

Groton Daily Independent

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Saturday, June 6

605 American Legion Riders, 8:30 a.m., Legion
DAY OF PLAY

Falk Field:

9:00: U8 red vs. Britton
10:00: U8 blue vs. Britton
11:00: U10 vs. Aberdeen (DH)
1:00: U12 vs. Britton (DH)

Nelson Field

9:00: U8 Softball vs. Britton
10:00: U10 Softball vs. Britton
12:00: U12 Softball vs. Britton
3:30: U14/U18 Softball Scrimmage

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



Locke-Karst Field

1:00: U14 vs. Redfield
3:00: Jr. Legion vs. Redfield
5:00: Legion vs. Redfield
7:00: Amateurs vs. Redfield
"WINE on 9" at Olive Grove is Cancelled.

Sunday, June 7

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.
United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.
Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
U12 Baseball at Sisseton Tournament

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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.

Editing Human Embryos

Scientists have edited the DNA of early human embryos with a new level of precision for the first time, using an upgraded gene-editing technology that avoids the unintended damage seen in earlier versions. The development suggests it may one day be possible to correct disease-causing mutations before birth.

The work, led by scientists from Columbia University, was conducted on lab-grown embryos intended for research, not for implantation. It builds on CRISPR-Cas9, a tool that works like molecular scissors, snipping DNA at targeted locations to remove or replace faulty genes. A newer approach—base editing—allows scientists to swap individual DNA letters without fully cutting the strand. The refinement can reduce mutations that occur during DNA repair and could open the door to treating diseases caused by single-letter genetic errors, such as sickle cell.

The breakthrough heightens concerns about using the gene-editing technology to enhance traits. In 2019, a Chinese scientist was sentenced to prison for secretly editing embryos to make them HIV-resistant in the first known case of gene-edited babies.

May jobs report doubles expectations.

Estimates suggest 172,000 jobs were added to the US economy last month, far surpassing analyst expectations of around 85,000. Openings rose to the highest level in two years, while the unemployment rate held steady at 4.3%.

New York Knicks take 2-0 lead in NBA Finals.

It marks the team's 13th straight playoff win, with the series heading back to New York for Monday's Game 3 (ABC, 8:30 pm ET) as the Knicks seek their first title since 1973. The Knicks won 105-104 last night after San Antonio Spurs star Victor Wembanyama missed a potential game-winning shot at the buzzer. President Donald Trump is expected to attend Monday's game.

Xavier Becerra (D) advances in California gubernatorial race.

The state's former attorney general won second place in Tuesday's primary, 26% to 20%, over billionaire Tom Steyer. Becerra will face Steve Hilton (R), who finished first with 27% in the open primary.

... Meanwhile, the race for Los Angeles mayor remains too close to call. Incumbent Karen Bass (D) finished first (35%) and will advance to the general election, while influencer Spencer Pratt (R) leads Nithya Raman (D), 29% to 23%, with 64% of votes counted.

Suspect arrested in stabbing death of 81-year-old actor James Handy.

Michael Gledhill, the 44-year-old son of Handy's girlfriend, called police shortly after the attack that unfolded in the actor's front yard. Gledhill has been charged with murder. Handy appeared in films including "Jumanji" and "Top Gun: Maverick."

"Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Ted Lasso" star Anthony Head dies at 72.

His family said the British actor, best known for playing Rupert Giles in "Buffy" and Rupert Mannion in "Ted Lasso," died from complications of pneumonia. In the UK, Head became recognized as the face of a long-running series of Nescafé Gold Blend commercials involving a romantic storyline.

Internet traffic from bots passes human traffic on the web for the first time.

Cloudflare CEO Matthew Prince says bots now account for more than 57% of total HTTP requests (humans are around 42%), driven by a boom in AI agents. The crossover was originally anticipated at the end of 2027.

The 158th Belmont Stakes, final leg of horse racing's Triple Crown, set today.

The race (FOX, 7:00 pm ET) features a rematch between Kentucky Derby winner Golden Tempo and runner-up Renegade. Renegade enters as the 2-1 morning-line favorite in a nine-horse field.

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Humankind(ness)

Dear readers—Starting next week, we'll feature stories about dads and fatherhood for the rest of June. Share a memory, lesson, or note of gratitude [here](#) for a chance to be featured, and enjoy our final sampling of submissions about mothers.

"I love this memory of my mom. She was Filipina and they have a saying, 'Amoy Awraw,' meaning you smell like the sun. I would hear this from her after coming in from playing outside as a kid. It was like her way of saying that I must've had fun while playing. I think of this and her after being outside working in the yard or garden."

— Jennifer C. in Washougal, Washington

"I grew up in India, a child of missionary parents. When I graduated from high school at age 16, I flew to America for college. In those days, people dressed up to fly. My dear sacrificial, frugal mother used my Dad's suit to repurpose it for a little suit for me, and I will never forget that frugality, love, and sacrifice (of both my mother and Daddy). MANY such experiences were mine with her as my magnificent, amazing mother. She absolutely filled my heart and always loved very sacrificially."

— Mardi B. in Macon, Georgia

"I had always prepared a gourmet dinner for my mom on Mother's Day. I would usually get the day off work so I could prep all day, creating a multitude of special dishes. The year she died (in March 2012, after a long illness), I scheduled myself to work that Mother's Day to keep myself busy and without reminders of my mom. My daughter unexpectedly dropped by work that afternoon with flowers and a pair of Wonder Woman-emblazoned sneakers. Her thoughtfulness on a day that I had dreaded was a bright spot—and I still have the sneakers!"

— Jill P. in Brea, California

★ GROTON ★

TRANSIT

FUNDRAISER



Join us for an evening of great food,
good company, and community support!

 WHEN: Thursday, June 11, 2026	 TIME: 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	 WHERE: Groton Community Center
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 Groton Community Center— 109 N 3rd Street
One block East of Groton Transit

★ LET US DO THE COOKING FOR YOU! ★

 BURGERS	 BRATS	 BEANS	 WATERMELON	 CHIPS
--	--	--	---	--

AND THE FAMOUS MINI DONUTS! 

★ FOOD ★ FUN ★ DOOR PRIZES ★

FREE WILL DONATION

Please join us & Help support Groton Transit!





Cross-Country Pilot Makes Overnight Stop at Groton Airport

GROTON — The Groton Municipal Airport recently welcomed a unique visitor as pilot Pete Gutmann of Spokane, Washington, made an overnight stop during his cross-country flight to Chicago.

Gutmann became the first pilot to spend the night and fully utilize the airport's facilities since recent improvements were completed. After arriving Friday evening, he settled in for the night and took advantage of the airport's amenities, including preparing his own meal using the airport's stove.

Before departing Saturday morning, Gutmann planned to take a shower and get ready for the next leg of his journey eastward to Chicago.

The stop provided an opportunity to showcase the conveniences available to traveling pilots at the Groton airport. Airport supporters hope more aviators will take advantage of the facilities as word spreads about the services available for those making cross-country flights.

Gutmann's visit highlighted the role smaller community airports continue to play in supporting general aviation travelers as they make their way across the country.





SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

'No time to give up,' Biden tells South Dakota Democrats

Former president delivers keynote address at McGovern Day dinner

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR

SIoux FALLS — Former President Joe Biden told South Dakota Democrats on Friday that the country has endured dark moments before, and they must do the same ahead of this fall's elections.

"There's no time to give up," Biden said. "It's time to get up."

Biden was the keynote speaker at the South Dakota Democratic Party's annual McGovern Day dinner fundraiser at the Ramkota exhibit hall.

State party spokesperson Krista Burns said over 1,200 tickets were sold. Party Deputy Executive Director Joseph Zweifel said the event raised over \$275,000.

Biden criticized President Donald Trump, accusing him of corruption, cruelty and undermining democratic norms.

"The very democracy is at stake," Biden said.

He said time and time again throughout history, in moments of crisis, "we Americans have summoned the better angels of our nature. We brought the country back from the brink."

He said voters will do that again in November by voting for Democrats.

Biden also defended his own record, saying he was proud to be a pro-union president and to invest in infrastructure, workers and the middle class.

"By the way, have you noticed how many Americans say the economy was better under Joe Biden?" he said, pointing to higher gas prices.

Biden recalled visiting South Dakota in 2012 to eulogize George McGovern, whom he called a friend and a true leader. He recalled McGovern's warning that America could not accept the "diminishing" of its promise. McGovern, who grew up in Mitchell, was the Democratic Party's 1972 presidential nominee.

Other speakers at the event included Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Julian Beaudion, U.S. House candidate Nikki Gronli and candidate for governor Dan Ahlers. Biden endorsed them all earlier in the day in a press release.

"These are good, decent people who know where they come from and who they're fighting for," Biden said in the release. "The people of South Dakota deserve leaders who will actually show up for them. For South Dakotans this November, that's Dan, Julian and Nikki."

When asked whether bringing Biden to the state could negatively impact him in November, Ahlers said Biden is a consensus builder with a working-class background and a record of working across party lines. Ahlers said that's the type of leader he wants to be.



Former President Joe Biden delivers the keynote address at the South Dakota Democratic Party's annual McGovern Day dinner on June 5, 2026, at the Ramkota exhibit hall in Sioux Falls. (Photo by Joshua Haiar/

South Dakota Searchlight)

"He's not a New Yorker. He's not a Californian. He's from Delaware," Ahlers said.

Americans for Prosperity-South Dakota issued a news release criticizing Biden's appearance. "Inviting Joe Biden here just shows that Democrats are out of ideas and aren't ready to move on from policies that we know don't work," said State Director Jennifer Beving.

Democratic former state Sen, Reynold Nesiba said the Biden administration delivered wins for the state. He pointed to federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act, which he said allowed the state to make a once-in-a-generation investment in water and wastewater infrastructure. He also cited the Inflation Reduction Act, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the CHIPS (Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors) and Science Act as policy wins that benefited the state.

"We had so many Republicans in office at the time that weren't giving Biden credit for everything that's happened," Nesiba said.

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

Where backers of losing campaigns are shifting support ahead of South Dakota's governor runoff

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR AND MAKENZIE HUBER

Political newcomer Toby Doeden topped the primary field for South Dakota's Republican gubernatorial nomination Tuesday, but political insiders say he's alienated some of his opponents' supporters by targeting the losing candidates as "career politicians."

Gov. Larry Rhoden's campaign, meanwhile, ran an ad late in the campaign calling one of those now-eliminated candidates, U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, a "Washington politician" who "questions South Dakota's record."

To win a majority of votes and their party's nomination in the July 28 runoff, Rhoden and Doeden must now court the thousands of Republicans who preferred Johnson and House Speaker Jon Hansen.

While some Hansen supporters told South Dakota Searchlight they're leaning toward Doeden

because he shares some of Hansen's views, some connected to Johnson's campaign and some legislative leaders see supporters of both losing candidates leaning toward Rhoden.

The runoff result could hinge in part on turnout. Political analysts expect turnout to fall below the 42%



South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden, left, and Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden are candidates in a July 28 runoff for the Republican nomination for governor. (Photos by South Dakota Searchlight;

illustration by Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

of Republicans who voted Tuesday.

Doeden, Rhoden campaigns talk uniting, mending Republican rifts

Political analyst Drey Samuelson worked for two of South Dakota's last Democratic federal officeholders. He said it's hard to imagine the 23% of primary voters who supported Johnson shifting toward Doeden, who announced on election night that "it feels pretty good" to end Johnson's political career.

The comment shows that Doeden "is more interested in flexing on Dusty than he is in gaining their support for the runoff," Samuelson said.

Doeden said in a statement that "the disagreements that I have had with my opponents does not overshadow the love that we all have for the state of South Dakota."

Doeden said he congratulated Johnson and Hansen for their "spirited and hard-fought campaigns" and hopes to "learn from and connect with them" going forward.

"I have a bold plan and vision for South Dakota, something Larry Rhoden simply does not, and I am ready to get it implemented," Doeden said in a statement.

Ian Fury, spokesman for the Rhoden campaign, said Rhoden is the "only candidate" who can unite the divided Republican factions, pointing to Rhoden's accomplishments and track record as governor.

"If Hansen and Johnson voters want civility-driven conservative results, they should vote for Governor Rhoden," said Fury, adding that voters who want "bluster" and "empty promises" should vote for Doeden.

Hansen supporters could split

Hansen earned 21% of the vote on Tuesday.

Doeden's anti-Johnson rhetoric appeals to Hansen supporter Ed Fischbach, who's now leaning toward Doeden.

"I don't trust Rhoden when Dusty's people are getting behind him," Fischbach said.

The Spink County farmer is a vocal opponent of carbon capture pipelines, which supporters see as a way to benefit the ethanol industry through carbon sequestration credits and to help meet a growing demand for lower-carbon fuels.

Fischbach and a coalition of landowners worried about carbon pipelines crossing their land helped remake the Legislature during the 2024 primary cycle. That primary saw the ejection of several lawmakers who'd backed a compromise bill that would have given the proposed Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline a path to construction under more strict conditions.

Hansen, a vocal opponent of the use of carbon pipelines for eminent domain, was selected as Speaker of the House of Representatives with the help of the new lawmakers who were elected in 2024.

As lawmakers debated eminent domain, Doeden also spoke out against the project. The Summit project no longer includes a path through South Dakota.

Eminent domain refers to the power to take private property for public use, with just compensation to the owner determined by a court. While Rhoden signed a bill banning eminent domain for carbon pipelines, Fischbach said he's still not sure he will support Rhoden.

Fischbach thinks the Republican majority swept in on an anti-pipeline wave in 2024 will lose control of the Republican caucus to a group he sees as too friendly to such projects. Fischbach is concerned that Rhoden might support a renewed carbon pipeline for South Dakota in that environment.

"I'm just worried we're now going to be ignored by Rhoden," Fischbach said.

Like Fischbach, some Hansen supporters were motivated by his positions on eminent domain for carbon pipelines and his opposition to government support for data centers, which former Hansen spokesman Austin Goss said is echoed in Doeden's "anti-establishment" campaign message.

"If that's their ultimate goal and they continue to chase that, then they're going to go to Toby," Goss said.

Goss did not say which remaining candidate Hansen might endorse or support. Hansen himself did not return a request for comment.

House Majority Leader Scott Odenbach served alongside Hansen in the Legislature during the last two

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years.

The Spearfish Republican supported Hansen. Now, he said he will likely support Rhoden.

Odenbach feels that Doeden supporters "divided and destroyed conservatives" in the Legislature during the last two sessions as a way to undermine Hansen's campaign.

"It would be very difficult to form collaborative coalitions with some of the people who aligned themselves with Doeden based on their past behavior," Odenbach said.

Many of Doeden's outspoken supporters in the Legislature were ousted on Tuesday night.

"Should Doeden win, he'll have a hostile Legislature he's coming in with," Odenbach said.

Odenbach predicted gridlock under Doeden but more collaboration under Rhoden.

"Early on in Rhoden's tenure, he was fully aware of the strife and acrimony that'd built up between the Legislature and his predecessor," Odenbach said, in a reference to former Gov. Kristi Noem. "He made it a priority to have meetings regularly, show goodwill and humility, work together and compromise on things."

Johnson supporters shift toward Rhoden

Sioux Falls-based MarketBeat CEO and philanthropist Matt Paulson supported Johnson with over \$150,000. But the leader of the financial data company now plans to back Rhoden and Lt. Gov. Tony Venhuizen.

"Between Rhoden and the political unknown that Toby Doeden is, I think Larry and Tony are the better choice," he said.

Nathan Sanderson, president of the South Dakota Retailers Association — representing over 4,000 member businesses, said industry leaders are likely to get behind Rhoden, even if they preferred Johnson.

