democratic Party strategist who served in the Obama administration and Destiny Wells, a U.S. Army Reserve member who previously lost races for secretary of state and attorney general.

Denise Paul Hatch, who cast herself as an anti-establishment outsider, also ran. Hatch pleaded guilty to felony misconduct in office in 2024, leading to her removal as a constable for Center Township.

Indiana's Holdman told AP he was 'at peace' ahead of poll close

Late Tuesday afternoon, before he'd lost the race to hold onto his state Senate seat, Indiana's Travis Holdman said the last few months had been "a roller coaster."

He was cold and wet from the 47-degree rain outside the polling place he had visited, though a voter had just thanked him for having "a spine."

Holdman's Trump-back challenger Blake Fiechter had entered the race, quit the race and reentered, all while super PACs backed by Gov. Mike Braun and Sen. Jim Banks unloaded more than \$1.3 million in his Fort Wayne area district attacking Holdman after he voted against the White House redistricting plan.

"It's the emotions of not knowing which way it's going to go," he explained, before finishing, "I'm at peace with however it goes."

Ramaswamy to face Acton for Ohio governor

Billionaire biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy has clinched the Republican nomination for Ohio governor and will face off this fall against the state's COVID-era health director, Democrat Amy Acton.

A newcomer to state politics, Ramaswamy aggressively positioned himself for the job early with the help of endorsements from President Donald Trump and the state Republican Party.

Trump's endorsement continues to carry weight in Ohio, which favored him three times for president, but Ramaswamy could face headwinds amid the president's lagging popularity over the war in Iran and the rising cost of living.

Acton, a physician who was unopposed in her primary, has a well-known public profile and robust fundraising.

Husted secures GOP Senate nomination and Acton Democratic governor nomination

U.S. Sen. Jon Husted has secured the Republican Senate nomination in Ohio, as the incumbent braces for what is expected to be an expensive fight to hold his seat.

On the Democrats' side, Dr. Amy Acton won the party's nomination for governor. The state's COVID-era state health director moves on to a likely matchup against Republican billionaire biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, who was facing a challenger in the GOP primary.

Husted and Acton were both unopposed in their primaries.

Polls have closed in Ohio

Today's vote will decide candidates for the marquee Senate and governor's races this fall. Anyone in line

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at 7:30 p.m. has the right to vote.

Challengers in Indiana who haven't kept up fundraising pace are getting help

Outside groups have spent more than \$8 million targeting incumbents in Indiana, in some cases outspending the money those candidates raised on their own.

In state Senate District 23, Trump endorsed Paula Copenhaver against state Sen. Spencer Deery. Deery raised \$500,000, according to the latest state filings, while Copenhaver raised about \$15,000. However, outside groups spent more than \$2 million in ad reservations boosting Copenhaver, according to AdImpact.

In state Senate District 1, Trevor de Vries -- a challenger endorsed by Trump -- raised just over \$30,000 as of latest filings, while incumbent Dan Dernulc has raised over \$200,000. But AdImpact shows outside groups spending more than \$200,000 to help defeat Dernulc.

Polls are now closed in most of Indiana

Polls remain open in 12 counties in northwestern and southwestern Indiana that are in the central time zone.

Trump is watching outcome of state Senate race, Michigan voter says

"I think it might have some bearing on the country, because I know Trump is obviously looking to hold onto the House and Senate and maintain his advantage there, which is pretty razor-thin I think at this point," said John Hall, a 69-year-old self-described independent who voted for Democrat Chedrick Greene. "So, I'm sure he's going to be paying close attention to this particular race."

Hall, a retiree who worked for years at an area radio station, said the economy is a key issue for him. He spent \$58 at the gas station before driving to the public library in Bay City to vote.

"It's taking a bite out of a lot of people's budgets right now," Hall said, adding it would have cost between \$35 and \$40 to fill up his car's tank two months ago.

Trump goes after Indiana Republicans who voted against redistricting

In a social media post while voters were headed to the polls, Trump said Republican state senators who voted against redistricting "couldn't care less about our Country, or about keeping the Majority in Congress."

Trump described the senators who crossed him as RINOs, which means "Republican in name only." And he hailed "Great Patriots" that he's endorsed to oust them.

Big spending in Indiana state Senate primary

Groups allied to defeat Indiana state Sen. Spencer Deery will have spent \$2 million in ads attacking him by the time polls close. That's more than any other district where incumbents are trying to fend off Trump-backed challengers.

Deery is completing his first term and was the first Republican senator to publicly oppose redistricting.

Paula Copenhaver is challenging him. She's a close ally of Republican Lieutenant Gov. Micah Beckwith and is Fountain County GOP chair in rural, western Indiana. Deery beat Copenhaver in a four-way Republican primary for the seat four years ago.

The super PAC run by Indiana U.S. Sen. Jim Banks, Hoosier Leadership PAC, will have spent more than \$1.1 million on ads attacking Deery through Election Day, according to the ad-tracking service AdImpact. Gov. Mike Braun's American Leadership PAC will have spent more than \$900,000 doing the same, according to the group.

Deery is on track to have spent more than \$745,000 on this year's primary, far more than last time.

YouTube provocateur Casey Putsch hopes he's a spoiler in Ohio governor contest

An engineer and vehicle designer who calls himself "The Car Guy," Putsch is making a long-shot bid for Ohio governor against Republican Vivek Ramaswamy.

After the last-minute disqualification of another candidate's ticket, the 44-year-old from northwest Ohio ended up as Ramaswamy's only primary opponent.

Putsch has attracted fans and critics with his provocative YouTube videos, which often — subtly or overtly — take aim at Ramaswamy's Indian heritage or Hindu faith.

On the campaign trail, he's also been critical of President Donald Trump, energy guzzling data centers and national Republicans' support for Israel and handling of the Epstein files.

How Indiana Gov. Mike Braun is helping Trump go after Republicans

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Trump is throwing his name behind Republican challengers to GOP senators who opposed redistricting. But Braun is carrying out much of the work.

After Trump's pledge last year to rally against GOP senators who blocked the effort and are seeking reelection, Braun picked the candidates.

Frustrated by Rodrick Bray, the Senate GOP leader who opposed redistricting, Braun recruited the seven Republicans challengers on the pledge that they oppose Bray for leader.

In his break with party orthodoxy, Braun has also committed \$3 million to advertising from his American Leadership PAC attacking those incumbents on the wishes of the president, according to statistics collected by the ad-tracking firm AdImpact.

That includes almost \$900,000 alone in ads attacking Republican state Sen. Spencer Deery of West Lafayette, the first Republican senator to oppose redistricting and a protege of former GOP Gov. Mitch Daniels, who is an opponent of the redistricting measure.

What happened after Indiana said no to redistricting

The Republican-controlled Indiana Senate in December rejected the measure that would have shaded all nine of the state's congressional districts as favorable to the party, and halted progress on the party's effort nationally.

The move defied months of urging by the White House led by Vice President JD Vance, who traveled twice to Indianapolis and hosted many in the caucus in Washington, where Trump phoned in to address the group.

While Indiana was considering the measure, voters in Democratic-leaning California approved Proposition 50, which allowed the state Legislature to bypass the independent commission to redraw districts for the next three biennial elections.

Republicans think they could win up to nine more seats under revised districts in Texas, Missouri, North Carolina and Ohio. But Democrats think they could win as many as 10 additional seats under new districts in California, Utah and Virginia, though legal challenges remain in both Missouri and Virginia.

Trump's involvement turned off some voters in Indiana

Emily Bohall Board, 37, an occupational therapist in Columbus, Indiana, said she had never voted in a Republican primary before Tuesday. But the issue of redistricting compelled her to cast a ballot for Sen. Greg Walker.

"Greg Walker is the only option not supported by Donald Trump, and I have been very upset about everything Trump has done," Board said.

Madison Long, 28, an attorney, who also voted for Walker, criticized Michelle Davis, Walker's opponent, for her ties to Trump.

"She doesn't have any promises of her own or any agenda of her own. Her goal is to just follow Trump," Long said. "I find that extremely concerning given the nature of the nationwide politics."

What's at stake in the Michigan special election

The race will determine whether Democrats maintain a majority in the state Senate for the final months of the year.

Democrats currently control the state Senate 19-18. If Democrat Chedrick Greene wins, Democrats keep their majority.

If Republican Jason Tunney wins, the Senate would be tied, making it tougher for Democrats to advance Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's agenda. While Democratic Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II would serve as the tie-breaking vote, Republicans could effectively block any measure from passing by not having all members vote.

There's another reason people are watching the race: The swing district in a battleground state could give clues to what will happen in November's midterms..



## Trump-backed candidates win majority of Republican primary races for Indiana Senate

By SCOTT BAUER, OBED LAMY and THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ind. (AP) — A majority of Republican Indiana state senators whose opponents were endorsed by President Donald Trump lost on Tuesday, a display of the president's enduring influence over his party after lawmakers rejected his redistricting plan five months ago.

Of the seven challengers endorsed by Trump, at least five won. One incumbent prevailed and the seventh race was too close to call.

"Big night for MAGA in Indiana," U.S. Sen. Jim Banks wrote on social media, adding that he was "proud to have helped elect more conservative Republicans to the Indiana State Senate."

The president's allies spent at least \$8.3 million on races that rarely get much attention from Washington. It's been a costly and unprecedented intraparty battle that has exacerbated tensions among Republicans ahead of the November midterm elections that will determine control of Congress.

State Sen. Travis Holdman, one of the incumbents to lose his primary, said he was at peace with his defeat. He voted against redistricting and faced more than \$1.3 million in attack advertising funded by organizations tied to Banks and Gov. Mike Braun.

"I did what my constituents asked me to do and it cost me my job," he says. "But that's OK."

Holdman warned that a more aggressive style of campaigning was arriving in his state.

"Welcome to D.C. politics in Indiana because this means that's what's coming," he said.

The race that was too close to call was the most expensive of the seven primaries.

The superpacs led by Banks and Braun combined to spend more than \$2.2 million on advertising attacking Sen. Spencer Deery, according to the ad-tracking firm AdImpact. Deery spent roughly \$815,000 on advertising, according to AdImpact, having only spent a combined \$142,000 on the 2022 primary and general election when he was first elected.

Indiana rejected Trump on redistricting

Trump began leaning on Republican-led states last year to redraw their congressional maps to make it easier for his party to hold its thin majority in the U.S. House. Although redistricting is normally done once a decade, after a new census, Trump wanted to abandon tradition to gain a political edge.

Texas was the first to follow through, and the White House pressured Indiana to go along too. Vice President JD Vance met with state politicians in Washington and Indianapolis, and Trump weighed in by conference call.

However, Indiana senators rebuffed the effort, one of the president's first significant political defeats of his second term.

The redistricting fight divided Republicans in Indiana, a state Trump won three times by no less than 16 points. Braun, Banks and organizations such as Turning Point Action have worked alongside Trump to unseat the incumbents.

Jim Bopp, a prominent Indiana attorney who leads a political action committee aligned with Braun, predicted that Trump's support would carry the day for the challengers.

"Republican voters overwhelmingly support Trump and when they find out Trump has endorsed a particular Senate candidate, they swing their support behind them," he said.

Voters had mixed views on Trump's involvement

In Columbus, Ronda Millig voted for Trump-backed Michelle Davis over redistricting opponent Sen. Greg Walker. Davis won.

"I really believed some of the things I had heard about him," said Millig, a retiree. "It didn't seem like he was someone I wanted in office."

But Millig did not say that Trump's endorsement was the deciding factor.

"That doesn't always mean anything," she said.

Madison Long, who is 28 and a lawyer, who also voted for Walker, criticizing Davis for her ties to Trump.

"She doesn't have any promises of her own or any agenda of her own. Her goal is to just follow Trump,"

Long said. "I find that extremely concerning given the nature of the nationwide politics."

Indiana opposition came from constituents, former governor

Former Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels, who had stepped away from politics after leaving the governorship in 2015, reemerged to help raise money for targeted incumbents.

The state senators who broke with Trump said they were listening to their constituents who were overwhelmingly against his redistricting proposal. Some said they didn't like Trump's aggressive tone in pushing the plan.

"We hate to be told what to do," said Mike Murphy, a former Republican state representative. "We're very independent thinking people. So when Donald Trump and his goons come in and try to tell us that we need to redistrict to help his political future, that's the worst thing you can do."

Bopp, who supported the Trump-backed challengers, said the primary was a chance for Indiana Republicans to express how important it is to redraw the congressional lines there.

"It's not a matter of Trump's power," Bopp said. "It's about Republican primary voters who support his agenda and don't want a Democratic House that will be hugely destructive to the Trump presidency and the country."

## Trump again assails Pope Leo, potentially complicating Rubio's visit to the Vatican this week

By MATTHEW LEE and NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has renewed his criticism of Pope Leo XIV, potentially complicating a fence-mending visit that Secretary of State Marco Rubio plans to make this week to the Vatican.

In an interview with conservative commentator Hugh Hewitt, Trump said the first American-born pontiff is helping Iran and also making the world less safe with his comments about the importance of not treating immigrants with disrespect.

"The pope would rather talk about the fact that it's OK for Iran to have a nuclear weapon," Trump said in the interview on Monday. "And I don't think that's very good. I think he's endangering a lot of Catholics and a lot of people."

The pope, however, has not said Iran should obtain nuclear weapons. He's called for more peace talks, and criticized war with Iran generally and Trump's specific threats of mass civilian strikes. The pope also has emphasized that he's reflecting biblical and church teachings, not speaking as a political rival to Trump.

Leo responded to Trump's latest criticism by calling out the U.S. president's misrepresentation of his views. Speaking to reporters Tuesday, the pope said the Catholic Church "for years has spoken out against all nuclear weapons, so there is no doubt there."

He also doubled down on his insistence that his call for peace and dialogue in the U.S-Israeli war in Iran is biblically inspired.

"The mission of the church is to preach the Gospel, to preach peace. If someone wants to criticize me for announcing the Gospel, let him do it with the truth," Leo said.

Rubio downplays the rift over Iran

For his part, Rubio, a practicing Catholic, said Trump's recent criticisms were rooted in his opposition to Iran potentially obtaining a nuclear weapon, which he said could be used against millions of Catholics and other Christians. Rubio said the whole world should be opposed to that.

Trump "doesn't understand why anybody — leave aside the pope — the president and I, for that matter, I think most people, I cannot understand why anyone would think that it's a good idea for Iran to ever have a nuclear weapon," Rubio told reporters at the White House.

Still, Trump's latest comments may make Rubio's task more difficult when he sees the pontiff on Thursday. Rubio has often been called on to tone down or explain Trump's harsh rhetoric as it relates to Europe, NATO and the Middle East, but the president's dispute with the pope has domestic political implications in the U.S. with midterm congressional elections approaching.

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Trump lashed out at Leo on social media last month, saying the pope was soft on crime and terrorism for comments about the administration's immigration policies and deportations as well as the Iran war. Leo then said God doesn't listen to the prayers of those who wage war.

Later, Trump posted a social media image likening himself to Jesus Christ, which he then deleted after backlash. He has refused to apologize to Leo and has sought to explain away the social media post by saying he thought the image was of him as a doctor.

The tension spills over into Italian politics

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, a long-time Trump ally, has taken exception to Trump's comments about the pope.

Trump in return criticized her as his ire against NATO allies expands over what he sees as a lack of support for the Iran war — most recently with the Pentagon planning to pull thousands of troops out of Germany in the coming months.

In response to Trump's latest comments criticizing the pope, Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said in a social media post that they were "neither acceptable nor helpful to the cause of peace."

"I reaffirm my support for every action and word of Pope Leo; his words are a testament to dialogue, the value of human life, and freedom. This is a vision shared by our government, which is committed through diplomacy to ensuring stability and peace in all areas where conflicts exist," Tajani wrote.

Rubio, who after this trip will have visited Italy or the Vatican at least three times in the past year, is expected to meet with Meloni and Tajani on Friday.

## **Former FedEx driver sentenced to death for killing 7-year-old girl after delivery at her Texas home**

By JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — A former FedEx driver was sentenced to death on Tuesday after he pleaded guilty to killing a 7-year-old girl he took from her Texas home while delivering a Christmas gift.