"The operations of government have been developed and crafted between the public and private sector over decades, and you've got a guy in Toby Doeden who doesn't even understand how they operate," Sanderson said. "And if you don't know how they operate, how can you profess to change them?"

Sanderson said a candidate claiming to know better amounts to an "entire disruption of a system we collectively agree works pretty doggone well."

Rep. Taylor Rehfeldt, R-Sioux Falls, whose political action committee offered financial backing to several of the Republican legislative candidates who won Tuesday, said she plans to support Rhoden with her vote but will focus her campaigning on legislative races. She preferred Johnson.

"I can't speak for anybody else, but what I can say is that Dusty supporters believe in practical, commonsense leadership. I can tell you with certainty, they will lean toward Larry Rhoden because he has the ability to govern," Rehfeldt said. "It may not be in the exact way you've hoped or longed to bring to the state like Dusty, but I do believe Rhoden won't cause harm to our state."

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

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.

US Senate blocks Trump's SAVE America Act, thwarting restrictions on voting

BY: JONATHAN SHORMAN

The U.S. Senate rejected the SAVE America Act on Thursday, dealing a blow to President Donald Trump's efforts to impose voting restrictions ahead of the November midterm elections.

Senators voted 48-50 against advancing an amendment that would have incorporated Trump's top legislative priority into an immigration-focused spending bill. The vote offered the clearest sign yet that despite pressure from the president, a handful of Republican senators continue to resist advancing the bill, which critics say would unleash immense chaos ahead of elections this fall.

The SAVE America Act would require voters to offer documents, such as a birth certificate or passport, proving their citizenship when registering to vote. It would also mandate voters show photo ID when casting a ballot and restrict where voters can register, effectively eliminating voter registration drives.

Democrats and voting rights groups have assailed the bill, saying it would disenfranchise voters and upend the midterms because the new rules would take effect immediately. Trump and the bill's GOP supporters say it's needed to combat noncitizen voting, an extremely rare phenomenon.

Since taking office last year, Trump has made a series of attempts to shape how elections are run. An executive order that would limit voting by mail remains in effect for now as opponents challenge it in federal court, and the Department of Justice continues to seek to force states to hand over sensitive voter data, so far unsuccessfully.

The Senate amendment, offered by Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, also included restrictions on sports participation by transgender athletes. On social media after the vote, Graham called the SAVE America Act "one of the most consequential" pieces of legislation developed by Trump and his team.

"All Democrats voted no, and they will eventually pay a price," Graham wrote.

Republicans also vote no

But the proposal fell short among a small group of Republicans, too. Sens. Susan Collins of Maine, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Thom Tillis of North Carolina joined Democrats in voting no.

Collins is seeking reelection in what is one of the most competitive Senate races in the country. McConnell and Tillis have both opted against seeking reelection, while Murkowski has said the bill would set up barriers for voters in her large, rural state.

Sixty votes would have been needed to advance the amendment — the same threshold to overcome a filibuster.



Montanans stand in line to register to vote at the Lewis and Clark County Elections Office on Nov. 5, 2024. (Photo

by Blair Miller/Daily Montanan)

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The vote came after the Senate spent weeks debating the SAVE America Act earlier this year before moving on to other business without a vote. Trump has urged Republicans to abandon the filibuster to pass the bill, without success.

"We will squash this blatant attempt at voter suppression," Sen. Mark Warner, a Virginia Democrat, wrote on social media after the vote.

The Senate also rejected, 50-49, a separate amendment offered by Sen. Mike Lee, a Utah Republican, that included a different version of the SAVE America Act. According to Lee, the amendment was the version of the bill passed by the House, which didn't include provisions on transgender athletes.

Collins voted in favor of the amendment after earlier opposing Graham's amendment.

California

Both amendments failed hours after Trump asserted, without evidence, that Democrats were stealing "the vote" in California. The state held primary elections earlier this week, but vote counting is often slow in the state, meaning vote totals reported on election night don't always reflect the final outcome of a race.

Trump linked California's elections to his push for the SAVE America Act, writing on social media that "I hope Republicans are watching" so they could pass the legislation.

"They found a lot of mail-in ballots last night, shockingly," Trump said at an unrelated Oval Office event on Thursday. "So we don't want that."

With the Senate unwilling to advance the SAVE America Act, some GOP lawmakers have begun offering alternative election-related bills.

Republican Reps. Julie Fedorchak of North Dakota and Laurel Lee of Florida on Thursday introduced the SAVE America Through REAL ID Act, which would create a grant program to help states provide REAL ID-compliant driver's license and identification cards to residents for free to low-income Americans.

On Tuesday, Sen. Marsha Blackburn, a Tennessee Republican, and Graham introduced the Election Security Partnership Act, designed to encourage states to submit their voter rolls to a computer program operated by the Department of Homeland Security that can identify possible noncitizens.

States can already upload voter data to the program, called Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements or SAVE, but the legislation would provide \$20 million in grants for states to offset any costs related to using SAVE.

Jonathan Shorman covers democracy for States Newsroom. Based in Kansas City, his coverage area includes elections and voting rights, fights over state and federal power, civil liberties and more. An alumnus of the University of Kansas, he previously covered politics for The Kansas City Star.

Trump administration processing freeze on asylum seekers violated law, judge rules

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — A federal judge in Rhode Island Friday struck down several Trump administration policies that halted processing for asylum seekers following a shooting in Washington, D.C., that left one West Virginia National Guard member dead and another seriously injured.

In a searing opinion, Judge John J. McConnell Jr. said the Trump administration “threw the lives of countless immigrants living in the United States into indeterminate legal limbo” when it directed U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to pause asylum applications and green card paperwork for immigrants hailing from 39 African, Asian, Latin American and Middle Eastern countries subject to the president’s travel ban.

The policy was announced in November after the two National Guard members were shot. Authorities later charged Rahmanullah Lakanwal, an Afghan national who was granted asylum, with the shooting. He has pleaded not guilty in federal court. A status conference is set for June 10 in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

McConnell, who was nominated by former President Barack Obama, said the policy “violated the very immigration laws that Congress has charged it with administering.”

USCIS is an agency within the Department of Homeland Security that oversees processing of legal immigration, ranging from asylum seekers to work authorization forms.

“USCIS’s hold on adjudications cannot be attributed to anything that these individuals did wrong; rather, it arises solely by the happenstance of their birth,” McConnell wrote.

He added that “the Court is reminded of a line often repeated in discussions around immigration policy: If people wish to immigrate to the United States, they ought to ‘follow the law’ and ‘do things the right way.’ This case serves as a perfect example of immigrants doing just that.”



A federal judge on June 5, 2026, struck down several Trump administration policies that halted processing for asylum-seekers following a shooting in Washington, D.C. of two members of the National Guard deployed to the nation’s capital. In this photo, tourists pass by members of the guard stationed outside Union Station in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 18, 2025. (Photo by Jane Norman/States Newsroom)

New policy paused processing

Labor unions and immigration advocacy groups in Rhode Island sued the Trump administration over the policies. They brought the suit on behalf of their members, immigrants who had the processing of their work visas and travel documents paused after the new policy following last year's shooting in Washington, D.C.

After the November shooting, on the eve of Thanksgiving, one guard member, U.S. Army Spc. Sarah Beckstrom, 20, died, and U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Andrew Wolfe, 24, was critically wounded, but recovered.

One of the groups that sued, Democracy Forward, praised the decision.

"This ruling reaffirms a basic principle: the federal government cannot shut down lawful immigration pathways or discriminate against people based on where they come from," Skye Perryman, president and CEO of Democracy Forward, said in a statement. "These unlawful policies caused enormous harm to families, workers, asylum seekers, and communities across the country who were left in limbo, unable to work, access protections, or move forward with their lives."

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

Telehealth access to abortion pill is lifesaving for domestic violence survivors, some say

BY: KELCIE MOSELEY-MORRIS

Carrie Frail was in the process of leaving an abusive relationship when she discovered she was pregnant. Her partner told her he could hit her in the stomach until she had a miscarriage, and it would save some money.

"I firmly believe he would have killed me at some point, whether accidentally or intentionally," Frail said.

She had a medication abortion at a Planned Parenthood clinic in St. Louis, Missouri, in 2008 while serving in the U.S. Air Force. She was relieved to have the option of using medication instead of a procedure, and it let her take less time off work. It wasn't an easy decision, she said, but she knew if she hadn't done it, she never would have been able to get away from that partner.

"I was too wrapped up mentally and emotionally in my life with him that ... I needed to be able to leave without giving him a phone number or letting him know where I was," Frail said. "I still believe that an abortion saved my life."

Access to telehealth prescriptions of mifepristone, one of two drugs used to terminate a pregnancy in the first tri-



Kaelah Oberdorf, 24, had a medication abortion in 2023 when she discovered she was pregnant while still recovering from the debilitating postpartum depression she had after giving birth to her daughter. Oberdorf said she was in an emotionally abusive relationship and didn't want her daughter or herself to be tied to that partner for life. (Courtesy of Kaelah Oberdorf)

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mester or to treat miscarriages, is threatened by an ongoing lawsuit in Louisiana. That state government has sued the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, trying to strike down the agency's 2023 rule allowing the medication to be dispensed without an in-person visit.

Researchers, advocates and survivors of domestic violence say it's vital to keep telehealth access available for people in abusive relationships who need discreet abortion options. The Louisiana lawsuit, however, argues in part that mifepristone has been weaponized against pregnant women in abusive relationships and shouldn't be available by telehealth.

The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals temporarily blocked the FDA's 2023 rule in early May, making in-person visits required for mifepristone prescriptions for two days before the U.S. Supreme Court paused that decision on emergency appeal. The court, with the exceptions of Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas, decided to keep the rule in place while the appeals case proceeds. But the rule could still be struck down again later, and the full case may end up in front of the Supreme Court.

Data from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey from 2023-24 showed about 34% of women and 17% of men experienced physical or sexual violence or stalking by an intimate partner. Those figures could be higher because of hesitance to report incidents of abuse. States with high rates of violence include many with near-total abortion bans, including Arkansas, Indiana, Oklahoma, Tennessee and West Virginia — meaning residents who are victims of reproductive coercion have less access to abortion medication.

Pregnancy is a time of heightened risk in a relationship with domestic abuse, according to research, and intimate partner violence is a leading non-obstetric related cause of death among pregnant and postpartum women. Those risks are highest among Black and Indigenous people in the United States.

Reproductive coercion

The lawsuit over mifepristone access includes Louisiana resident Rosalie Markezich as a plaintiff, who says the availability of the drug without an in-clinic visit allowed her boyfriend to order the pills in 2023 and pressure her to take them. In her written statement in the case, Markezich said the pressure caused ongoing trauma, and that if she'd had to see a doctor beforehand, she could have told the provider she didn't want an abortion and the pills would never have been prescribed.

Anti-abortion groups, including Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America and Family Research Council, submitted amicus briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court about the type of coercion Markezich said she experienced. The telehealth option prevents in-person screenings for coercion, Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America said, and the in-person requirement provided "a line of defense" against reproductive coercion. Family Research Council also argued that because the FDA's initial approval of the telehealth provision did not include a thorough study of how it could be used for coercion, it should be struck down.

Liz Tobin-Tyler, professor of health services, policy and practice at the Brown University School of Public Health, said people in abusive relationships very commonly experience what researchers call reproductive coercion. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, that includes situations in which a partner tries to control when and how pregnancy occurs, either by intentionally causing a pregnancy or forcing someone to end it, as with Markezich.

Coercion can also occur when a partner interferes with contraceptive methods, such as trying to force the use of a certain method or intentionally failing to use contraception. Tobin-Tyler said sometimes the abusive partner attends medical appointments to try to influence decisions related to birth control and other medical care discussions.

"It all comes back to that aspect of control," she said.

Robin Turner, Montana director at gender equity organization Legal Voice, said what happened to Markezich was terrible, but that Louisiana could prosecute Markezich's partner under existing laws, including harm induced by drugs. She said reinstating the in-person requirement for mifepristone would harm many other people because it would apply nationwide.

"It's not a reasonable or proportional way to address what happened to the client," Turner said. "We

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have to take what happened to the plaintiff seriously — and understand that taking that (access) away is not effective.”

Turner co-authored a brief for Legal Voice submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court during the emergency appeal proceedings that centered on the importance of access to mifepristone for people in relationships marked by domestic violence.

“A lot of what being in these relationships is about is your world getting smaller, and we don’t want our systems to imitate the dynamics of abuse. But that’s what happens when the government takes away the access to the healthcare that they need,” Turner told Stateline.

Safety planning for hotline callers

Kaelah Oberdorf, 24, said she was on birth control when she discovered she was pregnant in 2023 in upstate New York.

She was in an emotionally abusive relationship, struggling financially and still recovering from the postpartum depression she experienced after having her first child when she was 20, despite thinking that she couldn’t get pregnant because of a medical condition. The depression was so severe she had to be hospitalized. She decided that ending the pregnancy was the right thing to do for her mental health and the daughter she already had.

“I didn’t want to be tied to him for life, I didn’t want my daughter, or any of my children, to be tied to him for life,” said Oberdorf, who now lives in Georgia. “I already had a living child who did not need to be kept in that situation, and if I’d had another one, even if I left him, I mentally would not have been able to handle it.”

Research also shows that pregnant and postpartum women in rural areas experience higher rates of intimate partner violence, possibly because they’re farther from in-person medical care, which could contribute to lower rates of preventive screenings for abuse.

Elizabeth Ling, associate director of legal services at nonprofit hotline If/When/How, which offers reproductive legal aid, estimated the hotline receives between five and 10 calls a week from people who talk about experiencing intimate partner violence, whether it’s physical, emotional or some form of coercion. She said callers in rural communities are some of those who need access to medication abortion by telehealth and via mail because they are often the furthest away from a clinic and can’t travel because a partner is actively watching their movements.

If/When/How talks callers through their legal options and counsels them about legal risks, which Ling said is a top concern for people in abusive relationships. It’s common for them to be fearful of their partner reporting them for having an abortion, which can bring unwanted attention from police and investigations even if it doesn’t result in charges.

The hotline also helps people make a safety plan for receiving abortion medication, talking through steps such as where medication will be mailed, who has access to that mailbox and how to navigate a situation with a partner tracking their movements.

“Abortion pills really are a lifeline for those who call and share their experiences with us,” Ling said.

Frail, who still lives in Missouri, now has a daughter and a son who are in their 20s. She has left many voicemail messages recently for Republican U.S. Sens. Josh Hawley and Eric Schmitt, who have advocated for the withdrawal of FDA approval for mifepristone and called for federal investigations into drug manufacturers. In her messages, she says that being able to choose when she had her children made her a better parent.

“I know if I had not had an abortion, I would not have ever been able to get away from that abusive partner,” Frail said.

Stateline reporter Kelcie Moseley-Morris can be reached at kmoseley@stateline.org.

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

Kelcie Moseley-Morris covers reproductive rights for Stateline. Based in Idaho, she has covered the effects of abortion bans nationwide, as well as reproductive health issues.

RFK Jr. seeks to peek at Americans' medical records for clues on autism and vaccines

Nebraska nonprofit led effort to share data from medical records with the federal government

BY: DARIUS TAHIR, KFF HEALTH NEWS AND AMANDA SEITZ, KFF HEALTH NEWS



U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. speaks during a policy announcement event at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on Jan. 8, 2026 in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images)

U.S. health secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is pursuing federal government access to most Americans' medical records, in a quest to research a link between vaccines and autism — a connection the medical establishment studied for decades and flatly rejects.

The Department of Health and Human Services is seeking data from little-known state systems that allow hospitals and clinics to exchange detailed, identifiable patient information, KFF Health News has learned.

In private meetings, some public health leaders have objected to giving Kennedy's team access to such data, raising doubts that it's legal or that the information would even be useful.