Jurors in a Fort Worth courtroom decided on Tanner Horner's punishment after hearing about a month of testimony and evidence that included audio of Athena Strand's last moments from inside his delivery van. Horner, 34, pleaded guilty to capital murder last month in the 2022 killing just as his trial began. Athena's body was found two days after she was reported missing from her home in the rural town of Paradise, near Fort Worth.

Horner didn't visibly react when the judge read the sentence, according to a livestream of the court proceedings.

Jurors found there was a probability Horner would commit criminal violence and be a continuing threat to society. They said there was nothing in the commission of the crime or in Horner's background to warrant life without parole instead of death.

Prosecutor James Stainton told jurors in opening statements that Horner had told, "lie upon lie upon lie upon lie" in the case, including telling authorities that he accidentally struck Athena with his van while making the delivery and then killed her in a fit of panic.

Several jurors cried as they were shown video and heard audio from inside the van after Athena was taken. He could be seen lifting her into the van, and then driving away, telling her not to scream or he'd hurt her.

Horner then covered the camera, but the audio continued recording. Horner asks Athena questions, including how old she is and where she goes to school, before stopping the van and telling her they are going to "hang out." Horner tells her to take off her shirt and she begins crying, and asks whether he's a kidnapper.

She asks him: "Why are you doing this?" He replies, "Because you are pretty."

"My mom says I can't do that to somebody," she tells him. "And you can't do that to me either."

As the recording, which lasts over an hour, continues, Athena's screams can be heard. At one point he tells her: "If you don't shut up, I will hurt you worse."



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A medical examiner testified that Athena died of blunt force injuries with smothering and strangulation. While acknowledging during opening statements that the evidence against Horner was "overwhelming" and "terrible," Horner's attorney, Steven Goble, told jurors that Horner's mother drank while she was pregnant, that he has autism and suffered from "various mental illnesses throughout his life" in addition to being exposed to a "massive amount of lead."

Goble had asked jurors to sentence Horner to life in prison.

Athena's family has said that the package Horner had dropped off was a Christmas present for her — a box of "You Can Be Anything" Barbies.

The trial was moved from rural Wise County to Fort Worth after Horner's attorneys argued that he would not have received a fair trial.

## 2 killed and 3 injured in back-to-back shootings north of Dallas, police say

By JAMIE STENGLE and KENDRIA LAFLEUR Associated Press

CARROLLTON, Texas (AP) — A man shot five people, killing two, in back-to-back shootings Tuesday at a shopping center and then an apartment building because he was angry over business dealings, police said.

The first shooting happened just before 10 a.m. at a shopping center in a Koreatown neighborhood in a suburb north of Dallas, the Carrollton Police Department said. When police arrived, they found four adults who had been shot. While they were investigating, another shooting was reported at an apartment complex roughly 4 miles (6 kilometers) away, and responding officers found a dead man inside one of the apartments.

Investigators determined the suspect, 69-year-old Seung Ho Han, carried out both of the shootings, police said. He was arrested at a nearby grocery store after a short chase on foot. Police say Ho Han acknowledged he was the shooter in an interview with detectives and said he was angry at the people he shot because of financial disagreements over their business dealings.

It was not a random act of violence and the attacker knew both of the people who were fatally shot, Carrollton Police Chief Roberto Arredondo said.

"It was a known business relationship. We're still trying to work to identify what caused his actions," Arredondo said.

The three people injured in the shooting were in stable condition, Arredondo said. The names of the victims were not released.

Shortly after the shooting, officers with their guns drawn walked past doors at K Towne Plaza in an area of Carrollton known as Koreatown. Agents from the FBI were among law enforcement collecting evidence in the parking lot.

Carrollton — population 130,000 — is 20 miles (32 kilometers) north of Dallas. More than 4,000 residents are of Korean descent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

"We're shocked," said John Jun, who's active in the Korean American community. "We're not immune to something like this happening, but we are very generally a peaceful community that works hard."

In the last 20 years, it has grown into a thriving Koreatown for the metro Dallas area, thanks to Korean investors. It's anchored by big-box businesses like H Mart as well as dozens of restaurants serving everything from Korean fried chicken to shaved ice desserts.

The city is also home to multiple Korean churches from Baptist to Presbyterian congregations.

## Trump will host Brazilian president for talks on economy and security, a White House official says

By COLLIN BINKLEY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump will host Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva on Thursday for talks about shared economic and security issues, a White House official said, speaking on

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condition of anonymity about a meeting that has not been officially announced.

The leftist Lula and Trump have had an up-and-down relationship since the U.S. leader's return to the White House last year.

Trump hit Brazil with steep tariffs and has pressed Brazilian authorities over their prosecution of former President Jair Bolsonaro for his involvement in a coup plot.

The Trump administration imposed a 40% tariff on Brazilian products in July on top of a 10% tariff hike earlier. The U.S. president justified the tariffs by saying that Brazil's policies and criminal prosecution of Bolsonaro constituted an economic emergency.

But Trump later loosened tariffs on Brazil as part of his effort to lower consumer costs for Americans.

Trump and Lula started mending fences at the United Nations' General Assembly in September, which was followed by their first private meeting in Malaysia in October and subsequent phone conversations.

Bolsonaro was accused of masterminding a plot to stay in power despite his 2022 election loss to Lula — similar charges to what Trump faced after a mob of his supporters attacked the U.S. Capitol in 2021 to stop Democrat Joe Biden from taking the White House.

Last month, Lula came to the defense of Pope Leo XIV during a tense exchange of attacks between the pontiff and Trump over the war in Iran.

The 80-year-old Lula is running for reelection in October.

The Brazilian paper O Globo first reported the planned trip by the Brazilian leader.

## Gasoline costs 50% more in the US than it did before the Iran war

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The price of a gallon of regular gasoline climbed 31 cents in the past week, spiking to an average of \$4.48 per gallon Tuesday, according to AAA, hitting the wallets of drivers after rising 50% since the war with Iran began.

The main reason drivers are paying more at the pump is because of the global energy crisis caused by the Iran war. The price of crude oil, which is the main ingredient in gasoline, has been climbing for most of the past two months because the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow passage of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of the world's crude oil normally passes, has effectively been shut, and oil tankers have been stranded there unable to deliver crude.

Many drivers were hopeful in mid-April, amid signs that the conflict could be winding down, and gasoline prices fell daily for almost two weeks.

"After the announcement of the initial ceasefire, there was kind of optimism that this really could be the beginning of the end of the conflict," said Rob Smith, director of global fuel retail at S&P Global Energy. "And so crude prices came down correspondingly, gasoline spot prices followed, and so on and ... the retailers lowered prices as well."

But as the war continued, gasoline prices reversed course and began increasing again.

"There's a fundamental shortfall that will exist globally or fundamental struggle to meet that demand that will drive up price," Smith said. "No matter what a government says or what any market person thinks, there is a true kind of upward pressure that's being exerted on prices every day the Strait of Hormuz is constrained. And it is still severely constrained."

Who sets gasoline prices

Gas station owners set prices at the pump, but a lot of factors go into what they decide to charge.

The main ingredient in gasoline cost is the price of a barrel of crude oil. In the U.S., oil prices represented about 51% of the price of a gallon of gasoline in 2025, according to the Energy Information Administration.

That means when crude oil prices rise, gasoline prices generally follow. Less oil on the market means higher prices for oil and gasoline. And the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz triggered the largest supply disruption in the history of oil markets, according to the The International Energy Agency, pushing oil prices as high as \$112 a barrel in early April.

Bob Kleinberg, adjunct senior research scholar at the Columbia University Center on Global Energy Policy,

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compared the average price of a gallon of gasoline in the U.S. with the price for a barrel of WTI, the U.S. benchmark oil, over the past few weeks, and said their price changes generally matched up.

"Not much of a mystery here," Kleinberg said. "It's not exactly proportional but the shape of the curves follows the same pattern, and really with very little delay."

Federal and state taxes contributed about 17% of the oil price, refining costs and profits contributed 14% and distribution and marketing contributed 17%, the EIA said. In some states, such as California, higher taxes and refining costs push the price of gasoline well above the national average.

What caused renewed march in gasoline prices

One event that could have changed the trajectory of gasoline prices occurred in April, when the U.S. blocked Iranian ports to stop the country from exporting oil.

"Iran had been moving an unusually high amount of oil to global markets, so that was helping moderate prices," said Jim Krane, energy research fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute. "The Trump administration decides they're going to punish Iran, and try to put more pressure on Iran by blocking their exports, so of course that does put pressure on Iran, but also puts pressure on global oil prices and forces them up. That was probably a big factor."

What refineries and traders are willing to pay for oil swings wildly after news breaks about attacks on ships in the Persian Gulf or diplomacy talks stalling. "The oil market is exquisitely sensitive to what's coming out of the White House," Kleinberg said.

Back in early March, at the beginning of the Iran war, the price of gasoline jumped 48 cents in a week. The highest weekly jump was in March 2022, when the price jumped 60 cents in a week after Russia invaded Ukraine, AAA said.

No quick fix

No one can predict how high gasoline prices will climb. A gallon of regular in the U.S. costs more now than it did in early May of 2022, and back then, the price kept climbing through Memorial Day, AAA said.

The longer the flow of oil is constrained through the Strait of Hormuz, the higher prices will go, and the longer it will take to get back to normal, Smith said.

"Even if there was a true and lasting resolution of the conflict, both sides agree to play nice and truly do commit to keeping Hormuz open, it will still take months to get back to what it was pre-war, if not even longer," Smith said. "There will still be within the industry a risk premium associated with going through that region. Not that it was ever a perfectly safe journey, but the past few months have shown that it'll be hard to convince shippers and insurance companies that the risk level will be similar to what it was in February. It'll be a long time before anyone can be convinced of that."

## Vice President Vance woos Iowa Republican voters ahead of 2028

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Vice President JD Vance, making his first trip to Iowa since taking office, promoted the administration's tax and tariff policies while framing the GOP as being on the side of working-class voters as he campaigned in the state where Republicans in less than two years will cast the initial votes to pick their party's next presidential nominee.

Standing before hundreds of supporters at a steel manufacturing facility, Vance repeatedly drew a contrast between Iowa Republican Rep. Zach Nunn and his Democratic challenger, telling the crowd that Nunn and the Trump administration were "fighting for you instead of fighting against you" as he attacked Democrats on issues of immigration and fraud.

"This is not a normal election. This is not a normal political environment," said Vance, who is seen as one of the GOP's strongest potential candidates for president in 2028. "This is a contest between a party that wants to take all of your money and give it to illegal aliens and a contest between gentlemen like Zach Nunn who fight every single day for you."

Nunn faces a competitive race to keep his Des Moines-area seat in the November midterms. Vance frequently heaped praise on Nunn, calling him "one of those guys who does the right thing, not just when



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the cameras are on, but when the cameras are off, too.”

The visit to Iowa offered Vance an opportunity to test his reception before Iowa’s voters, whose leadoff caucuses give them an outsized role in determining the next presidential nominee. Campaigning for a local congressman in his role as vice president provided him with a chance to make an impression on Iowa Republicans, seasoned evaluators of those who seek the nation’s highest office, before the campaign begins in earnest.

Vance’s appearance comes days after Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, who is also considered a possible 2028 candidate, spoke to a group of evangelical Christians who are influential in Iowa’s GOP contest.

Jimmy Centers, a Des Moines-based Republican political consultant, said that the 2028 contest is “light-years away” but that the Republicans who hear Vance speak on Tuesday will be evaluating how he might measure up in an election for the White House.

“I certainly think, as of right now, Vice President Vance would probably be a straw-poll winner of Iowa Republicans for 2028. But I don’t think anyone is saying, ‘We won’t consider anybody else,’” Centers said.

Vance’s visit comes as higher prices for gas and fertilizer hit Iowans

Vance, who has not said whether he will run for president in 2028, appeared with Nunn at Ex-Guard Industries in Des Moines.

The vice president’s visit follows a trip Trump made in January to tout the administration’s tax cuts, part of a string of stops they’re making this year on economic issues before midterm elections that will determine control of Congress.

But Vance’s visit comes when his own political prospects — and the message he delivered on the economy — have been complicated by the war in Iran.

The vice president, who has long been skeptical of foreign military interventions, has seemed a reluctant defender of the 9-week-old war, for which Trump has struggled to find an off-ramp. Iowans, like much of the rest of the country, are grappling with higher gas prices because of the conflict. But the state’s farmers are also feeling the pinch of high fertilizer costs from the war and have been hurt by tariffs Trump has imposed.

Vance made a nod to those cost struggles in his remarks, saying that he’s aware of the rising price of fertilizer and noted: “We got a little blip.” Nonetheless, he said the administration is “working on it.”

While Iowa’s farmers have steadfastly supported the president, they have been looking to the White House for assurances that the current troubles won’t last.

Vance, who met with Iowa Gold Star families just before his public remarks, also became emotional as he discussed the sacrifices made by fallen U.S. soldiers and their families. He talked about wondering how he would react if his 6-year-old son, Vivek, who accompanied him Tuesday, told him later in life that he wanted to enlist, saying he would be “so proud of him” but also “so terrified.”

“Every time that a person gives the ultimate sacrifice to the United States of America ... there’s a whole crew of people who love them the same way that we all love every single member of our family,” he said, adding that “part of how we earn that incredible sacrifice” is “by making this country’s politics and government worthy of the people who put on the uniform and will never see their loved ones again.”

Earlier Tuesday, Vance, who represented Ohio in the U.S. Senate before becoming vice president, stopped first in Cincinnati to vote in Ohio’s primary elections and told reporters he was voting for Vivek Ramaswamy in the governor’s race. Asked about U.S. Sen. Jon Husted, who’s running in a special election to serve out the remainder of Vance’s term, Vance said he thinks Husted’s “going to do a great job” and has been “good for Ohio.”

His 6-year-old son, meanwhile, filled out a ballot for children, which the vice president showed to the poll workers when he cast his own ballot. “He voted for the Easter bunny over the tooth fairy,” he said of his son.

Before arriving in Iowa, Vance also appeared in Oklahoma City to hold a fundraiser in his role as finance chair of the Republican National Committee.

It’s ‘awfully, awfully early’ in the road to 2028

Kim Schmett, a longtime Iowa GOP activist, said the presidential cycle starts “deceptively slow.”

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He said Trump's Make America Great Again political movement "is very alive and going here" in Iowa, which would benefit Vance — as well as Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who is also thought to be a potential candidate.

"I think there's going to be a lot of MAGA support," he said. "And Vice President Vance and Marco Rubio seem to be the recipients of where that is going at the moment."

But Schmett cautioned, "It's awfully, awfully early in the process."

On the Democratic side, at least half a dozen presidential prospects have been making visits to the states with the earliest presidential primary contests, including recent visits to Iowa by former Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and Michigan U.S. Sen. Elissa Slotkin.

Meanwhile, potential Republican presidential candidates "are treading very lightly," said GOP strategist Alex Conant, who worked on Rubio's 2016 presidential campaign.

"I think Republicans are going to be very reluctant to get in Trump's way until Trump gives the green light for the campaign to start," Conant said.

That means much of the groundwork to meet with donors or activists or recruit political staffers might happen slowly and subtly — for now.

After the midterms? Conant said: "It'll be irresistible."

## Wall Street rallies to records after oil prices ease and corporate profits keep topping expectations

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. stock market rose to records Tuesday after oil prices eased and companies kept reporting bigger profits for the start of the year than analysts expected.

The S&P 500 climbed 0.8% to top its prior all-time high set at the end of last week. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 356 points, or 0.7%, and the Nasdaq composite set its own record after rallying 1%.

Stocks got a boost after oil prices gave back much of their big jumps from Monday. The price for a barrel of Brent crude, the international standard, fell 4% to \$109.87 after briefly cresting \$115 on Monday, though it's still well above its roughly \$70 price from before the war with Iran.

U.S. military leaders said Tuesday that a ceasefire with Iran remains in effect, even though Iran was blamed for attacks against the United Arab Emirates, a U.S. ally, the day before. The U.S. military is meanwhile trying to force open a path in the Strait of Hormuz, which would allow oil tankers to resume shipments from the Persian Gulf and hopefully bring down the price of crude.

Even with the war ongoing, the U.S. stock market has remained remarkably resilient on its record-setting run. That's in large part due to the strong profits that U.S. companies have reported for the first three months of 2026 despite the rise in oil prices since the end of February.