They have also expressed concerns about allowing the federal government to peer into the mi-

nutiae of Americans' medical records, which could mean viewing anything from doctors' notes to prescription history. HHS has offered no insight into how it will protect or handle the personal health information it obtains.

But Kennedy told KFF Health News that medical records are key to investigating the cause of autism, vaccine safety and chronic diseases. And millions of dollars in grant money has poured into a Nebraska nonprofit that has assisted Kennedy's effort, according to state records.

He and his advisers have been frustrated that federal access to Americans' medical records has been limited.

"We need a good health record system, and one of the things that really surprised me most when I came into office is that there is — that the systems are broken," Kennedy said in a May interview. "We've had to go to the states and, luckily, we've got a lot of cooperation from the states, but we now have databases together that we can actually do the studies on. Those studies are in motion."

HHS has not publicly announced any new projects involving medical records and autism or vaccine research. Kennedy faced blowback last year when he proposed compiling the medical records of people with autism to create a federal disease registry — which health department officials later disputed was underway.

But Kennedy said in May, "We have a whole pipeline of studies that will be done over the next year."

Though the White House has steered Kennedy away from further changes to U.S. vaccine policy ahead

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of November's crucial midterm elections, President Donald Trump has regularly echoed Kennedy's doubts about vaccine safety and last week signed an executive order calling for the U.S. to reduce the number of vaccines recommended for children.

Kennedy's political appointees and allies — including William "Reyn" Archer III, a former Texas health official and vaccine critic whom Kennedy hired as a senior adviser — have led the initiative for the health department to collect and examine medical records.

Federal officials met with leaders of the state-run health information exchange systems several times over the past year and asked how the personal medical records they maintain could be used for vaccine research, according to seven people who participated in the discussions or were familiar with them.

Craig Behm, who runs the Maryland health information exchange, said Kennedy's team asked about how the vast trove of medical records they store from hospitals and health systems could be used to study vaccines.

"If this administration wants to conduct research on the effectiveness of vaccines, are you saying you all can help us conduct that research?" Behm recalled being asked by a top official at HHS' health information technology office.

Last June, Behm and leaders of other state exchanges met with Kennedy's top advisers to discuss sharing more medical data with federal agencies. The state organizations followed up with a pitch in October for a new surveillance system that would give the federal health department "real-time, 24-hour data feeds on opioid and chronic disease trends" within a year, according to a presentation reviewed by KFF Health News. Under the proposal, HHS would get data from 90% of the population's medical records by 2028.

Administration officials regularly asked during the meetings how the records could be used to monitor vaccine safety. Kennedy has rejected the federal government's current vaccine-monitoring systems; decades of research has shown immunizations are safe and effective for most people.

"Vaccine safety, or whatever words you want to use, has come up pretty consistently in those conversations," said John Kansky, CEO of the Indiana Health Information Exchange.

Kansky sees the potential value of sharing information from the exchanges for public health but is worried about the focus on vaccines: "It's like, oh man, I wish you would have picked something that pushed fewer buttons for people."

A system to monitor chronic disease

Nearly every state has at least one health information exchange — often regulated by state laws and run by private companies or nonprofits — that enables hospitals and health systems to immediately share patients' medical records with one another. The systems allow doctors and nurses to quickly pull up nearly anyone's medical history and records at emergency rooms or share after-visit summaries and notes with patients' primary care providers, for example.

In certain circumstances — most often dealing with cases of infectious diseases such as measles or flu — the exchanges notify public health authorities, like the state health department or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Using the exchanges for broader public health purposes is not an unusual idea in itself. But it can present privacy, legal and ethical complications, health officials say.

In the end, Behm said his organization in Maryland declined to share more data with the federal government for vaccine research, noting that sharing medical records for that purpose would require a rash of approvals from hospitals, state political leaders and research boards. Any new data-sharing agreement should also have a clear, detailed framework outlining what would be shared and with whom, he added.

"A number of us said, 'We can't do anything our agreements don't allow us to do, so no,'" Behm said. Indeed, most health information exchanges have contractual restrictions on who can access clinical data.

Kansky said Indiana is still weighing whether to provide additional data for Kennedy's project, and that nothing has yet been shared.

HHS spokesperson Emily Hilliard did not answer questions about how many states are participating in Kennedy's project, what new data the agency is collecting, how much the federal government is spending

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on the initiative, how it is protecting patient privacy, or who has access to the data.

"HHS is strengthening public health surveillance and modernizing data systems to better understand and combat the childhood chronic disease epidemic as part of Secretary Kennedy's Make America Healthy Again agenda," Hilliard said in an emailed statement. "Americans deserve robust systems to monitor the drivers of chronic illness."

Kennedy has asserted, without evidence, that vaccines can cause chronic illness.

A Kennedy partner in Nebraska

At least one state has been cooperative.

The former leader of Nebraska's state health information exchange has led the effort to share data from medical records with the federal government.

Jaime Bland, former CEO of CyncHealth — the Nebraska health information exchange used by most hospitals and health systems in the state — said several states are looking to "open up channels" to provide more analysis to Kennedy's team.

"They're looking at the data differently and providing some insights back to the CDC," Bland told KFF Health News.

Bland was among a group who proposed that CyncHealth would help kick off the initiative, according to a 43-slide PowerPoint presented to federal officials during an October meeting.

CyncHealth and other state health information exchanges would "ingest data from hospitals, clinics, laboratories, pharmacies, payers and social services agencies," then "link claims and clinical records through a master patient index."

Data from the exchanges "will be deidentified where appropriate," according to one slide.

The federal government would pay the exchanges for furnishing the records, according to the proposal: \$3 a person, annually.

Officials would "frame publicly that this is not a new database, but a federated trust model that delivers real-time data for all HHS missions," the presentation reads.

After the meeting, Nebraska's health department was awarded a large grant from the CDC, and CyncHealth in turn got millions of dollars from the state.

On Dec. 19, the CDC announced new funding under its Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity program, which sends money to state and local health departments for lab work, health information enhancements and solutions for outbreaks.

Nebraska's state health department was awarded \$18.7 million — the most of any state last year, though Nebraska is the 38th most populous state. By comparison, Texas received \$9.2 million, and California got \$10.8 million.

CyncHealth was then awarded three contracts totaling \$13.6 million from the state health department just weeks later, on Jan. 9 and Jan. 16, according to a publicly accessible database of state contracts.

Grace McNamara, a spokesperson for CyncHealth, said it retained \$2.4 million of the funding for Kennedy's project; the remaining money was distributed to "other participating states and various vendor organizations for implementation support."

A former CDC official who was aware of the transaction, but not authorized to speak publicly about it, confirmed the money was intended for CyncHealth to supply data for Kennedy's initiative to look at vaccines and autism. McNamara said that the "work is focused on improving outcomes related to acute and chronic illnesses."

"The referenced project is not research, but rather a proof-of-concept project on how health information exchange and public health can work together to improve health outcomes and is not specific to autism," she said in an emailed statement.

McNamara did not answer questions about what type of medical data is being provided to the federal health department or whether patients' identifying information is removed.

Bland left her post at CyncHealth — where she was paid nearly \$420,000 a year — in December. She

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was named in April as the chief data strategist for the MAHA Institute — a think tank founded by allies of Kennedy and Trump to advance their Make America Healthy Again movement.

Bland agreed with Kennedy that data from state health information exchanges could provide more insight into autism's causes or vaccine injuries.

"The data is so fragmented, so modeled when it comes to population health and public health, that we lose sight of the individual stories," Bland said. She told a story she had heard about a woman who had a seizure after receiving the HPV vaccine.

"You know, the vaccine is safe — it absolutely is — but it wasn't safe for her," Bland said. "As public health officials, we say the vaccine is safe. But there are cases where it is not."

Daniel Jernigan, a former top CDC official who left the agency last summer, said he tried to point Kennedy to data that would help the health secretary study vaccine safety and autism.

After 31 years at the CDC overseeing public health surveillance, emerging infectious diseases and the influenza divisions, Jernigan thought the solution was simple. The secretary could work with researchers to obtain huge databases pulled from health systems nationwide and maintained by major electronic health records companies.

Those databases are deidentified, meaning they don't include patient names or other information that can identify individuals. Jernigan said Kennedy didn't seem interested.

Instead, as The New York Times first reported, the health secretary dispatched two top advisers — Archer and Hannah Anderson, his former deputy chief of staff — to the CDC's headquarters in Atlanta last July to download millions of identifiable patient records directly from the Vaccine Safety Datalink, the system the health agency uses to investigate complications from vaccines. The records, though, were decades old.

Jernigan said the federal government has limited legal authority to access medical records from state health information exchanges. In any case, examining those records may provide a view of a person's medical history that will not necessarily produce answers to Kennedy's questions about vaccines and autism.

"If they're just using the electronic health record data, there are limits to that," Jernigan said. "If they're only looking at electronic health record data, all you're going to get is what was captured in the encounter. It's not going to be very satisfying."

KFF Health News data reporter Maia Rosenfeld contributed to this article.

KFF Health News is a national newsroom that produces in-depth journalism about health issues and is one of the core operating programs at KFF—an independent source of health policy research, polling and journalism. Learn more about KFF.

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Darius Tahir is a correspondent at KFF Health News.

Amanda Seitz is a health policy reporter at KFF Health News.

'No known exposures' after measles detected in Brookings county child, health department says

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

South Dakota Department of Health officials have flagged the state's ninth case of measles this year.

Healthcare providers detected measles with a child younger than 14 in Brookings County, department spokeswoman Tia Kafka said. A Wednesday notice from the department asked medical providers to "be alert" for measles symptoms in Brookings, Deuel, Hamlin, Kingsbury, Lake and Moody counties.

The department did not issue a press release about the measles case, as it has in prior cases because, "there are no known public exposures at this time," Kafka said in a written statement.

The last case reported before Wednesday was in March, according to the department's measles dashboard.

So far this year, there have been six measles cases reported in Grant County, one in Brown and two in Brookings. Seven were in patients who were unvaccinated or who did not know their vaccination status. Kafka did not say if the most recent patient was vaccinated.

Measles symptoms appear in two stages. The first could include a runny nose, cough, slight fever, red eyes sensitive to light and a rising fever. Between the third and seventh days of infection, a person with measles will have a temperature of 103-105 degrees and develop a red blotchy rash, typically beginning on the face before spreading to the entire body.

People who are not immune, vaccinated or are unsure of their status should contact their medical provider, the department has advised.

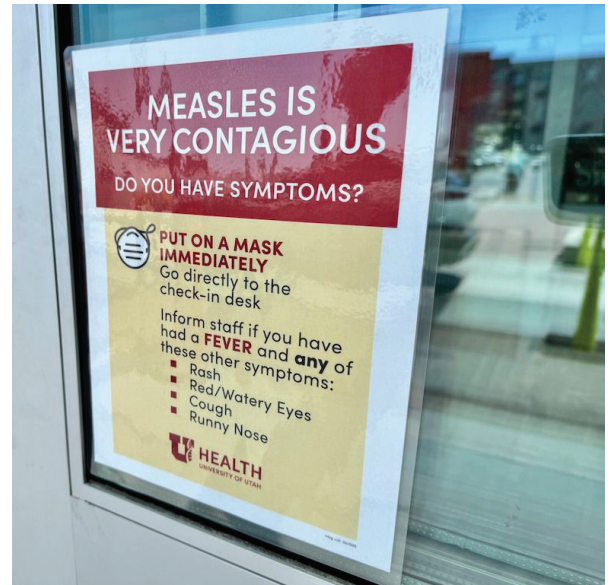
According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there have been 1,983 confirmed measles cases nationwide in 2026 across 40 states. Those states include South Dakota, Minnesota and Nebraska.

There were 2,267 confirmed cases across the U.S. in 2025, according to the CDC.

Measles was considered fully eradicated in the U.S. in 2000. Falling measles vaccination rates in recent years have contributed to its return. Several areas of the U.S. now have vaccination rates below the 95% threshold needed to prevent outbreaks.

The kindergarten measles vaccination rate in South Dakota has tumbled from 97% to 90% in the past 10 years. Health officials blame disinformation about vaccine safety, which has contributed to a rise in parents claiming religious exemptions to avoid otherwise mandatory school immunizations.

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.



A sign at a University of Utah health clinic warns visitors about the spread of measles. Under the Trump administration, federal health officials have cut back the number of recommended vaccines, and more states are offering exemptions for parents who don't want to vaccinate children entering public schools. (Photo by McKenzie Romero/Utah

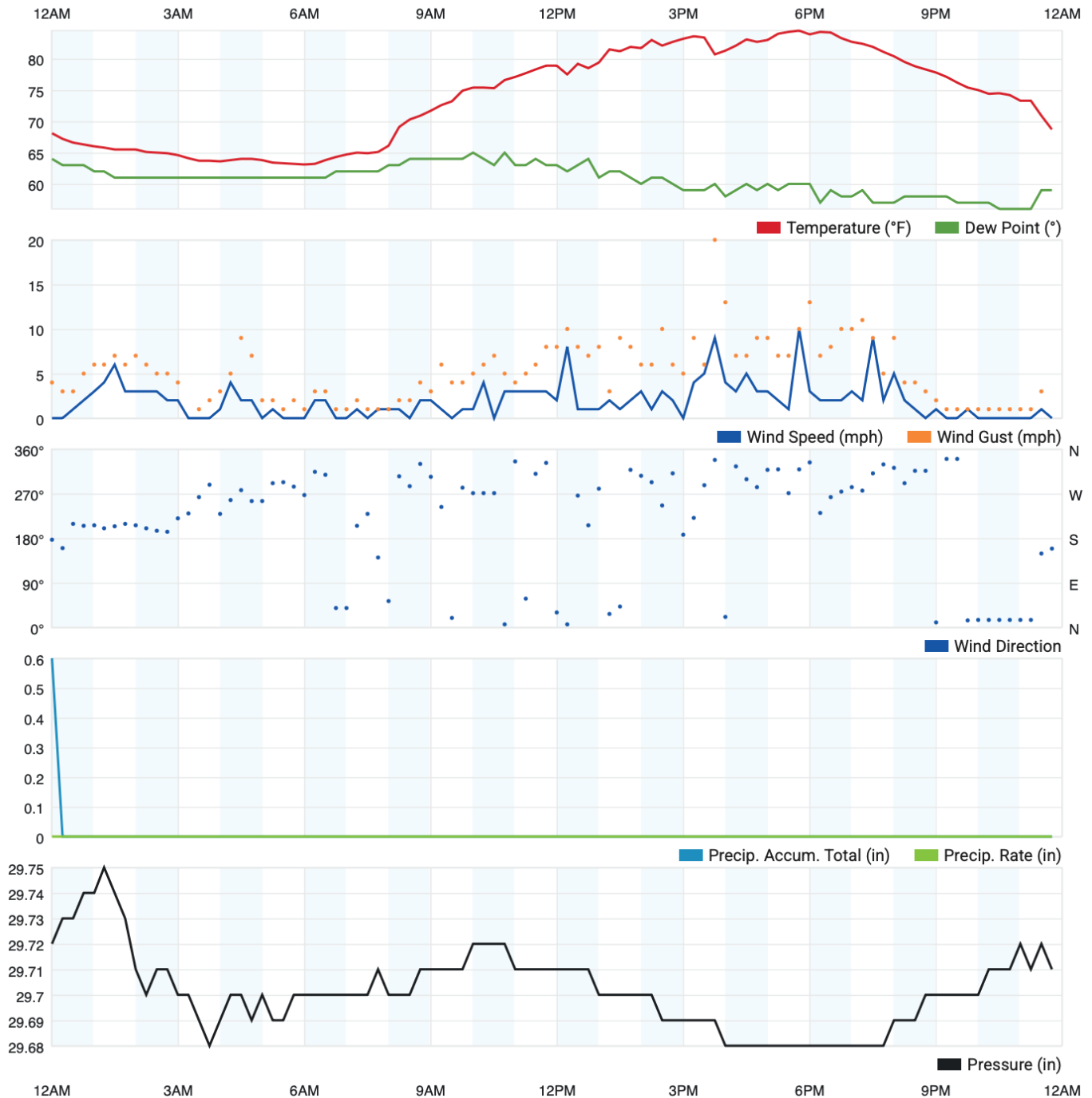
News Dispatch)