"This has been a 'why ask why' market," according to Scott Wren, senior global market strategist at Wells Fargo Investment Institute. "You just have to go with it."

Even though many risks are still weighing on the market, "investors are looking at earnings" and how much companies are spending on AI data centers and other investments, he said.

DuPont's stock rallied 8.4% after the chemical giant led another cavalcade of companies reporting better-than-expected profits for the latest quarter.

DuPont said its water technologies business felt some impact from the war due to logistics disruptions in the Middle East. But it nevertheless raised its forecasts for financial results over the full year.

Other winners included American Electric Power Co., which rose 1.8%, and Cummins, which added 2.8%, after they likewise made more money during the first three months of the year than analysts expected.

Pinterest jumped 6.9% after the online bulletin board topped Wall Street's first-quarter sales and profit targets as its number of active monthly users jumped 11% to 631 million.

AB InBev likewise topped analysts' profit forecasts, and it credited growth for its Corona, Stella Artois and Michelob Ultra brands outside of their home markets, among other factors. "Cheers to beer," CEO

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Michel Doukeris said, as the company's stock that trades in the United States climbed 8.7%.

They helped offset a drop for Palantir Technologies, which fell 6.9% even though it reported stronger results for the latest quarter than analysts expected. Its stock has struggled this year on worries about increased competition, like many software companies have. Its stock is also coming off a huge run where it more than doubled in each of the last three years.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 58.47 points to 7,259.22. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 356.35 to 49,298.25, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 238.32 to 25,326.13.

In stock markets abroad, indexes were mixed in Europe. The CAC 40 rose 1.1% in Paris, but the FTSE 100 fell 1.4% in London. Many Asian markets were closed for holidays, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 0.8%.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 slipped 0.2% after the central bank raised its benchmark interest rate to 4.35%, saying conflict in the Middle East had sharply increased fuel and commodity prices that were already adding to inflation.

In the U.S. bond market, Treasury yields eased following oil's drop in price and reports on the U.S. economy that came in mixed.

One report said growth for U.S. services businesses unexpectedly decelerated last month, with some companies saying the war is slowing spending. A separate report said U.S. employers were advertising slightly more job openings at the end of March than economists expected, an encouraging signal for the job market.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.42% from 4.45% late Monday.

That's still well above its 3.97% level from just before the war began. The rise has made mortgages and other kinds of loans for U.S. households and businesses more expensive.

## How a deadly hantavirus outbreak unfolded on a cruise ship for weeks before it was identified

By GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — A deadly outbreak of the rare hantavirus unfolded over the course of weeks on a cruise ship that sailed from Argentina toward Antarctica and then across the Atlantic Ocean, stopping at or near remote islands on the way as passengers and crew members fell sick, according to information from the cruise operator, the World Health Organization and ship tracking data.

It shows nearly a month passed between when an elderly Dutch man fell sick and died in the South Atlantic and laboratory tests in South Africa — more than 3,500 kilometers (2,174 miles) away — confirmed hantavirus infections.

Three passengers in total have died, one is in intensive care in a South African hospital, and three other people still on the cruise ship have shown symptoms and were waiting for evacuations. Nearly 150 passengers and crew members from 23 countries were on the ship, which is waiting off the coast of West Africa.

Hantavirus is spread by rodents. People can get it through contact with infected rodents' saliva, urine or droppings. It doesn't usually spread from person to person, but some health authorities say such transmission could be possible.

While only two hantavirus cases related to the ship have been confirmed through tests, WHO suspects the others also are hantavirus and is treating it as an outbreak. It is still investigating the source.

What happened on the ship

The Dutch company that operates the ship, the MV Hondius, offers "expedition cruises" that involve trips to the Antarctic and several islands in the South Atlantic to see some of the remotest places on earth.

The cruises can last a month or more and cost between \$6,000 and \$25,000, depending on the cabin.

The MV Hondius set off from southern Argentina on April 1.

On April 6, the 70-year-old Dutch man fell ill with fever, headache and mild diarrhea, WHO said.

He died on board on April 11, after developing respiratory distress. The ship was between the British



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island territories of South Georgia and St. Helena in the middle of the South Atlantic, according to data from the ship tracking website MarineTraffic. The cause of death could not be determined, according to the cruise company, Oceanwide Expeditions.

The ship sailed on for nearly two weeks, stopping near the island of Tristan da Cunha before it reached St. Helena, where the Dutch man's body was taken off the ship on April 24. His 69-year-old wife disembarked with his body and flew to South Africa, while the man's body remained behind.

The woman, who already had symptoms, became sicker during the April 25 flight and collapsed at an airport in South Africa. She died at a hospital on April 26, WHO said.

Another passenger, a British man, became sick on the ship after it left St. Helena and sailed to tiny Ascension Island, some 1,300 kilometers (800 miles) north. He had a high fever, shortness of breath and signs of pneumonia, according to WHO, and was evacuated from Ascension Island to South Africa on April 27. He is in an intensive care unit in a South African hospital.

The third fatality, a German woman, died on the ship on Saturday, again after it had set sail for a new destination — this time Cape Verde. She died four days after falling ill and also had signs of pneumonia, WHO said, which can be caused by hantavirus. Her body is still on the ship.

When authorities first knew hantavirus was on the ship

Health officials in South Africa ultimately tested the British man in intensive care for hantavirus after other extensive tests on him were negative. They received a positive result for hantavirus on Saturday, some 21 days after the first passenger died.

On Sunday, WHO announced it was investigating a suspected hantavirus outbreak on the ship, which had by that time reached Cape Verde waters.

The British man's positive test prompted South African health authorities to also test the Dutch woman's body posthumously for hantavirus. That test came back positive on Monday.

WHO said the outbreak on the ship was being managed and the global risk was low as hantavirus is not easily spread between people, though it added it was tracing people who were on a passenger plane between St. Helena and Johannesburg, South Africa, with the Dutch woman.

What the plan is for the people still on board

Oceanwide Expeditions said Tuesday that aircraft were flying to Cape Verde to evacuate two people needing urgent medical care and one passenger who was traveling with the German woman who died Saturday. They were to be taken to the Netherlands, but a timeline for arrival wasn't clear.

The ship then would sail to Spain's Canary Islands, a voyage of about three days, the company said.

Spanish officials had said they were monitoring and hadn't confirmed any plans as of Tuesday evening.

Passengers and crew have been isolated in cabins with "maximal physical distancing," WHO said, in a lockdown reminiscent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The source of the infections

WHO says it is still investigating how a virus that is relatively rare in people got on board the ship. It said the Dutch man and his wife — who it called cases one and two — had traveled in Argentina and elsewhere in South America before they boarded.

WHO says Andes virus, a specific species of hantavirus, is found in South America, primarily in Argentina and Chile.

## Man charged in White House correspondents' dinner attack is indicted on new assault count

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A California man accused of trying to storm the White House Correspondents' Association dinner and attempting to kill President Donald Trump was indicted Tuesday on a new charge over claims that he fired a shotgun at a Secret Service officer during the attack.

Cole Tomas Allen initially was charged in a complaint with attempting to assassinate the president and two additional firearms counts. He faces a maximum sentence of life in prison if convicted of the attempted

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assassination charge alone.

Allen's indictment by a federal grand jury in Washington, D.C., includes the same three counts but also adds a charge of assaulting a federal officer with a deadly weapon.

A Secret Service officer was shot once in a bullet-resistant vest during the April 25 attack at the Washington Hilton, which disrupted and ultimately prompted an early end to one of the highest-profile annual events in the nation's capital. Allen was armed with guns and knives when he ran through a security checkpoint and pointed his weapon at the officer, who fired five times without hitting anybody, authorities said.

The addition of the assault charge confirms that authorities believe Allen fired the shot that struck the officer. Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche indicated last week that investigators wanted to review more ballistics evidence before making that determination.

Allen's attorneys have questioned the strength of the government's theory that their client intended to kill the president or fired a shot that struck the officer.

"In sum," they wrote, "the government's entire argument about the nature and circumstances of the offense is based upon inferences drawn about Mr. Allen's intent that raise more questions than answers."