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

June 5, 2026



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Today



High: 90 °F

Hot

Tonight



Low: 64 °F

Mostly Clear

Sunday



High: 92 °F

Hot and
Breezy

Sunday Night



Low: 63 °F

Breezy.
Partly Cloudy
then Chance
Showers

Monday



High: 85 °F

Slight Chance
Showers then
Slight Chance
T-storms



Gusty Winds, Heat & Humidity This Weekend

June 5, 2026
1:32 PM CDT

Heat Index (°F) Forecast

	6/6 Sat								6/7 Sun							
	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	
Aberdeen	59	56	68	84	88	87	81	71	67	68	78	90	94	92	83	
Britton	59	57	70	82	85	85	77	70	68	69	78	90	93	90	79	
Chamberlain	64	62	72	85	90	92	88	79	75	70	78	90	95	94	86	
Clark	60	58	68	79	83	83	78	71	69	67	74	86	89	86	78	
Eagle Butte	62	59	68	82	86	87	82	76	71	69	75	85	90	90	81	
Eureka	58	55	69	82	85	86	79	72	68	66	74	87	92	90	82	
Gettysburg	59	56	69	82	86	87	81	74	70	67	76	87	91	91	83	
McIntosh	60	59	69	82	86	87	81	75	71	69	76	87	90	88	78	
Milbank	59	58	68	81	85	85	78	69	65	66	76	90	92	89	79	
Miller	60	58	70	83	87	88	82	74	71	69	77	88	91	90	82	
Mobridge	60	58	69	84	88	89	82	75	71	68	76	88	93	92	82	
Murdo	63	60	68	83	90	92	85	77	73	69	76	87	93	91	83	
Pierre	62	59	69	85	91	93	86	79	74	71	78	91	97	96	85	
Redfield	59	56	68	84	87	88	81	72	70	68	77	90	94	92	82	
Sisseton	60	58	70	82	84	85	78	70	66	67	76	88	93	89	82	
Watertown	61	58	68	82	86	86	79	73	70	68	75	87	91	88	82	
Webster	60	58	68	79	83	84	77	71	67	68	75	86	89	87	79	
Wheaton	60	59	72	82	84	85	78	69	66	67	77	88	91	88	79	



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

We already addressed increased winds through the weekend, however we also have heat and humidity to deal with coming up. Here are the heat index values expected through the weekend.

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Heat & Humidity Trends:

June 5, 2026
1:39 PM CDT

Elevated Heat Risk This Weekend and for Next Week

	6/6 Sat	6/7 Sun	6/8 Mon	6/9 Tue	6/10 Wed
Aberdeen	1	2	2	2	2
Britton	1	2	2	2	2
Chamberlain	1	2	2	2	3
Clark	1	1	1	2	2
Eagle Butte	2	2	2	2	2
Eureka	1	2	2	2	2
Gettysburg	1	2	2	2	2
McIntosh	2	2	2	2	2
Milbank	1	2	2	2	2
Miller	1	2	2	2	2
Mobridge	1	2	2	2	2
Murdo	1	2	2	2	2
Pierre	2	2	2	2	2
Redfield	1	2	2	2	2
Sisseton	1	2	2	2	2
Watertown	1	2	2	3	3
Webster	1	1	1	2	2
Wheaton	1	2	2	2	2

Heat Risk: The likelihood that temperatures & humidity cause negative health impacts (ie heat exhaustion or heat stroke)

Category	Risk of Heat-Related Impacts
Green 0	Little to no risk from expected heat.
Yellow 1	Minor - Primarily affects those who are extremely sensitive to heat and without cooling/hydration.
Orange 2	Moderate - Affects those who are sensitive to heat, especially those without cooling/hydration, and some health systems and industries.
Red 3	Major - Affects anyone without cooling/hydration as well as health systems and industries.
Magenta 4	Extreme - Rare and/or long-duration extreme heat with no overnight relief affecting anyone without cooling/hydration as well as health systems, industries, and infrastructure.

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Heat Risk is used to help assess the risk associated with the heat and humidity as temperatures and humidity are both on the rise through the next several days.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 85 °F at 5:39 PM

Low Temp: 63 °F at 5:56 AM

Wind: 20 mph at 3:44 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 99 in 1950

Record Low: 30 in 1897

Average High: 78

Average Low: 53

Average Precip in June.: 0.66

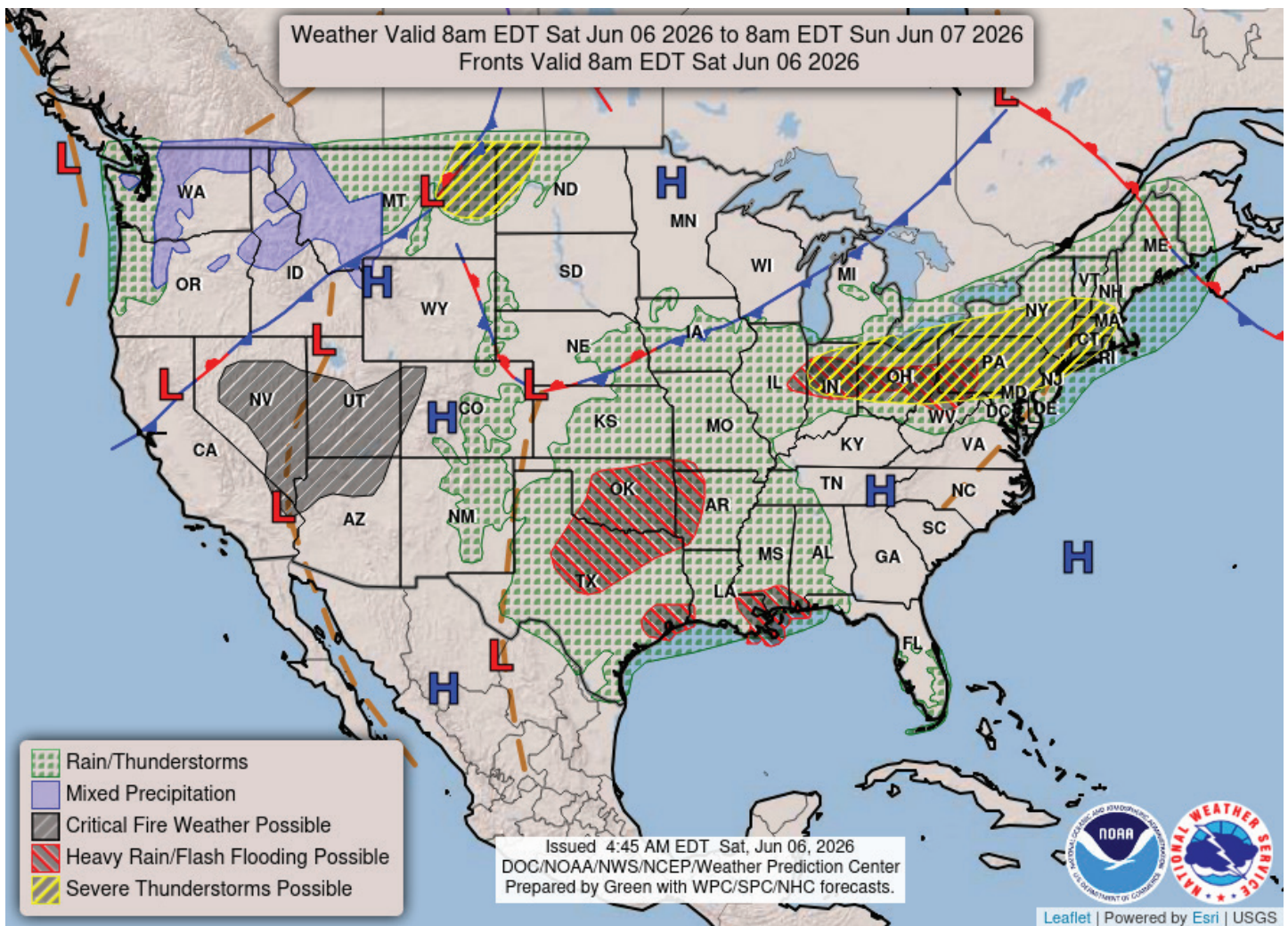
Precip to date in June.: 0.56

Average Precip to date: 7.91

Precip Year to Date: 6.92

Sunset Tonight: 9:17 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:44 am



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Today in Weather History

June 6th, 1895: An estimated F2 tornado moved northeast from 6 miles west of Summit, passing 3 miles northwest of Summit. Buildings on eight farms were damaged.

June 6-7th, 1897: Light to heavy frost, and in some localities, killing frost occurred on the 6th and 7th. These cold temperatures, late season frost in May, and wet conditions hampered the planting season. Luckily, growing conditions changed toward the middle and end of the month. Some low temperatures on the 6th include 26 degrees in Castlewood and Watertown, 29 in Mellette, 30 in Aberdeen and Milbank, and 32 in Highmore. Some low temperatures on the 7th include 24 degrees in Castlewood, 25 in Watertown, and 30 in Milbank.

June 6th, 1999: Heavy rains of 2 to 4 inches caused flash flooding on a creek feeding into the Grand River. At a ranch southwest of Bullhead, a bunkhouse wall was moved off the foundation by a wall of water coming down the creek. A machine shop was washed away with several equipment and many tools. Some tools and equipment were found more than a mile down the creek. A pump house and a grain bin were also destroyed. A pickup was washed down the stream, and a propane tank near home was rolled over. A colt was picked up by the water but managed to escape. The powerful water flow took out several dead trees and washed them downstream. Finally, the flash flood washed out a road and a culvert.

1816 — The temperature reached 92 degrees at Salem MA during an early heat wave, but then plunged 49 degrees in 24 hours to commence the famous year without a summer . (David Ludlum)

1894 — One of the greatest floods in U.S. history occurred as the Willamette River overflowed to inundate half of the business district of Portland OR. (David Ludlum)

1975 — A tornado, reportedly spinning backwards (spinning clockwise), was sighted near Alva, OK. (The Weather Channel)

1977 — Severe thunderstorms with large hail and winds to 100 mph caused one million dollars damage around Norfolk, VA. A forty-two foot fishing boat capsized near the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel drowning 13 of the 27 persons on board. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Thunderstorms in southern California produced one inch hail at Mount Pinos, and marble size hail at Palmdale. Thunderstorms in southeastern Arizona produced heavy rain leaving some washes under four feet of water. Six cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings soared into the upper 90s. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Seventeen cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Williston ND with a reading of 104 degrees. Thunderstorms in Florida produced wind gusts to 65 mph which damaged two mobile homes northwest of Melbourne injuring six people. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Thunderstorms developing during the late morning hours produced severe weather through the afternoon and night. Thunderstorms spawned 13 tornadoes, and there were 154 reports of large hail and damaging winds. A strong (F-3) tornado injured six persons at Lorenzo, TX, and thunderstorm winds gusting to 100 mph killed one person at Glasscock City, TX. Softball size hail was reported at Lipscomb and Glen Cove TX. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)



The Courage to Obey

The grace of our Savior strengthens us to share boldly and endure faithfully..

2 Timothy 2:1-3: 1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

3 Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

In today's passage, the apostle Paul tells us to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (v. 1). He knew the Lord stood by his side and strengthened him so that the good news would be spread. And Paul moved forward in faith (2 Timothy 4:17).

In the same way, the Holy Spirit gives us the courage and power to obey God's commands, so we can rely upon His might to carry us. As believers, we should ...

Share knowledge. The church not only possesses the good news about salvation; it also has the full riches of God's Word. Many people have listened to biblical teaching and experienced the Lord intervening in their lives. To keep those lessons to oneself can leave unbelievers in harm's way and deprive fellow Christians of necessary wisdom.

Suffer willingly. Hardship is part of the Christian experience. Jesus tells us we will face tribulation, but we can take heart because He has already "overcome the world" (John 16:33). It is little wonder, then, that Paul reminds Timothy to stand strong in the Lord and see to it that the teaching is shared (2 Tim. 2:1-2).

Paul encouraged Timothy to "remember Jesus Christ" (2 Timothy 2:8). This also applies to us. When we focus on the Lord, His grace strengthens us to share boldly and endure faithfully.

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:
06.05.26

6 38 51 54 55 5

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 28 Mins 23
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.05.26

13 30 50 52 66 2

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$392,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.03.26

2 5 19 22 24 6

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$28,580,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 28 Mins 23
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.03.26

2 23 24 28 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$119,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 43 Mins 23
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.03.26

26 28 31 56 64 13

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 12 Mins 23
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.03.26

14 16 38 55 64 12

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$212,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 12 Mins 23
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

Israeli airstrikes kill 9 including Lebanese army officers after ceasefire deal

BEIRUT (AP) — Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon Saturday killed nine people including three members of the Lebanese military, the Lebanese army and state media said, days after the two sides reached a new ceasefire deal.

An airstrike on the road linking the city of Nabatiyeh with the town of Marjayoun occurred in the morning killing a brigadier general, a captain and another soldier, the army said without immediately releasing their names.

Another airstrike on the southern village of Saksakiyah killed six people and wounded four, state-run National News Agency said.

"The continued, deliberate, and repeated Israeli aggression against Lebanon, its people and its army only strengthens our resolve, faith and determination," the army said in its statement.

It said Israel's attacks aim to thwart all efforts "to reach a solution that would restore stability, establish a comprehensive ceasefire and lead to the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territories."

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military on the airstrike that killed the troops.

The latest declared ceasefire came about through U.S.-brokered talks between Israel and Lebanon's government, which accuses Hezbollah of dragging the country into war and had made efforts to disarm it before the latest hostilities. The Lebanese militant group has refused the truce.

The airstrikes came a day after Lebanon's president and prime minister criticized Iran for opposing the latest ceasefire deal between the Lebanese government and Israel, saying their country should not be used by Tehran as a "bargaining chip" in its talks with Washington.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi responded in a post on X Saturday by saying that after President Joseph Aoun's comments "one would think it's Iran that has occupied a fifth of Lebanon, displaced a quarter of Lebanese and is bombing his country on daily basis."

"Had Lebanon been a bargaining chip for Iran, we'd have a deal long ago. Save Lebanon from your real foe, Mr. President," Araghchi said in reference to Israel.

The war began on March 2 when Hezbollah fired rockets at northern Israel, two days after Israel and the U.S. began their attacks on Iran. Israel has since launched a ground invasion of Lebanon and carried out wide attacks that have displaced more than 1 million people.

Israeli troops have seized around a fifth of Lebanon, pushing further into the country's south than at any time since the end of Israel's 1982-2000 occupation.

More than 3,500 people have been killed in Lebanon since the war began. The fighting has killed at least 29 Israeli soldiers and three civilians.

Ukraine targets St. Petersburg again after Putin rejects Zelenskyy's offer for direct talks

By The Associated Press undefined

Residents of St. Petersburg, Russia's second-largest city, were told not to leave their homes after a "large-scale" Ukrainian drone attack targeted the city Saturday morning, underscoring Kyiv's growing ability to hit deep inside Russia, a day after the Russian president refused an offer to meet his Ukrainian counterpart.

St. Petersburg Gov. Alexander Beglov advised the residents not to go outside and warned of possible disruptions to mobile internet service, while Regional Gov. Alexander Drozdenko said 141 drones were shot down over the surrounding Leningrad region.

Russia's Defense Ministry said its air defenses shot down 376 Ukrainian drones.

"Last night, our drones covered a distance of about 1,000 kilometers to the St. Petersburg region – to the enemy navy's arsenals and a base in Kronstadt," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote of

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the attack on X.

Although no casualties were immediately reported, the renewed attack on St. Petersburg is the latest embarrassing blow to Russian President Vladimir Putin's efforts to cast the conflict as a distant event that doesn't affect Russian daily life.

A Ukrainian drone strike set ablaze an oil terminal in the city and hit a nearby naval base Wednesday, hours before the opening of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, Putin's annual showcase for investment.

Speaking at the forum, Putin said Thursday that Russia will strengthen its air defenses to counter recent Ukrainian drone attacks, which have reached deep inside his country and cast a cloud over the event in his hometown of St. Petersburg.

Putin on Friday rejected a proposal by Zelenskyy for a face-to-face meeting on the four-year-old conflict, saying he sees "no point" in it. Thursday's letter, the first public message Zelenskyy has written directly to Putin since Russia sent troops into Ukraine in 2022, was a sweeping critique of the Russian leader's 26 years in power, as well as some taunts about his age.

With the front line barely moving as swarms of drones hinder advances, both sides have sought an edge by launching long-range strikes.

In Ukraine, one person was killed and three wounded overnight into Saturday in the Dnipropetrovsk region, as Russian forces struck three districts nearly 30 times with drones and artillery, regional head Oleksandr Hanzha said.

In Zaporizhzhia, seven people sought medical care after a Russian drone strike started a fire at a parking lot, according to regional head Ivan Fedorov.

Russia targeted Ukraine overnight with 272 strike drones, and air defenses shot down 249 of them, the Ukrainian air force said Saturday.

The pope is in secularized, polarized Spain, where the Catholic Church has a complex legacy

By NICOLE WINFIELD and SUMAN NAISHADHAM Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Pope Leo XIV's trip to Spain will bring the American pontiff to a traditional center of European Christianity, where the Catholic Church has a complex legacy and the Socialist-led government is in the midst of a political crisis.

Leo's weeklong visit begins Saturday in Madrid, where upon landing he was greeted by the country's Catholic monarchs, King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia, and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez. His first day ends with a prayer vigil with young people, many of whom will be witnessing their first pope on Spanish soil.

In a sign that the clergy sexual abuse crisis continues to overshadow papal trips, the Vatican confirmed late Friday that Leo would meet with survivors during his visit. The Spanish Catholic hierarchy is belatedly reckoning with decades of abuse and cover-up in the once-staunchly Catholic country.

The visit, the first by a pope in 15 years, signals Leo is returning papal attention to Europe and its Christian roots. Pope Francis largely stayed away from the traditional centers of European Christianity in favor of smaller Catholic communities farther away.

But with the Spain trip — and a day trip to Monaco in March, a quick stop in San Marino in August and a four-day visit to France planned for September — Leo is seemingly keen to bring his message of peace, unity and human dignity to a continent in the throes of Russia's war in Ukraine, the fallout from the U.S.-Israeli war in Iran and anxiety over artificial intelligence.

Leo acknowledged Saturday as he headed to Spain that he's competing with another VIP in Madrid this weekend.

Puerto Rican sensation Bad Bunny is performing two shows of his 10-concert Spanish tour this weekend in the Spanish capital.

"When confronted with the question 'Do I go see Bad Bunny or do I go to see the pope?' I think many

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will go to see Bad Bunny," Leo said. But he said he believed others would go to see him.

A first-ever papal speech to the Spanish Parliament

The highlight of Leo's visit to Madrid will be his speech Monday to both chambers of the Spanish Parliament. Even though St. John Paul II visited Spain five times and Pope Benedict XVI three, no pope has ever addressed Las Cortes Generales, as the Parliament is known.

Such speeches are rare and often become one of the most important of a pontificate.

But Leo will find a legislature that is highly polarized, with the ruling Socialist party hammered by a series of corruption scandals. Conservative parties including the Popular Party and far-right Vox have called for Sánchez to step down before elections in 2027, and have roundly criticized his government's migration policies.

The papal visit will be hard to miss in Madrid. Leo's face has been plastered across subway cars, billboards and ads in metro stations in the Spanish capital. On display at some souvenir shops are posters and magnets of Leo and other papal knick-knacks. Bakeries are selling limited edition pope cakes and pastries.

Despite some expected protests of Leo's visit — the trip is costing some 15 million euros (\$17.2 million) — his speech to Parliament in particular is something of a milestone for Spain's Catholic Church. Shaped by the anticlerical violence of the country's 1936-1939 civil war, more recently, it has dealt with a credibility crisis over revelations of decades of clergy abuse and cover-up.

While much of Europe has secularized in recent decades, Spain stands out after it underwent a religious crisis following the 1975 death of Gen. Francisco Franco. A staunch Catholic, Franco viewed his reign as something of a religious crusade against the anticlerical anarchist, leftist and secular tendencies in Spain.

As Spain transitioned to a democracy, the percentage of Spaniards who declared themselves Catholics fell from 90% in the 1970s to just 55% in 2025, according to polling data collected by Spain's state opinion agency. Of that group only 19% say they regularly attend Mass.

And yet there are signs of renewed interest in all forms of spirituality, Christian and otherwise, especially among young Spaniards, said sociologist Narciso Michavila Núñez, president of the GAD3 consulting firm that polls young people about their faith, among other things.

In recent surveys, he said, pollsters are registering newfound interest in faith among Gen Z Spaniards. Michavila and others cite the popularity of Spanish pop star Rosalía's new hit album "Lux," which is overtly spiritual.

"The truth from a common view is not that God is in fashion. What is new in this moment, in this visit of the pope, is that God in the Spanish society is not a tattoo anymore," he said.

A Mass at Sagrada Familia and migration message

After Madrid, the other highlights of the trip include Leo's visit midweek to Barcelona, where he will celebrate Mass in the Sagrada Familia basilica on the centenary of the death of its famed architect, Antoni Gaudí. While Catalonia's beloved native son is on the path to possible sainthood, no announcements on his canonization are expected during the trip, Bruni said.

During the June 10 Mass, Leo will inaugurate the soaring central spire of the basilica, the Tower of Jesus Christ, which when it was moved into place earlier this year made Sagrada Familia the tallest church in the world.

Leo will also fulfill a wish of Francis by ending his visit with a two-day stop in the Canary Islands, the Spanish archipelago that is closer to Africa than the Iberian peninsula and a key destination for migrants leaving West Africa.

Leo will meet with migrants and the humanitarian organizations providing care for them. He is expected to toss a wreath of flowers into the sea, in memory of migrants killed during the treacherous Atlantic crossing. He'll do so from the port in Las Palmas that in 2020 earned the nickname the "Dock of Shame" because thousands of migrants were forced to sleep in the open for weeks on end during a spike in arrivals.

Francis had made reaching out to migrants and refugees a hallmark of his papacy and Leo has followed suit by demanding dignified treatment of migrants, especially in his native United States.

"For those of us who are immigrants and find ourselves in this situation of having family far away, some-

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one like the Pope — who is an important figure for the entire world — coming here is truly something that makes me say ‘wow,’” said Constantina Nchama, an immigrant from Equatorial Guinea in Madrid days before Leo’s visit.

“It’s something that happens once in a lifetime,” she said. “I’m very, very excited about that, truly.”

Spain’s Socialist-led government has bucked a general trend in Europe and the U.S. by announcing it will grant legal status to potentially hundreds of thousands of immigrants living and working in the country without authorization. Sánchez has highlighted the benefits of legal migration to the country’s economy with an aging workforce and low birthrate.

Traders face big losses after Uganda closes Congo border over Ebola contagion fears

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA Associated Press

MPONDWE BORDER, Uganda (AP) — Leah Masika was on the verge of tears as she thought of her valuable consignment of plantain stuck in a long convoy of trucks on both sides of the Uganda-Congo border. Her cargo, destined for Uganda, was starting to leak water, and would go bad within hours if there was no movement.

The Ugandan trader was awaiting clearance from authorities for trucks to pass through the Mpondwe border post on Thursday after they were prevented from entering or leaving Uganda as part of escalating measures to prevent cross-border Ebola contagion.

“Our things are here rotting,” she said.

On May 28, about two weeks after Congo declared an outbreak of Ebola in the eastern Ituri province, Uganda closed its western border in a decision that reflected growing fears of cross-border contagion. Exceptions were made only in emergency cases, including for the outbreak response, humanitarian, cargo or security reasons.

But in recent days, as the spread of Ebola in eastern Congo appeared to outpace the response, authorities in the Ugandan frontier district of Kasese have tightened the measures.

Traders say they are frustrated by the slow movement of cargo trucks. Some at the Mpondwe border post told The Associated Press that while they knew the tough measures are provoked by fear of Ebola contagion, they felt that holding up the trucks was excessive.

Sylvia Asimwe, a clearing agent, pointed to the queue of trucks stretching over a mile on the Ugandan side. At least seven were carrying fish imported from China and destined for the Congolese cities of Beni and Butembo.

Asimwe was adamant those Congolese towns are in the province of North Kivu, not the Ebola epicenter of Ituri. “The fish is going to spoil,” she said. “So much money.”

‘Ebola has wasted our work’

The Uganda-Congo border is several hundred miles long and crossed by numerous footpaths beyond formal border posts. Trade is often booming along the route up to Mpondwe, and there is kinship between the Bakonzo people on the Ugandan side and the Banande on the other side.

Mpondwe is Uganda’s top border post for informal exports that were valued at an estimated \$131 million in 2023, according to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

After the recent border closure, some shops were shuttered and young men, deprived of casual work, sat on stools dolefully.

“The situation is bad,” said Ismail Mumbere, who often works as a vendor of roadside snacks on the Ugandan side. “A lot of people earn from here, in many businesses. But now the government has told us there is Ebola. Ebola has wasted our work.”

The current outbreak in Congo is suspected to have infected over 1,000 people. The number of confirmed cases is much lower because many suspected victims succumb to their symptoms outside hospitals and without firm proof they had Ebola.

Congolese authorities, as of Thursday, have confirmed 452 cases with 82 deaths in total. Seventy-one

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new cases were confirmed within 24 hours, which the authorities said is a sign of "active community transmission".

The World Health Organization, while declaring the current outbreak a public health emergency of international concern, discouraged border closures. But the U.N. agency also acknowledged that neighboring countries are at high risk of contagion.

"With movement of cargo, and maybe trucks, is mobility of people, and we want to reduce that," said Arafat Bwambale, a surveillance officer for Kasese, defending the measures.

Officials were trying to stop Congolese nationals from crossing to Uganda by way of more than two dozen footpaths along the Mpondwe border, he said.

All available vaccines and treatments for Ebola don't work for patients with the rare Bundibugyo type spreading in Congo, making the outbreak worrisome.

Ugandan authorities are cautious after 19 confirmed cases

Uganda has confirmed 19 Ebola cases, all linked to the outbreak in the neighboring country after some Congolese nationals sought treatment in the Ugandan capital, Kampala, before it was known there was an outbreak.

The disease was believed to have been spreading for days or weeks before the outbreak was declared May 15.

Uganda has had multiple Ebola outbreaks of its own since 2000, when the disease killed more than 200 people.

Ebola, named for a tributary of the Congo River, was first discovered in 1976 in simultaneous outbreaks in Congo and present-day South Sudan. Outbreaks are believed to start with the virus spilling over into humans from an infected animal such as a fruit bat. These cross-species infections often happen when people handle and eat wild meat, according to experts.

Once Ebola has infected one person, the virus then spreads through close contact with sick or deceased patients' bodily fluids, such as sweat, blood, feces or vomit.

Tracing and isolating contacts is seen as key to stopping the spread of Ebola, in addition to getting medical workers proper protective equipment.

Bwambale, the surveillance officer, said the nearest referral hospital in Kasese has an isolation center and is equipped with a lab that can return results on a sample within six hours. In recent days, samples taken from 41 people in the Kasese area tested negative for Ebola, which manifests as hemorrhagic fever.

Still, authorities appeared to be planning more restrictions.

A meeting of the local Ebola task force was likely to come up with "a more restricted way on how both the cargo or the trucks get into the country in a systematic way," Bwambale said.

That alarms traders for whom the Mpondwe border post is the primary route of business.

Masika, the plantain dealer, said she would not order more goods from Congo until the current outbreak was over. But she would be in trouble if the cargo already in transit didn't reach various locations in and around Kampala, where the fruits, deep fried or boiled, are a staple of breakfast menus in restaurants.

Masika said she couldn't countenance a loss of 50 bags, each worth roughly \$44.

"We are begging them to help us and open (the border)," she said. "We will not go back to Congo."

Air raid sirens in Bahrain as Iranian missiles and drones head for Gulf neighbors

By SAMY MAGDY and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Bahrain's government said Saturday that Iran fired ballistic missiles and drones towards it and Kuwait. The foreign ministry said they had been intercepted and called on Iran to immediately cease attacks on its Gulf neighbors.

The statement came hours after the U.S. military said it shot down Iranian ballistic missiles and drones launched toward the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf Arab allies on Friday, while striking some of the Islamic

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Republic's coastal surveillance radar sites in response, an exchange of fire that further frayed a shaky ceasefire with Tehran.

The exchange of strikes comes as the Trump administration ramps up pressure on Iran to make a deal to end the conflict.

U.S. Central Command said on social media Friday night that Iran fired seven ballistic missiles toward Kuwait and Bahrain, with U.S. forces intercepting six of the missiles and a seventh failing to reach its target. The military said there were no reports of harm to U.S. personnel.

The ballistic missiles were fired after the U.S. earlier in the day shot down four Iranian drones that were launched toward the Strait of Hormuz.

"The attack drones posed an immediate threat to regional maritime traffic," U.S. Central Command said on social media.

Kuwait's military said forces were intercepting missiles and drones attacking the country, while Bahrain activated air raid sirens and told residents to move to the nearest safe location and follow official instructions.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard said it targeted the Ali Al Salem airbase, which hosts U.S. forces in Kuwait, and the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet in the tiny Gulf island nation of Bahrain, according to the state-run IRNA news agency.

The U.S. military is enforcing a blockade on Iranian ports in response to Tehran's chokehold on the crucial corridor for global oil and natural gas shipments, which has sent energy prices spiking and posed political problems for President Donald Trump's Republican Party ahead of the midterm congressional elections.

U.S. Central Command said it hit the radar sites, including an island in the strait, "to defend against further attacks."

Trump promises a quick end to US-Iran conflict

It was the latest in back-and-forth attacks that have strained the tenuous ceasefire in the war and efforts to reach a deal to extend that truce. Earlier this week, Iranian drones heavily damaged a passenger terminal at Kuwait's main airport, killing one person, wounding dozens and briefly closing the airfield.

Despite the attacks raising new concerns that the ceasefire could collapse, Trump told reporters Friday that "the situation with Iran seems to be going quite well."

"We're going to come out of Iran very quickly and it's going to be very strong one way or the other, whether it's a piece of paper or the very tough way," Trump said at an event with farmers in Wisconsin. "The very tough way is maybe the easier way, but we're going to come out, and your fertilizer prices are going to go way down, just like they were four months ago."

Trump increasingly appears to be boxed in on a conflict that has settled into a holding pattern. U.S. and Iranian negotiators reached a tentative agreement a week ago to extend the ceasefire by 60 days and start a new round of talks on Iran's nuclear program. But Trump has called for unspecified changes and Iranian officials have shown no public signs of signing off on the deal.