Allen, 31, of Torrance, California, was injured but was not shot. He was placed on suicide watch after his arrest, but jail officials removed him from that status over the weekend. Allen's attorneys complained that he had been unnecessarily confined in a padded room with constant lighting, repeatedly strip searched and placed in restraints outside his cell.

## 'The Lost Boys' and 'Schmigadoon!' earn 12 Tony nominations each to lead the field

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — "The Lost Boys" and "Schmigadoon!" each earned a leading 12 Tony Award nominations Tuesday, as nominators also made June Squibb the oldest Tony-nominated actor in history at 96. Danny Burstein is now the most-nominated male actor in Tony history.

"The Lost Boys," an adaptation of a 1987 teen movie vampire thriller, and "Schmigadoon!," an adaptation of an Apple TV series that gently mocks Broadway musicals, were followed by a revival of "Ragtime," a big, soaring musical celebrating early 20th-century America, with 11 nominations, and "Death of a Salesman," Arthur Miller's masterpiece that looks at the unraveling of the American Dream, starring Nathan Lane, which nabbed nine nods.

Twenty-four shows got at least one nomination across the 26 Tony categories, a revival of "Chess," the Cold War-set love triangle between two chess grand masters and the woman who loved both, and "Cats: The Jellicle Ball," which reimagines Andrew Lloyd Webber's classic feline musical into a celebration of queer ballroom culture.

"I'm over the Jellicle moon about this!" said Bill Rauch, who secured his first Tony nomination for co-directing the reimagined "Cats." "I've spent my whole career trying to connect the dots between classics and the place and time we're living in, and so to have 'Cats' have this life on Broadway right now just really feels like an affirmation of everything I've been trying to do for decades."

Best new musical and play nominees

The best new musical crown will be between "The Lost Boys," "Schmigadoon!," "Titanique," a camp musical comedy that reimagines the 1997 megahit movie "Titanic," and "Two Strangers (Carry a Cake Across New York)," an opposites-attract rom-com set during a New York City weekend.

Ali Louis Bourzgui, nominated for best featured role in a musical playing a seductive vampire in "The Lost Boys," took a bite on why his show was so well received: "I think that people, including myself, love a villain that they can care for," he said. "Some of my favorite performances are technically villains on paper, but the person who's playing them actively makes them a full 3D person that you can root for. I think that's the most interesting kind of character."

The best new play nominees are the John Lithgow-led "Giant," which explores accusations of antisemitism

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against children's author Roald Dahl; "Liberation," about a consciousness-raising women's group in 1970s Ohio that won the Pulitzer Prize for drama on Monday; "The Balusters," a wry comedy about a small-town neighborhood association that descends into chaos over whether to install a stop sign; and "Little Bear Ridge Road," about a struggling writer who returns to his rural hometown to settle his dead father's estate.

Playwright Mark Rosenblatt conceived of "Giant" in 2018 and started writing it in 2020, and it seems remarkably relevant in 2026, following the fallout from the war in Gaza and the spotlight on antisemitism in America.

"The ideas in the play, the concerns in the plays, the pain in the play, is perennial," he said. "But I could never have imagined that it would, when it finally was produced, would be playing against the backdrop of what's happening now."

"The Fear of 13," the true story of a man who spent more than two decades on death row, didn't get any acting nods, despite starring Adrien Brody and Tessa Thompson in their Broadway debuts. Former "Glee" star Lea Michele will still be seeking her first Tony nomination after having missed out for her work on "Chess."

Squibb is now the oldest Tony-nominated actor in history, besting the record set by Lois Smith, who was 89 when she was nominated in 2020 for "The Inheritance." Squibb's Broadway resume reaches back to a stint in the original production of "Gypsy" in 1960 with Ethel Merman, and she recalls rehearsing a musical by dancing on a concrete floor. It is her first Tony nomination.

In Jordan Harrison's play "Marjorie Prime," a widow played by Squibb is brought an artificial companion who looks precisely like her dead husband. Premiering in 2014, the work in 2026 capitalizes on the recent frenzy over technological advancements like ChatGPT. Squibb said she saw the original, but only now fully comprehends the implications of things like AI.

As for her age, she said she doesn't really think about it: "I can't ignore my body is different than it was when I was young. And when I read a script now, I have to think can I physically do what they're asking me to do. And that's about it," she said. "As long as it's not dancing on concrete floors."

Burstein becomes the most-nominated male actor in Tony history with nine nods after his work in "Marjorie Prime," beating the record set by Jason Robards. Kelli O'Hara got her ninth career nomination for a revival of the comedy "Fallen Angels," tying her with Rosemary Harris for third on the all-time acting nominations list.

Who lost out?

A trio of actors from the hit TV series "The Bear" struck out in their Broadway debuts this season — Ayo Edebiri in a revival of "Proof" and Jon Bernthal and Ebon Moss-Bachrach who both appeared in "Dog Day Afternoon," an adaptation of Sidney Lumet's 1975 bank robbing drama.

Others who missed out this year include Bobby Cannavale, who starred in a revival of "Art" with Neil Patrick Harris and James Corden that was snubbed by the nominators. "Bill & Ted" stars Keanu Reeves and Alex Winters reuniting for a revival of "Waiting for Godot," were also left off, although Brandon J. Dirden was nominated for a featured role. Laurie Metcalf was in a position to earn two but will have to settle with a featured role nod for "Death of a Salesman."

Nominations include a return

The best play revival category is stacked with well-received work: "Every Brilliant Thing"; "Death of a Salesman"; "Oedipus," a modern retelling of Sophocles' classic tragedy set on election night in a modern campaign office; "Becky Shaw," Gina Gionfriddo's dark comedy about a newlywed couple who decide to play matchmaker; and "Fallen Angels," Noël Coward's alcohol-fueled competition between two upper-crust ladies over the attention of a former lover.

Daniel Radcliffe secured a nomination for "Every Brilliant Thing," a one-person show that explores the antidotes to depression.

Rose Byrne, the "If I Had Legs I'd Kick You" star who plays one of those upper-crust ladies in "Fallen Angels," secured a nomination for best actress in a play, becoming the 22nd actor in history to be Oscar- and Tony-nominated in the same year. In addition to Byrne and O'Hara, Lesley Manville secured a nod for "Oedipus," Susannah Flood for "Liberation" and Carrie Coon for her work in her husband Tracy Letts'



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play "Bug."

O'Hara — winner for the 2015 "The King and I" revival — said there will be no chill descending between her and her co-star: "I'm moving with great bravery because of someone who's brave right next to me. And if she takes home that prize, it would mean we both win."

Lithgow, who has two Tonys already, will get his third if he beats leading actor in a play nominees Lane, Radcliffe, Mark Strong in "Oedipus" and Will Harrison from "Punch," which looks at restorative justice following the death of a man from a physical punch.

Best actor in a musical nominees include Joshua Henry and Brandon Uranowitz, both from "Ragtime," Sam Tutty in "Two Strangers," Nicholas Christopher in "Chess" and Luke Evans from "The Rocky Horror Show."

On the women's side, the nominees are: Caissie Levy from "Ragtime," Marla Mindelle for "Titanique," Christiani Pitts from "Two Strangers," Sara Chase from "Schmigadoon!" and Stephanie Hsu in "The Rocky Horror Show."

The nominations also seemed to be an official welcome back to producer Scott Rudin, who scored nods for "Death of a Salesman" and "Little Bear Ridge Road." In 2021, Rudin said he was stepping back after allegations of bullying.

The Tony Awards will be handed out June 7 at Radio City Music Hall during a telecast hosted by Pink. The awards will air live on CBS and stream on Paramount+.

Last year's show — hosted by "Wicked" star Cynthia Erivo — drew 4.85 million viewers to CBS, its largest broadcast audience in six years, according to Nielsen.

## **GOP bill would fund \$1B in White House security upgrades for Trump's ballroom**

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republicans have added \$1 billion in White House security upgrades to legislation that would fund immigration enforcement agencies, a proposed boost for President Donald Trump's ballroom project after a man was charged with trying to assassinate him at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner last week.

The GOP bill released late Monday would designate the money for the U.S. Secret Service for "security adjustments and upgrades" related to the ballroom project, which Trump and Republicans have been pushing since Cole Tomas Allen allegedly stormed the April 25 media dinner at the Washington Hilton with guns and knives. The legislation says the money would support enhancements to the ballroom project, "including above-ground and below-ground security features," but also specifies that the money may not be used for non-security elements.