Asked on Friday why it was taking so long, Trump told NBC's "Meet the Press" it was because "it's a very hard thing for them."

"There are things they never thought they'd be doing that they're going to have to do. They've got no choice, and it takes a little while," he said in the interview.

Trump said the Iranians still have 21% to 22% of their missiles.

Israeli strikes on Lebanon continue

His administration also has touted the latest ceasefire agreed to this week by the Lebanese government and Israel after U.S.-brokered talks in Washington. However, the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group has rejected the agreement and new attacks have put it at further risk.

The Israeli military on Friday struck multiple parts of southern Lebanon and issued evacuation warnings for nine villages, including one that has sheltered thousands of people displaced by the fighting. The strikes killed nine people in six locations in southern Lebanon, the state news agency reported.

The Israeli military said two soldiers were wounded, one severely, in an encounter Friday with militants in southern Lebanon.

The fighting in Lebanon, where Israeli forces have seized large swaths of the south, also threatens ef-

forts to end the Iran war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz because Iran has demanded that any lasting truce extend to Lebanon.

Besides the drone interception in the Strait of Hormuz, the U.S. military said earlier Friday that its forces boarded a sanctioned oil tanker linked to Iran in the Indian Ocean as the United States seeks to prevent Iran from profiting off its oil and other goods.

The U.S. also targeted Iran's energy sector with new sanctions on a group of people, firms and tankers.

Armenia prepares for an election that could reshape ties with Moscow and the West

By YURAS KARMANAU and KATIE MARIE DAVIES Associated Press

Armenia's parliamentary elections Sunday will be a vote on its geopolitical future as incumbent Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan seeks closer relations with the European Union and the United States despite longstanding ties with Russia that have been championed by his critics.

Many analysts favor Pashinyan's Civil Contract party to retain control of the parliament, but with many opposition parties running on pro-Russia platforms, the Caucasus nation's place on the international stage has been thrown into the spotlight.

In the months ahead of the election, Russian President Vladimir Putin and other Russian officials have warned Armenia that joining the EU could come at the expense of massive economic damage by disrupting Armenian trade ties with Moscow and its allies.

"These are the first elections in Armenia's history where geopolitical orientation has become a decisive issue," Mikayel Zolyan, an analyst and former member of the Armenian Parliament, told The Associated Press from Yerevan. "Until now, Armenia has remained within Russia's sphere of influence, and this was taken for granted, but now, for the first time, this is being called into question."

Armenians disappointed with Moscow over Karabakh

Relations between Moscow and Armenia soured in 2023 after Azerbaijan took control of the entire Karabakh region. The mountainous region had been controlled for decades by ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia, part of a long conflict between the neighboring countries.

Armenian authorities accused Russian peacekeepers deployed to the region of failing to stop Azerbaijan's onslaught. Moscow, busy with the conflict in Ukraine, has rejected the accusations, arguing its troops didn't have a mandate to intervene.

"It turned out that Russia's image as a guarantor of Armenian security was not based in reality, and it all collapsed after the Karabakh war," said Alexander Iskandaryan, director of the Caucasus Institute in Yerevan.

Pashinyan has begun cautiously weakening ties with Moscow, joining the International Criminal Court in 2023 and suspending its participation in the Moscow-dominated Collective Security Treaty Organization in 2024.

Armenia also officially declared its aspirations to join the EU and hosted the European Political Community summit in Yerevan in early May.

A convincing win in the parliamentary vote would give Pashinyan a mandate to continue the trend and finalize a deal with Azerbaijan.

Western ties could bring benefits

Western nations have sought to show some of the advantages that closer ties could bring.

In August, U.S. President Donald Trump hosted Pashinyan and Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev to sign an agreement declaring an end to their decades-long hostilities and including provisions for the creation of a new transit corridor between Azerbaijan to its exclave of Nakhchivan. An agreement in February could pave the way for a U.S. company to build a new nuclear reactor in Armenia.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen also has said that Europe is ready to invest in Armenia's energy industry and its "booming digital scene."

Trump has endorsed Pashinyan and called him a "great friend" and a leader who is making his country

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"strong, wealthy, and very secure!"

Opposition parties back Moscow ties

Much of Armenia's opposition is still dominated by pro-Russia groups and many are also against normalizing relations with Azerbaijan. Key opposition figures have called for Pashinyan to stand down over the loss of Karabakh.

Nineteen political forces, including two blocs and 17 parties, are taking part in the elections.

Pashinyan's main rival is the Strong Armenia Party, which wants closer business ties with Russia and accuses Pashinyan of attempting to spark a war with Moscow. The party is led by Armenian-Russian billionaire Samvel Karapetyan, who is on trial for calling for the overthrow of Armenia's government. He denies the charges.

Other potential contenders include former President Robert Kocharyan, who leads the Hayastan bloc and has accused Pashinyan of "seriously undermining" relations with Russia.

Russia applies economic pressure

Russia, which has a military base in Armenia, has warned that Yerevan's Western turn could have dire political and economic consequences.

Putin has compared Armenia's course to that of Ukraine in thinly veiled threats and has suggested Russia's conflict with Ukraine started with its attempts to join the EU.

In recent weeks, Russia has introduced new restrictions on Armenian produce after citing sanitation violations, banning Armenian flowers, certain types of cognac and wine, eggplants, potatoes, dried fruits, fish and more.

Armenia's membership in the Eurasian Economic Union, a Russian-led customs union, was placed under formal review during a members' meeting in Kazakhstan in May, with threats to suspend it completely by December.

During the Kazakhstan summit, the governments of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan also demanded Armenia hold a referendum on whether it would remain in their group or seek EU membership. Pashinyan has rejected the need for such a vote.

Armenian government statistics show 38% of Armenia's exports went to countries within the Eurasian Economic Union in 2025, the vast majority heading to Russia. In comparison, just 8% of trade went to the EU.

The Russian measures prompted von der Leyen to announce Thursday that the 27-nation bloc would send 50 million euros (\$58 million) to support Armenia. In a statement, she said Russia is "weaponizing" economic relations and its ban on imports was "nothing short of economic coercion."

Facing an uncertain future

Russia could exert further pressure on Armenia because it controls a significant portion of the country's energy and infrastructure and supplies cheap gas.

"It's completely unrealistic to say that Armenia can somehow overcome Russian influence in a short period of time," analyst Zolyan said.

Armenia's civil society also is concerned by what they have described as Russian-backed disinformation campaigns ahead of the vote. Moscow denies any interference.

Daniel Ionnisyan, head of the Union of Informed Citizens, an independent election watchdog, told the AP that his organization has documented instances of Russian interference through social media campaigns, cyberattacks, vote buying and bribery of journalists.

That echoes findings of a delegation from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which visited Yerevan in May and said foreign interference included illicit political financing, cyberattacks, economic coercion and direct attempts to manipulate the electoral process.

"These hybrid tactics aim not only to sway public opinion but to secure long-term geopolitical leverage over Armenia," the delegation said.

Democrat Xavier Becerra advances to general election in race for California governor

By SOPHIE AUSTIN Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Democrat Xavier Becerra advanced to the general election for California governor Friday after pitching himself as an experienced choice to lead the nation's most populous state and succeed Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom.

Becerra leaned on his more than 35 years in public office, including as state attorney general and U.S. health secretary, to argue that he was the most qualified candidate in a crowded field.

"The people of the great state of California, in the greatest nation on earth, have spoken — loudly and proudly," Becerra said in a statement. "We are never backing down. November, here we come."

It was not yet clear who Becerra would face in the general election. His top rivals came down to Republican Steve Hilton, a former Fox News commentator backed by President Donald Trump, and Democrat Tom Steyer, a billionaire climate activist who poured \$215 million of his own money into his campaign.

Born and raised in Sacramento by Mexican immigrant parents, Becerra has a wife and three daughters. He has said his family's immigrant background mirrored his "underdog" gubernatorial campaign, in which he initially failed to garner substantial support before surging in the final months.

After one of the top Democratic contenders, Rep. Eric Swalwell, was accused of sexual assault and dropped out of the race, Becerra benefited from an opening to coalesce Democratic support. He quickly racked up key endorsements from labor groups and Latino legislative leaders.

Becerra has vowed to maintain the state's mantle as a chief antagonist to President Donald Trump. As attorney general, he filed more than 120 legal actions against the first Trump administration on everything from immigration to climate policy.

The president has also been in a spat with the state over its drawn-out vote count. Trump made baseless claims about mass fraud Thursday, and on Friday, federal prosecutors said they opened investigations into allegations of election fraud. Hilton called for California to limit mail ballots to those who request them, rather than sending them to all registered voters.

During the campaign, Becerra's rivals scrutinized his leadership as health secretary during the COVID-19 pandemic and the unaccompanied migrant children crisis in 2021, when Becerra's Department of Health and Human Services was responsible for shelters where they were housed. Some of them were criticized as having inadequate living conditions, and there were also concerns about authorities failing to thoroughly vet sponsors with whom some children were placed.

If elected, Becerra said, he would declare states of emergency to address high energy costs and housing shortages and to freeze home insurance rates.

Though California is one of the nation's most diverse states, Becerra would be the first Latino to hold the office since the late 1800s.

Newsom was barred by term limits from seeking a third stint in office.

These candidates for governor worked for Joe Biden. Some don't really talk about it though

By STEVE PEOPLES and MATT BROWN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden is not on the ballot this fall.

But at least three prominent members of his administration will be, representing the Democratic Party in a trio of governor's races that may test the resilience of the Biden brand two years after he left the White House under a cloud of disapproval.

Two Biden Cabinet members — former U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland of New Mexico and former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra of California — advanced to the general election ballot for governor in their states this week. They joined Keisha Lance Bottoms, a former senior adviser,

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who secured the Democratic nomination in Georgia's governor's race last month.

Their rise comes as a bitter feud erupts among Biden's allies, including some who worked in the White House, about the Biden family's reemergence in the public spotlight just five months before the high-stakes midterm elections. Hunter Biden is mixing it up with admirers and critics on social media, while Jill Biden is rehashing the tortured saga of the last presidential race in a new memoir. Biden himself has his own book coming out later this year.

As candidates shift toward the general election phase of the midterms, it's unclear whether the Biden connections will help or hurt the Democratic gubernatorial hopefuls come November.

"I will put my experience to work for the people of our state," Haaland told cheering supporters this week as she accepted her party's nomination.

She did not, however, mention Biden's name as she ticked through her experience as a single mother, her time in Congress and her leadership of the Interior Department.

Biden who?

One former Biden White House aide, Rodericka Applewhaite, suggested that some Democrats on the ballot this fall were intentionally avoiding asking the former president to help with their campaigns.

Applewhaite is among the Democratic operatives publicly criticizing the Biden's public reemergence in recent days — especially Jill Biden's book tour.

"The Bidens are burning a lot of good will that they built up over a very long time in what seems to be days," she said, offering the former president and his family a pointed suggestion. "Step aside and let us have the battles that we need to have today."

On the ground in California, Georgia and New Mexico, Biden alumni are navigating their Biden connections in different ways.

Haaland and Becerra are eager to focus on President Donald Trump in their campaign materials, but neither referenced Biden in their primary night speeches to supporters. Nor does either cite Biden's name in the biographies listed on their official campaign websites.

Biden did not issue a public endorsement in the New Mexico or California contests ahead of Tuesday's contests either. Democrats have focused on hammering Republicans over Trump's time in office.

"It's laughable that Republicans have become so desperate to avoid talking about Donald Trump that they are now trying to go after our candidates for advocating for their states and getting results when they served in the executive branch," said Kevin Donohue, a spokesperson for the Democratic Governors Association. Democrats, he said, "are focused on affordability" while "Republicans are all in on Trump's cost-raising agenda."

That hasn't stopped Republicans from highlighting both candidates' old boss.

In fact, Republicans are actively planning to highlight Democrats' ties to the Biden administration as a weakness in the weeks ahead, according to Kollin Crompton of the Republican Governors Association.

"Deb Haaland turned her back on New Mexico to push Biden's failed policies and the Green New Scam. New Mexico deserves a leader, not a career politician who forgot where she came from," Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte, who chairs the campaign organization, said in a statement.

Georgia is another story.

Lance Bottoms points to her work with Biden on her campaign website. She asked for, and received, Biden's formal endorsement just ahead of Georgia's primary, which she shared widely on her campaign's social media platforms. She also said she'd invite the former president to campaign with her this fall. "As I am moving around this state, people are missing Joe Biden more and more each day," she told CNN.

Bottoms was the first of two candidates Biden endorsed since leaving office, and he called her with congratulations after her primary victory on May 19.

But even Bottoms has not highlighted her time in the administration on the campaign trail. Her stump speech regularly mentions her time serving as Atlanta's mayor and career as a prosecutor but quickly pivots to issues like affordability and the Trump administration's agenda.

"I spoke with him this morning, so he called to congratulate me," Bottoms said of Biden after her primary win. But then she immediately pivoted. "At the end of the day, we all want the same things. We want to

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live in great neighborhoods, we want great schools, we want access to health care.”

Biden’s bad numbers

Americans had a dimmer view of Biden’s presidency when he left office than they did at the end of Trump’s first term or Barack Obama’s second, according to The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Around one-quarter of U.S. adults at the time said Biden was a “good” or “great” president, with less than 1 in 10 saying he was “great.”

It was a stark illustration of how tarnished Biden’s legacy has become, with many members of his own party seeing his Democratic presidency as merely mediocre.

Americans were similarly likely to describe both Biden and Trump as “poor” or “terrible” — about half said this characterized each president’s time in office — but about 3 in 10 said Biden was “average,” while less than 2 in 10 said this about Trump.

The Biden family has faced fresh scrutiny in recent weeks, sometimes even from former aides.

The former president’s son, Hunter Biden, drew criticism for recently appearing on the podcast of far-right conspiracy theorist Candace Owens. He has garnered attention by posting online about his experience with addiction and criticisms of the media.

Former first lady Jill Biden has shocked some Democrats for comments she made as part of a book tour for her memoir, “View from the East Wing,” which was released Tuesday. The former first lady said in an interview with CBS News that she was “frightened” by her husband’s performance during the infamous debate against Trump. The fallout eventually prompted Biden to drop out.

In the memoir, she writes that Biden’s senior aides “insisted he needed to run” for reelection. Her memoir includes a retelling of her husband’s decision to end his candidacy and the family’s reaction to the former president’s cancer diagnosis last year.

Throughout her book tour, she has faced tough questions about the former president’s health and cognitive abilities while in office, as well as her role in pushing him to seek reelection despite widespread public concerns.

The former first lady described it as “heartbreaking” that the Democratic Party abandoned her husband during an interview on ABC’s “The View.”

“That’s why Joe had to decide to get out, because he had lost the support of the Democratic Party,” she said.

Such comments have sparked a fight among allies, especially after former Biden spokesperson Andrew Bates questioned to the New York Post “why that painful conversation for the party needed to be publicly re-opened now.”

Jill Biden shot back, “I want to say to Andrew, call me up and say it to my face.”

Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders and Sam Altman are all talking about public ownership in AI

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was perhaps a surprising private overture from OpenAI CEO Sam Altman to Sen. Bernie Sanders.

The meeting between the two had come just after the Vermont senator announced a plan for the public to take a 50% ownership stake in artificial intelligence companies such as OpenAI, using their stock to create a public wealth fund that would spread the fortune generated by AI behemoths.

Altman told Sanders that he, too, wants the public to have equity in AI companies. Though the CEO said he couldn’t support Sanders’ threshold of 50%, he nonetheless wanted to work with him to advocate for the general idea, according to people with knowledge of the conversation.

The nearly hourlong meeting in Sanders’ Senate office this week, held at Altman’s request, highlighted the inherent tension between AI powerhouses and policymakers as Americans are increasingly asked to

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accept the costs of the AI boom even as they remain unconvinced of its direct benefits. Yet it's also creating odd political bedfellows fueled by populism as politicians from Sanders to President Donald Trump embrace giving the public a stake in AI's growth.

Speaking to reporters on Air Force One on Friday, Trump described a potential partnership "where the American people can benefit from the success of AI" and said executives from leading AI companies will visit the White House, "probably next week," to discuss the idea.

"There's something very interesting about it, where it almost becomes a partnership with the American public," Trump, a Republican, said Friday.

When reporters noted to Trump that Sanders, a self-proclaimed democratic socialist, had proposed public ownership in AI companies, he pointed to similarities in their coalitions. The economic views of Trump voters and voters who supported Sanders for president, Trump said, "aren't that far apart."

Trump has embraced government investment in private companies in his second term, scrambling his party's politics. His administration last year secured a 10% stake in the struggling Silicon Valley company Intel, and it considered a government takeover of Spirit Airlines earlier this year, although the airline couldn't reach a deal and ultimately closed.

Public backlash is becoming harder to ignore

The positioning of leading figures such as Trump and Sanders comes as concerns about AI are emerging far beyond Washington.

In Michigan, Democrats recently clashed over Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's appearance with Altman at the site of a major data center. Candidates such as New York Democratic House hopeful Alex Bores have also made AI regulation a campaign issue by tapping into voters' angst about the technology.

"This is a real change to society," Altman told reporters this week. "I think it's possible both that people can use AI a lot and like using it and also have anxiety about what it's going to do for the future."

Data center projects across the country have drawn opposition from residents concerned about electricity demand, water consumption and environmental impacts. Some states once eager to attract the facilities, including Ohio and Virginia, have moved to reconsider tax incentives.

"We need to pass legislation right now that says there's not going to be any further data center development until they agree to pay for their own electricity, build their own grids and pay for their own water supply," Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley, a leading Republican skeptic of Big Tech, told The Associated Press.

Before arriving in Washington, Altman stopped in Michigan on Monday to appear alongside Whitmer, a Democrat, at the building site of a 1.65 million-square-foot data center. Whitmer's team claimed the project will create more than 2,500 union construction jobs.

But it also drew criticism from local activists and some Democrats, including Michigan Rep. Rashida Tlaib, who called the project "disgusting." She said she was "so disappointed" in Whitmer.

"It's a very controversial topic right now and it's coming from the ground up," Michigan Sen. Elissa Slotkin, a Democrat, said about the grassroots pushback. "People feel very strongly about it."

Whitmer, however, told reporters after the event that "one thing's very clear, everyone has a cellphone in our pocket."

"We are all, more and more, consuming technology and data and these data centers are going to get built. So, my thought is if we can hold them to a high standard and do it in Michigan, that's the best way to do it," she said.

The tensions extend beyond data centers. On college campuses, commencement speakers have been interrupted by boos when discussing artificial intelligence. About 70% of college students see AI as a threat to their job prospects, according to a 2025 poll by the Institute of Politics at the Harvard Kennedy School.

Altman acknowledged those concerns. He said that while "the impact on jobs has been less than many people in our field expected," he understands "that college students have a lot of anxiety about the future."

Washington searches for an AI bargain

The idea that AI's expansion is inevitable is increasingly shared by leaders across the political spectrum, even as they disagree sharply about how to manage it.

That reality was at the center of Altman's conversations in Washington. In addition to Sanders, Altman

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met with Trump administration officials such as Michael Kratsios, the White House's chief science and technology adviser, and congressional leaders from both parties.

Sanders' team emphasized that the two did not reach an agreement on the main points that the senator made to Altman, including the 50% figure so the public has decision-making power. Sanders also expressed opposition to the growing election spending by the AI industry.

"Unfortunately, Sam Altman did not commit to any of those," said Sanders' spokesperson Jeremy Slevin. Altman, in emerging from the conversation, described it as "great," adding that the two "obviously don't agree on everything."

Policy makers are also looking at how AI should be governed

Congress this week released a bipartisan framework that would establish the first broad federal approach to AI regulation while temporarily preempting many state laws.

Anthropic, one of OpenAI's top competitors, has proposed mechanisms for coordinating pauses on advanced AI development if systems become too powerful.

The Trump administration has also begun constructing its own oversight structure, signing an executive order to establish a process for reviewing national security risks posed by advanced AI systems before their public release.

Sanders said he found the administration's move notable after years of warnings that regulation could slow American innovation.

"Even these guys are beginning to catch on that there are legitimate concerns that have to be dealt with," Sanders said.

After actor James Handy's stabbing death, his girlfriend's son is charged with murder

By ANDREW DALTON and HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A man was charged with murder Friday in the stabbing of "Jumanji" and "Top Gun: Maverick" actor James Handy, who was in a relationship with the suspect's mother.

Michael Gledhill, 44, was charged after police say officers found the 81-year-old Handy stabbed in the chest and lying unconscious outside a home in Los Angeles on Wednesday. Handy was taken to the hospital and later pronounced dead.

Gledhill did not appear at an arraignment Friday afternoon in Los Angeles Superior Court and no plea was entered for him. Javier Trincado, Gledhill's lawyer, said his client is "unable to assist" in his defense and told the judge that the sheriff's department did not bring Gledhill to the courtroom, but did not provide a reason.

Superior Court Judge John H. Reid ordered that Gledhill be sent to mental health court and undergo psychological evaluations. Another judge will decide whether he is competent for trial.

Authorities say Gledhill was arrested after telling police he was the person they were looking for. Police had responded to the home after a 911 caller stated: "I am the son of man, I just killed the man of sin," according to the department.

Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan J. Hochman said Handy deserved to enjoy his later years with his loved ones and that the person who took his life should be held accountable.

"This is not how anyone's life should end, stabbed in the chest and left dying in the front yard of a home," he said in a statement.

Handy was a character actor in films and on TV for decades, including appearances in a variety of television crime procedurals.

Actor Brian Delate knew Handy for more than four decades after meeting him at a Vietnam veterans theater company in New York. Delate described him as someone with a great sense of humor who was always curious.

Delate told The Associated Press that a few times over the past couple of years, Handy mentioned in

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passing that his girlfriend's son had mental health problems.

"I didn't think much of it, because he just kind of mentioned it casually," he said.

Handy's girlfriend had fixed up the garage so her son could live there, Delate said. Handy had his own home.

Bail was set at \$2 million for Gledhill, according to authorities. If convicted, Gledhill faces up to 26 years to life in prison, according to the district attorney's office.

Emails sent to Trincado and officials from the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office were not immediately answered.

Born in New York, Handy appeared in films and TV shows for decades.

He was known for his role as an exterminator in the 1995 film "Jumanji" and more recently as the bartender Jimmy in the 2022 film "Top Gun: Maverick," according to IMDB. He's also appeared in some of the top TV crime dramas, including "NCIS: Los Angeles," "The Closer" and "Cold Case."

"I could not have asked for a more talented, humble or gracious client and friend than James Handy," Pam Ellis-Evenas, from the Ellis Talent Group, said in an email to The Associated Press.

Jeff Hawks, who said he's been friends with Handy for about 10 years after they met at an audition, described him as a hilarious man who had a habit of belting out doo-wop songs when they'd go out to bars.

"I can't imagine who would ever have a beef with him," he said. "To me, it's impossible. He was just really a decent guy."

With Vietnam in mind, Delate lamented how his friend died.

"If he'd just passed away from an illness or something like that, this would be a very different experience," he said. "But because of the nature of how he died and the fact that we lived in an arena of killing back in the '60s, it has a different resonance."

US military says it shot down Iranian missiles, drones launched toward Gulf allies, Strait of Hormuz

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

BRIDGEWATER, N.J. (AP) — The U.S. military said it shot down Iranian ballistic missiles and drones launched toward the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf Arab allies on Friday, while striking some of the Islamic Republic's coastal surveillance radar sites in response, an exchange of fire that further frayed a shaky ceasefire with Tehran.

The exchange of strikes comes as the Trump administration ramps up pressure on Iran to make a deal to end the conflict.

U.S. Central Command said on social media Friday night that Iran fired seven ballistic missiles toward Kuwait and Bahrain, with U.S. forces intercepting six of the missiles and a seventh failing to reach its target. The military said there were no reports of harm to U.S. personnel.

The ballistic missiles were fired after the U.S. earlier in the day shot down four Iranian drones that were launched toward Strait of Hormuz.

"The attack drones posed an immediate threat to regional maritime traffic," U.S. Central Command said on social media.

Kuwait's military said forces were intercepting missiles and drones attacking the country, while Bahrain activated air raid sirens and told residents to move to the nearest safe location and follow official instructions.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard said it targeted the Ali Al Salem airbase, which hosts U.S. forces in Kuwait, and the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet in the tiny Gulf island nation of Bahrain, according to the state-run IRNA news agency.

The U.S. military is enforcing a blockade on Iranian ports in response to Tehran's chokehold on the crucial corridor for global oil and natural gas shipments, which has sent energy prices spiking and posed political problems for President Donald Trump's Republican Party ahead of the midterm congressional elections.

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U.S. Central Command said it hit the radar sites, including an island in the strait, "to defend against further attacks."

Trump promises a quick end to US-Iran conflict

It was the latest in back-and-forth attacks that have strained the tenuous ceasefire in the war and efforts to reach a deal to extend that truce. Earlier this week, Iranian drones heavily damaged a passenger terminal at Kuwait's main airport, killing one person, wounding dozens and briefly closing the airfield.

Despite the attacks raising new concerns that the ceasefire could collapse, Trump told reporters Friday that "the situation with Iran seems to be going quite well."

"We're going to come out of Iran very quickly and it's going to be very strong one way or the other, whether it's a piece of paper or the very tough way," Trump said at an event with farmers in Wisconsin. "The very tough way is maybe the easier way, but we're going to come out, and your fertilizer prices are going to go way down, just like they were four months ago."

Trump increasingly appears to be boxed in on a conflict that has settled into a holding pattern. U.S. and Iranian negotiators reached a tentative agreement a week ago to extend the ceasefire by 60 days and start a new round of talks on Iran's nuclear program. But Trump has called for unspecified changes and Iranian officials have shown no public signs of signing off on the deal.

Asked on Friday why it was taking so long, Trump told NBC's "Meet the Press" it was because "it's a very hard thing for them," citing their "great independence" and the fact that "they're strong, they're proud."

"There are things they never thought they'd be doing that they're going to have to do. They've got no choice, and it takes a little while," he said in the interview.

Trump said the Iranians still have 21% to 22% of their missiles.

Israeli strikes on Lebanon continue

His administration also has touted the latest ceasefire agreed to this week by the Lebanese government and Israel after U.S.-brokered talks in Washington. However, the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group has rejected the agreement and new attacks have put it at further risk.

The Israeli military on Friday struck multiple parts of southern Lebanon and issued evacuation warnings for nine villages, including one that has sheltered thousands of people displaced by the fighting. The strikes killed nine people in six locations in southern Lebanon, the state news agency reported.

The Israeli military said two soldiers were wounded, one severely, in an encounter Friday with militants in southern Lebanon.

The fighting in Lebanon, where Israeli forces have seized large swaths of the south, also threatens efforts to end the Iran war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz because Iran has demanded that any lasting truce extend to Lebanon.

Besides the drone interception in the Strait of Hormuz, the U.S. military said earlier Friday that its forces boarded a sanctioned oil tanker linked to Iran in the Indian Ocean as the United States seeks to prevent Iran from profiting off its oil and other goods.

The U.S. also targeted Iran's energy sector with new sanctions on a group of people, firms and tankers.

Graham Platner says Maine voters will 'have my back' despite scandals ahead of Senate primary

By PATRICK WHITTLE and KIMBERLEE KRUESI Associated Press

BAR HARBOR, Maine (AP) — Graham Platner, the insurgent Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in Maine, defiantly declared Friday that voters would stand by him despite a steady drumbeat of reports about his history with women.

Speaking to a crowd of hundreds in a coastal resort town, with Tuesday's primary around the corner, the first-time candidate pitched himself as a man with an imperfect past who remains Democrats' best chance to oust Republican Sen. Susan Collins in November.

"When politically motivated, serious and false accusations are made against me, Maine, you have my back," Platner said. "The state of Maine raised me. And the state of Maine saved me."

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Last weekend, his campaign wrestled with stories about sexually explicit messages that Platner sent to several women while he was married. Then on Thursday, The New York Times reported about his relationships with previous girlfriends. Some viewed him positively but others described him as volatile and insulting.

One woman said Platner twisted her arm during an argument and locked her in a room. Platner called that allegation untrue.

While some Democrats have been alarmed by Platner's checkered past, there was little hesitation in Friday's crowd, which gave Platner a standing ovation before he even started talking.

Platner is the last candidate in the running for the nomination after Gov. Janet Mills suspended her campaign, and the party faithful appear eager to rally behind a candidate they hope can defeat Collins. Some argued that the need for Democrats to take back control of the U.S. Senate is too important to cast aside flawed candidates.

"I've always believed in redemption. And so, I just think people deserve a second chance, and should be allowed to continue changing," said Brendan O'Keefe of Seal Cove.

Galen Lowe of Bar Harbor said he believed that Platner was leveling with voters about his past.

"It's refreshing to have someone actually own up to stuff that they've done and say, yeah, that wasn't such a great idea. I'm working to be a better person," he said.

Key to the Senate

Platner is key to Democrats hopes' to win a Senate majority, and he's maintained support from prominent politicians like Sens. Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and Ruben Gallego. He appeared Friday evening with progressive Rep. Ro Khanna of California, as well as Democratic candidates for U.S. House and governor.

"We reject, unequivocally, misogyny. But you know who else rejects it? Graham Platner," Khanna said. "He understood that those years that he came back were not the best years of his life."

Platner faced renewed scrutiny last weekend after reports that he and his wife, Amy Gertner, have had marital difficulties and sought counseling after he allegedly sent sexually explicit text messages to other women.

According to The Wall Street Journal, Gertner had told the campaign in August about the messages, which she had discovered on his phone last year, to make sure they weren't a liability to the campaign. Platner's campaign team reportedly decided that the texts were private and being handled by the couple, who were married in 2023.

Genevieve McDonald, a former campaign staffer for Platner, told The Associated Press that the candidate was "sexting multiple women while married" and that "the campaign tried to assess that as an election vulnerability."

Shortly after the news came out, Platner posted a five-minute video taken by Gertner, who avoided speaking directly about her husband's reported texts but dubbed the broader coverage as "gossip" and said "being married is hard."

Voters worry that more scandals lurk

Gertner's emotional comments about working on her marriage have resonated with some women, who say they are shocked that a former campaign aide would betray someone's trust and the issue should remain between the couple.

"It's none of my business as far as I'm concerned," said Joanne Mason, a local Democratic leader from south-central Maine. "And I would hope that people wouldn't judge any one person on their own private marriage."

Valerie Tate, a Democrat from Belfast, described Gertner's honesty about trying to work on their mental health and marriage as admirable.

"That is not a scandal," Tate wrote in an email. "That is integrity. Personal growth is not a disqualification from public life. For many of us, it is precisely what made us worthy of it."

However, Tate conceded that her mind wasn't fully at ease. With the public still learning about Platner's past, there is a chance something could emerge as a dealbreaker for voters.

"Of course, there is that concern as there would be in any race with somebody we don't know all the

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dramas and the journeys they've been on," she wrote. "Something could come out that would be disqualifying."

Past controversies simmer

This isn't the first time Platner has faced questions about his past. He had a tattoo recognized as a Nazi symbol, which he had covered up after starting his campaign.