White House spokesperson Davis Ingle praised Republicans for including the money for the "long overdue" project, saying it would "provide the United States Secret Service with the resources they need to fully and completely harden the White House complex, in addition to the many other critical missions for the USSS."

The money is part of a larger bill to pay for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol, as Democrats have been blocking funds for both agencies since mid-February. Congress passed bipartisan legislation to fund the rest of the Homeland Security Department on April 30 after a record-long shutdown, but Republicans are using a partisan budget maneuver to push through the ICE and Border Patrol dollars on their own. The House has not released its bill yet, but the Senate is expected to start voting on its version of the legislation next week.

It is unclear exactly how the \$1 billion would be used, and the amount far exceeds the proposed \$400 million for construction of the ballroom. The White House has said in court documents that the East Wing project would be "heavily fortified," including bomb shelters, military installations and a medical facility underneath the ballroom. Trump has said it should include bulletproof glass and be able to repel drone attacks.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has sued to block construction of the project, but a federal

appeals court said last month that it can continue in the meantime.

The White House has said that private money would pay for the construction but public money would be used for security measures. Some Republicans have suggested that public money pay for all of it, arguing the security breach at the dinner shows the president needs a secure place to host events.

"It would be insane" to hold the dinner at a hotel again, said Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, who introduced a bill to pay for the ballroom's construction with Sen. Katie Britt, R-Ala.

Democrats have said they will oppose any efforts to pay for the ballroom.

"While Americans are struggling to make ends meet as a result of President Trump's failed policies, Republicans are focused on providing tens of billions of dollars for the President's vanity ballroom project and cruel mass deportation campaign," said Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin, the top Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, which oversees the U.S. Secret Service.

## Justice Department seeks the names of 2020 election workers in Georgia's Fulton County

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The Department of Justice is seeking the names of every person who worked in the 2020 election in Georgia's Fulton County, a Democratic stronghold that Donald Trump has long accused of widespread voter fraud he falsely says cost him victory against Joe Biden in the state that year.

Lawyers for the county filed a motion on Monday night to quash a grand jury subpoena that asks for the names and personal contact information of county employees and volunteer poll workers. This latest action comes after the FBI in January went to a Fulton County elections warehouse and seized ballots and other documents from the 2020 election, which Georgia's certified totals showed Trump lost in the state to Biden by 11,779 votes out of nearly 5 million cast. Trump, a Republican, still insists the election was stolen from him even though judges and his own attorney general concluded otherwise.

Monday's court filing says the subpoena is meant to "target, harass and punish the President's perceived political opponents." The request is "grossly overbroad and untethered to any reasonable need," the county's lawyers argue. It "cannot yield any evidence that could result in a criminal prosecution," they wrote, arguing that the statute of limitations on any federal crime related to the 2020 election has already expired.

The Justice Department did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment Tuesday.

County Board of Commissioners Chairman Robb Pitts, in an emailed statement, called the subpoena "yet another act of outrageous federal overreach designed to intimidate and chill participation in elections."

"Let me be crystal clear. Fulton County will not be intimidated," said Pitts, a Democrat who's running for reelection.

Since the 2020 election, Trump "has obsessively propagated the debunked conspiracy theory that Fulton County 'stole' the 2020 election from him," the county's lawyers wrote. "And he has made it clear that he seeks retribution against those who refuse to indulge his baseless claims."

Trump has already targeted individual poll workers like Ruby Freeman, who was attacked by him and his supporters after the election. Freeman, who's Black, has said she was forced to flee her home after false claims of election fraud against her led to racist threats and strangers showing up at her home.

The grand jury subpoena, dated April 17, was served on the county's director of elections on April 20, the county's court filing says. It seeks the "name, position/function, residential and email addresses, and personal telephone number(s)" for thousands of election workers "ranging from county employees who assisted on election day, to bus drivers who operated a mobile voting location, to volunteers and temporary poll workers," the filing says.

The subpoena "is a chilling escalation in the campaign to terrorize Fulton County election workers," the county's lawyers wrote, adding that threats arising from the current political environment have caused election workers to "fear for their physical safety." That and other stresses "including the likelihood of being scapegoated by public officials" are causing election workers to leave their jobs "in unprecedented numbers," they wrote.

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The county's lawyers note that the subpoena directs the county to provide the records not to the grand jury but to an out-of-state Justice Department lawyer or to the FBI agent who wrote the affidavit used for the seizure of the county's 2020 ballots in January.

The January seizure of the ballots and other records from Fulton County was one in a string of moves by Trump's administration to obtain past election records from critical swing states. The FBI in March used a subpoena to get records related to an audit of the 2020 presidential election in Maricopa County in Arizona. And the Justice Department in April demanded that Michigan's Wayne County turn over its ballots from the 2024 election, which Trump won against Biden's vice president, Kamala Harris.

The Justice Department is also fighting numerous states in court for access to voter data that includes sensitive personal information. Election officials, including some Republicans, have said handing over the information would violate state and federal privacy laws.

## **Boko Haram militants kill 23 soldiers in an attack on a military post, Chad says**

By MOUTA ALI Associated Press

N'DJAMENA, Chad (AP) — Boko Haram militants have killed 23 soldiers in an attack on a military post in the Lake Chad region, Chad's armed forces said Tuesday.

The region has long been threatened by the Nigeria-based Boko Haram militant group, which is known for carrying out attacks in neighboring countries.

Chad's military said another 26 soldiers were injured in Monday night's attack on Barka Tolorom island. In a statement, it said "a significant number of sect members were neutralized" and the attackers eventually were repelled.

President Mahamat Idriss Deby in a separate statement called the attack "cowardly."

A number of armed groups compete in the resource-rich, four-country Lake Chad region to fund their operations by imposing what they call taxes on local communities.

Boko Haram in the past decade and a half has killed several thousand people and displaced millions, according to the United Nations, and continues to carry out operations across parts of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

## **Trump's drugmaker deals may save economy \$529B over 10 years, White House says**

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — White House economists estimate that President Donald Trump's deals with pharmaceutical companies to drop some of their U.S. prescription drug prices to what they charge in other countries could save \$529 billion over the next 10 years.

The analysis obtained by The Associated Press includes the first economy-wide projections behind a policy at the core of Trump's pitch to voters going into November's midterm elections for control of the House and Senate. Democratic lawmakers have been doubtful about the savings claimed by Trump and these new numbers are likely to trigger additional questions about the data.

Cost-of-living issues are at the forefront of voters' concerns and higher energy prices tied to the Iran war have deepened the public's anxiety. Trump has tried in part to address affordability concerns by focusing on his efforts to cut deals with companies so that the cost of prescription drugs in the U.S. would no longer be dramatically higher than in other affluent nations.

"Now you have the lowest drug prices anywhere in the world," Trump said at a Friday rally before a crowd of seniors in Florida. "And that alone should win us the midterms."

The analysis was done by administration officials for the White House Council of Economic Advisers. They also estimated that federal and state governments could save a combined \$64.3 billion on Medicaid during the next decade because of what Trump calls his "most favored nation" policy on drug prices.



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Few of the details of the deals struck by the Trump administration and 17 leading pharmaceutical companies have been made public, making it hard to independently verify the projected savings. The White House analysis sought to estimate the prospective savings as more medications come onto the market and fall under Trump's framework — with one model in the report tallying the possible savings at \$733 billion over a decade.

Trump and his Department of Health and Human Services have touted his drug-pricing deals as transformative and urged Congress to codify their principles into law. Democratic lawmakers have challenged the administration's claims of savings. Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and 17 Senate Democrats in April proposed a measure requiring the administration to disclose the terms of the agreements signed by pharmaceutical companies.

"If these deals are so great, why is the Trump administration afraid of showing them to the public?" Wyden said when announcing the measure. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said his team would share details that didn't include proprietary information or trade secrets.

The potential savings estimated by the Trump administration would be substantial as Americans spent \$467 billion on prescription drugs in 2024, according to the most recent government data available. The analysis is premised on the idea that foreign countries would also pay more for their prescription drugs, which would diversify drugmakers' sources of revenue and preserve their ability to innovate with new treatments.

The Congressional Budget Office in October 2024 estimated that a plan similar to what Trump ended up adopting could reduce prescription drug prices by more than 5%, though the decrease "would probably diminish over time as manufacturers adjusted to the new policy by altering prices or distribution of drugs in other countries."

The scope of the savings claimed by the Trump administration are likely to intensify the scrutiny by Democrats, who counter that any price reductions would be offset by higher costs for prescription drugs not covered by the "most favored nation" framework. One of their main critiques is that pharmaceutical companies have increased their profit margins while working with the administration.

In April, staff working for Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., released an analysis that looked at 15 of the companies that have agreed to this drug-pricing plan and found that their combined profits jumped 66% over the past year to \$177 billion. The report noted that the tax cuts Trump signed into law last year "exempted or delayed many of the most expensive drugs" from price negotiations with Medicare.

The Trump administration has countered that they consider Sanders' critique to be flawed, saying that it's based on the list prices for pharmaceutical drugs instead the actual price that patients pay.

## **Zambia blasts the US over a \$2 billion health deal in exchange for critical minerals**

By FARAI MUTSAKA and GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Zambia is accusing the United States of tying a \$2 billion deal for critical health assistance to access to the southern African nation's rich mineral assets, and calling the outgoing U.S. ambassador's allegations of corruption "mischievous" and "undiplomatic."

The comments by Zambia's foreign affairs minister, Mulambo Haimbe, on Monday brought into the open simmering tensions over President Donald Trump's "America First" strategy, which is reshaping aid to Africa into transactional agreements.

Some African leaders and health experts have criticized the new U.S. stance and its demands for sensitive health data in exchange for badly needed support for health systems strained by the Trump administration's dismantling of foreign aid. Some say they would not receive access to health innovations like vaccines in return.

The U.S. is also seeking to challenge China, a dominant player in Zambia and much of Africa, whose minerals are critical to the green energy transition, including inputs for solar panels, electric vehicle batteries and energy storage systems.

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Zambia says talks stalled over data-sharing demands

In a statement, Haimbe described the accusations of Zambian graft and negotiation inertia by outgoing U.S. ambassador Michael Gonzales as “mischievous” and “deeply regrettable, undiplomatic and inconsistent with the spirit of mutual respect.”

Haimbe also accused the U.S. of tying access to critical minerals to the conclusion of the health deal, which Gonzales earlier dismissed as “alarmist allegations” that he called “disgusting” and “absolutely and patently false.”

Negotiations have continued for months to conclude the deal, one of dozens the Trump administration is pursuing in some of the world’s most aid-dependent countries.

Gonzales in late April said Zambian leaders had “abdicated their responsibilities, letting the United States pay for healthcare while officials diverted government funds to their own pockets.” He said Zambian authorities had “ignored” U.S. overtures to conclude a new deal.

But Haimbe said negotiations had stalled over “unacceptable” data-sharing demands “in violation of our citizens’ right to privacy” and “the insistence on preferential treatment of U.S. companies over Zambia’s critical minerals.”

Zambia “takes the view, first and foremost, that Zambians must have a say on how her critical minerals are used, and second that no one strategic partner is to be treated preferentially to others,” he said.

The U.S. Embassy did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

US says its approach aims to reduce donor dependency

The U.S. approach replaces decades of engagement anchored in the now-dismantled United States Agency for International Development and the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR.

In their place, U.S. officials are negotiating country-by-country agreements that recast aid as a transaction, tying funding to conditions including commercial provisions, domestic financing commitments, disease surveillance, pathogen sharing and even religion.

Since late last year, the U.S. has signed agreements with about 30 countries, many in Africa. Washington says the approach is meant to reduce donor dependency, promote local ownership and safeguard American interests, including against an aggressive China that dominates trade in Africa but contributes less aid.

There has been pushback.

Ghana last week said it had rejected a proposed deal over provisions granting broad access to sensitive health data without safeguards. Zimbabwe walked away from a \$367 million package over similar concerns. In Kenya, a \$2.5 billion agreement signed in December has been put on hold after a court challenge arguing it violates data protection laws.

In Lesotho, draft U.S. proposals sought 25 years of access to health data and biological samples before local officials secured a shorter five-year deal.

Health experts say data would largely flow one way

Critics say the data-sharing demands tilt toward U.S. interests and warn the information-sharing would largely go in just one direction: toward Washington.

The new agreements aim to ensure the flow of disease surveillance data and biological samples, but through bilateral channels, after the U.S. withdrew from the World Health Organization in January, said Asia Russell, executive director of advocacy group Health GAP.

Countries currently report disease outbreaks primarily through the WHO, which coordinates responses and is negotiating new frameworks on pathogen-sharing and equitable access to vaccines.

The U.S., now outside those talks, is pursuing direct access instead.

“They (the U.S.) want to understand what’s actually happening,” said Jen Kates, a senior vice president at the Washington-based non-profit KFF. “But they are trying to do it in a very different way.”

Health advocates say this risks creating a parallel global health system. In Zimbabwe, a government spokesperson in February said the government terminated negotiations because the U.S. was not offering a “corresponding guarantee of access to any medical innovations — such as vaccines, diagnostics, or treatments — that might result from that shared data.”

“That raises serious concerns about who benefits,” said Atilla Kislá of the Southern Africa Litigation Center.

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Advocates point to the harsh experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, when African countries contributed data and samples but were largely last in line for vaccines.

Experts warn against health as a 'bargaining chip'

The agreements with the U.S. are drawing criticism for closed-door negotiations and limited public scrutiny. "Secrecy is at the center of this. That puts accountability for results at risk," said Health GAP's Russell. "It's impossible to evaluate these deals properly without seeing the full terms. Part of what made PEPFAR successful was transparency. Now that's been taken away."

The deals also come with tighter financial conditions. Many include reduced funding compared to previous levels of U.S. assistance, while requiring countries to increase domestic health spending, with aid at risk if targets are not met.

"These are going to be very heavy lifts," said KFF's Kates. "Countries are already under strain."

Critics say some agreements also advance U.S. commercial and political interests, blurring the line between aid and transactional diplomacy.

"When health becomes a bargaining chip, everyone becomes less safe," Russell warned.

## **Today in History: May 6**

### **The Hindenburg crashes in flames in New Jersey**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, May 6, the 126th day of 2026. There are 239 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 6, 1937, the hydrogen-filled German airship Hindenburg caught fire and crashed while attempting to dock at Lakehurst, New Jersey; 35 of the 97 people on board and one crew member on the ground were killed.

Also on this date:

In 1882, President Chester Alan Arthur signed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred Chinese laborers from immigrating to the U.S. for 10 years. (The act would remain in effect until 1943.)

In 1889, the Eiffel Tower opened to the public as part of the Paris World's Fair.

In 1935, the Works Progress Administration was established under an executive order signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1954, medical student Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile at a track meet in Oxford, England, finishing in 3:59.4.

In 1994, the Channel Tunnel connecting England and France beneath the English Channel was officially opened in a ceremony attended by Queen Elizabeth II and French President François Mitterrand.

In 2004, President George W. Bush apologized for the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison, but rejected calls for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's resignation.

In 1954, medical student Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile during a track meet in Oxford, England, finishing in 3:59.4.

In 2013, three women who had been kidnapped and held for years are found alive at their captor's home in Cleveland, Ohio. (Ariel Castro pleaded guilty months later to kidnapping, rape and other offenses and died by suicide weeks after starting a life sentence plus 1,000 years.)

In 2023, King Charles III was crowned at Westminster Abbey in a grandiose ceremony replete with pomp and ritual. Charles was the 40th sovereign enthroned in the abbey — and, at 74, the oldest.

Today's Birthdays: Rock musician Bob Seger is 81. Country musician Jimmie Dale Gilmore is 81. Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair is 73. TV host Tom Bergeron is 71. Actor Roma Downey is 66. Actor-director George Clooney is 65. Hockey Hall of Famer Martin Brodeur is 54. Actor Adrienne Palicki is 43. NBA point guard Chris Paul is 41. Actor-comedian Sasheer Zamata is 40. Rapper Meek Mill is 39. Actor-singer Naomi Scott is 33. WNBA forward Angel Reese is 24. Actor Emily Alyn Lind is 24. Soccer player Cole Palmer is 24. Actor Aryan Simhadri is 20.