Platner has said he didn't realize the meaning of the tattoo. However, a former girlfriend told the Times he joked about it being a Nazi symbol and called it "my Totenkopf."

There's also been much attention on Platner's former Reddit posts, which were dismissive of military sexual assaults and used homophobic slurs, for which he has apologized.

As revelations have emerged around Platner, at least two feminist political groups — National Organization for Women PAC and Vote for Equality — encouraged Maine voters to vote for Mills, who will still appear on the ballot.

Platner has never held elected office and has fashioned a progressive, populist-style campaign focusing on issues such as income inequality, lack of health care accessibility and the rising cost of housing. In return, he's attracted thousands at his rallies and campaign events and collected millions in campaign funds to further boost his messaging.

But some Democrats are also wrestling with the question of whether more controversial information surrounding Platner could come out ahead of the November election.

"I think a lot of people are afraid," said Deb Dagnan, chair of Maine's Piscataquis County Democrats. "They're waiting for the other shoe to drop after he gets the nomination. Then what do we do?"

Virginia man gets life in prison for double murder scheme in affair with au pair

FAIRFAX, Va. (AP) — A Virginia man who was having an affair with the family's au pair was sentenced Friday to life in prison without parole for the murder of his wife and a man who was lured to the couple's home as a fall guy.

Brendan Banfield, a former IRS law enforcement officer, claimed he shot Joseph Ryan after he came across Ryan attacking his wife on the morning of Feb. 24, 2023. But prosecutors said Brendan Banfield and Brazilian au pair Juliana Peres Magalhães set Ryan up in a scheme to get rid of Christine Banfield, a pediatric intensive care nurse.

Judge Penney Azcarate called Banfield's actions evil and calculated.

"The disregard of the life of your wife, someone you supposedly loved, is almost unfathomable," she said in handing down the sentence, which is mandatory in Virginia for an aggravated murder conviction. The scheme involved "luring a completely innocent man into your deadly trap; continuing on after the murders without a care; and not once — not once — thinking of the impact" on the Banfields' 4-year-old daughter. Brendan Banfield "took everything from her," Azcarate said.

In addition to murder, jurors in February convicted Banfield of child endangerment because the couple's daughter was home during the killings. Azcarate sentenced Banfield to an additional five years on that charge and three more years on a firearms charge.

Speaking at his sentencing, Banfield proclaimed his innocence. Banfield said he loved his wife and, although he had affairs, he never intended to leave her.

Azcarate was unmoved, citing his lack of remorse as a reason she felt no hesitation in ordering him to remain behind bars for life.

During Friday's hearing, Christine Banfield's older sister, Danielle Hocker, described her sister as kind, caring, reliable and selfless. She said they grew up chasing fireflies and sleeping next to each other on the floor in sleeping bags.

"When she was born, 'I' became 'we,'" Hocker said. "I haven't stopped saying 'we' when I speak about my childhood after her death, except now when I do, it takes my breath away — a pause filled with love that has nowhere to go."

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Ryan's mother, Deidre Fisher, told the court that her son was an "extremely caring" person who was a caretaker for his grandmother and other loved ones.

"Joe was a guy who believed in fighting for the underdog, and even actual neglected dogs," Fisher said, with a small laugh. "He would walk into an animal shelter and ask for the oldest, ugliest dogs, bring them home and love them for years."

Ryan's aunt, Sangeeta Ryan, said Banfield "didn't just take Joe and Christine from us. He tried to erase the truth of who they were."

During Banfield's trial, Magalhães testified he had told her he wanted to marry her and have children with her, but he needed to "get rid of" his wife first. He didn't want a divorce because "she would have more money than he would" and because he wanted custody of the couple's daughter, said Magalhães, who was 21 when she started working for the Banfields in 2021.

Magalhães also testified that she and Brendan Banfield staged the scene at the home in Herndon, Virginia, to look as if they had shot a violent intruder. The pair had pretended to be Christine Banfield on a fetish website to lure Ryan to their house for a sexual encounter involving a knife.

On the day of the killings, Magalhães waited in a car outside the house with the daughter. When Ryan arrived, she called Brendan Banfield, who was waiting at a nearby McDonald's. The pair took the child to the basement and then went to the bedroom, where they encountered Ryan. Brendan Banfield shot Ryan and then stabbed Christine Banfield with the knife Ryan had brought. When Magalhães saw Ryan moving, she fired a second shot that killed him.

On Friday, Banfield emphasized that there was dissent within the police department over the theory that he had impersonated his wife, saying it would have been impossible for him to send some of the messages.

Some media have dubbed the case the "au pair affair." Magalhães pleaded guilty to manslaughter after agreeing to testify against Banfield. Magalhães was sentenced to 10 years in prison after Banfield's trial.

Trump's deportation agenda is about to get a \$70B infusion from Congress

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — With virtually no strings attached, Congress is on the verge of providing a sizable infusion of cash to the Department of Homeland Security, powering President Donald Trump's mass deportation agenda for the remainder of his term in the White House.

The nearly \$70 billion package, which cleared the Republican-held Senate in a middle of the night vote and now heads to the House, was declared a "rotten bill" by the Democratic leader and an "ATM for ICE" by pro-immigrant advocates.

But for those aligned with Trump's campaign promise for the largest mass deportation operation in U.S. history, it all but guarantees an uninterrupted flow of money to carry out the administration's immigration enforcement operations — and comes on top of some \$170 billion Congress already approved for the department last summer, as part of Trump's big tax breaks bill.

"We're going to continue to arrest people, we're going to continue to detain people and we're going to keep deporting people," Trump border czar Tom Homan told CBS News on Friday.

He hinted at summer sweeps of enforcement actions coming next to New York City.

More money, fewer guardrails

The work of Congress comes at a pivotal time for the Republican president and his party as they face restless voters before the midterm elections. About one in three U.S. adults know someone who has been impacted by Trump's immigration operations, according to an AP-NORC poll conducted in April. And as America celebrates its 250th anniversary, most say it's no longer a great place for immigrants.

The funding package from Congress is just a slim dozen-page bill that carries none of the usual guardrails or directives typically demanded in legislation. It turns loose \$30 billion for Immigration and Customs Enforcement operations, and billions for the Border Patrol, and others, prepaying the department's operations into 2029.

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"Their options are limitless in terms of what they can do with this money," said Vanessa Cardenas, the executive director at America's Voice, a longtime advocacy organization for immigrants.

"That is such a hard thing to accept as a taxpaying citizen that our dollars are going to this massive, mass deportation machine, while Americans are struggling to meet health care costs, and have access to food and they're paying so much in gas."

The administration has sought to shift the debate over its immigration operations, installing new leadership at Homeland Security in the aftermath of violent scenes of immigration enforcement earlier this year and the shooting deaths of Americans Renee Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis.

Rather than the dramatic street sweeps, the administration is working behind the scenes on actions that are stripping immigrant groups of their ability to remain in the U.S., by doing away with Temporary Protected Status or making it more difficult to secure green cards.

The so-called Dreamers, young immigrants brought illegally to the U.S. as children, have reported delays in renewing their Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status, exposing them to potential deportation.

But protests on American streets continue, including over detention conditions at the Delaney Hall facility in New Jersey.

At the same time, Homeland Security continues to hire more ICE agents — it's hosting an employment fair next month in Florida — build more detention facilities and partner with countries around the world to take people who are being deported from the U.S.

In a statement, the department said Trump and Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin are "laser focused on ensuring the hardworking men and women" of ICE and Customs and Border Patrol are fully funded. It said the package from Congress "will ensure our critical national security operations continue despite any Democrat attempts to hold our great patriotic employees hostage in the future."

Power of the purse becomes a blank check

Typically a funding package from Congress would run hundreds of pages or more, with a range of specific instructions about how the money can be spent and on what timelines.

Congress, after all, holds the power of the purse, and often uses that constitutional role to put checks on the administration.

But after Democrats refused to fund Homeland Security earlier this year following the violence in Minnesota, Republicans retaliated by using the congressional budget resolution process to muscle the package through on their own, outside the traditional appropriations channels.

It's the same process both parties have used in the past, most recently on Trump's 2025 tax cuts bill.

"All this important oversight" that typically comes with the appropriations process "doesn't happen," said Bobby Kogan, a former staff member of the Senate Budget Committee who's now at the Center for American Progress, a think tank.

Overnight, Democrats in the Senate worked to exert that authority, offering amendments to ensure Congress had some say in the process. Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois, for example, sought to protect "Dreamers" from deportation as their DACA renewals are being delayed. But those efforts all failed.

Deportations not enough, for some

Meanwhile the administration is under enormous pressure to deliver on its promise to boost deportations to some 1 million a year, after the Republican president's first year numbers fell short.

Mike Howell, president of the Oversight Project, is a leader of the Mass Deportation Coalition that is pushing the Trump administration to stick to its promises.

"Everyone's talking about it like ICE is about to get another massive cash injection, and that's not how I see it at all," he said. "They're getting like life-support money."

"We're not asking them to keep going," Howell said. "We're asking them to start."

Howell said there's little chance the Trump administration will be able to reach the president's deportation goals unless it drops its priority to go after what they call the "worst of the worst."

His group put out a framework earlier this year that proposes more comprehensive sweeps to arrest immigrants, particularly in the workplace. He also wants to see the Trump administration make it more difficult for immigrants who are in the U.S. to use the banking system, get social services and obtain driv-

ers licenses. Republicans in Congress have offered bills tackling some of those issues.

The administration has been amping up its own rhetoric and recently posted a new website that characterizes immigrants as "aliens" — with outer-space themes — and suggests ways the White House is working to prevent people from staying in the U.S.

Stocks slump as Big Tech sinks and a strong May jobs report boosts odds for higher interest rates

By DAMIAN J. TROISE and ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writers

The U.S. stock market had its worst day since October Friday as a sell-off in big technology companies weighed down the broader market and a strong jobs report boosted expectations that the Federal Reserve will be forced to hike interest rates at some point this year.

The S&P 500 sank 2.6%, its biggest one-day drop since October 10, when the Trump administration threatened to impose a 100% tariff on imported goods from China. The losses helped push the benchmark index to its first losing week in the last 10.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 1.4%, while the Nasdaq composite slumped 4.2%.

Tech stocks dragged the broader market lower as companies that had powered the S&P 500 to a series of records the past two months saw losses. Nvidia fell 6.2%, Broadcom dropped 7.9% and Micron Technology slid 13.3% for the biggest loss among stocks in the S&P 500.

Shares in Meta fell 5.5% following a published report that the social media giant may seek to do a new stock offering to raise funds for spending on AI infrastructure.

Stocks within the S&P 500 were not far from being evenly split between gainers and losers. But, many of the bigger tech stocks have pricey values that tend to give them outsized influence on the broader market.

Meanwhile, bond yields jumped after a report showed the U.S. added a surprising 172,000 jobs in May, according to the Labor Department. It is the latest report showing that employment remains solid, despite the squeeze inflation is putting on businesses and consumers.

The latest reading on employment comes two weeks before Kevin Warsh heads his first policy meeting as chair of the Fed. Policymakers are widely expected to keep rates steady at the June 16-17 meeting despite pressure from President Donald Trump to lower borrowing costs. Longer-term, the market sees a better than 60% chance the Fed will push rates higher by the end of the year, according to CME FedWatch, and little to no chance of a cut.

"Any hopes of a Fed rate cut have effectively been eliminated with this morning's strong jobs report," said Ronald Temple, chief market strategist at Lazard, in a research note.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.54% from 4.50% just before the report was released. The yield on the 2-year Treasury, which more closely tracks the Fed's actions, jumped to 4.16% from 4.04% just prior to the report.

The Fed has been holding interest rates steady as it tries to gauge the ongoing impact from rising inflation. Prices were already ticking higher from the impact of tariffs. The U.S. war with Iran has essentially blocked crude oil shipments from moving through the Strait of Hormuz.

The price of Brent crude, the international standard, fell 2% to settle at \$93.09. It was about \$70 per barrel before the war. The surge in oil prices prompted a jump in fuel prices. That has fueled a broader rise in inflation as prices for anything being shipped move higher and threaten to slow economic growth.

A measure of inflation preferred by the Fed showed that prices rose 3.8% overall in April. That marked the biggest increase in two years.

Wall Street has been anticipating that negotiations to end the war will eventually be successful. American and Iranian negotiators reached a tentative deal last week to extend their ceasefire, but the agreement has not been finalized.

The latest round of corporate earnings is coming to a close. Lululemon slumped 8.6% after trimming its revenue and profit forecasts.

Most reports from companies have been surprisingly good and helped Wall Street on its record run. Encouraging profits and forecasts helped overshadow lingering worries about the direction of the economy amid tariffs and high energy costs because of the U.S. war with Iran.

With earnings now in the background, analysts have been warning that the tech companies benefiting from interest in artificial intelligence may have become too expensive. That could result in a slowdown for a market that has posted a solid gain in 2026, with the S&P 500 up 7.9% for the year.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 200.57 points to 7,383.74 on Friday. The Dow dropped 695.15 points to 50,866.78, and the Nasdaq lost 1,121.53 points to close at 25,709.43.

Markets were mixed in Europe after markets in Asia fell.

Trump says he wants his new acting director of national intelligence to cut the office

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE (AP) — President Donald Trump said Friday that he wants his new acting director of national intelligence, Bill Pulte, to cut the office, which has already been significantly scaled back during his second term.

Trump noted that the size of the office has been “way too high for way too long” and that “if he cut, I wouldn’t mind that.”

“He’ll do a very good job,” Trump told reporters on Air Force One as he traveled to Wisconsin for an event on agriculture. “He’ll watch it closely, but Bill Pulte is very good, he’s very talented.”

The Republican president said in an earlier interview with The Wall Street Journal that he has asked Pulte to start the process of firing employees. In the interview, Trump said he has already conveyed his view to Pulte, who has served as head of the Federal Housing Finance Agency but has no apparent national security expertise.

“I’d like to see it smaller. I think there are a lot of people in there that shouldn’t be there,” Trump said, which the Journal said was in reference to intelligence community officials who had served in the Democratic administrations of Presidents Joe Biden and Barack Obama.

Trump told the Journal that he wants Pulte to “start the process” of firing personnel and that the eventual permanent director of national intelligence should continue it. The president has indicated that he would not formally nominate Pulte for the position.

“Frankly, it might be good for him to shake it up before people come,” Trump said. “Because, if he (Pulte) reduced the size, in conjunction with me ... and in conjunction with possibly the person coming in ... he can do a lot of the hard work and we wouldn’t have to saddle somebody that goes in.”

Pulte was tapped by the president earlier this week in a surprising move that has been met with bipartisan resistance in the Senate, which confirms presidential nominations. The temporary appointment has now snarled the renewal of a critical national security surveillance program on Capitol Hill, with Democrats key to the vote pointing out that they did not trust Pulte — whose office oversees 18 intelligence agencies — to help administer the surveillance program.

Trump told reporters on Air Force One that Pulte will stay in the position depending on how long it takes to get his successor confirmed. The president also said he was considering five people who were “all very good, all people that you know very well, all people that do that kind of thing.”

“They’re very respected people,” Trump said of his intelligence candidates, without naming them.

Under Pulte’s predecessor, Tulsi Gabbard, the DNI office had already taken steps to scale back its size. In August, the Trump administration said that the office’s budget would be cut by more than \$700 million per year, while slashing the size of its workforce.

At the time, Gabbard said the office had become “bloated and inefficient” while she announced the roughly 40% workforce reduction.

Gabbard resigned last month after revealing her husband’s cancer diagnosis.

The US job market is strong but many Americans are still frustrated by prospects and rising prices

By PAUL WISEMAN and ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The American job market continues to show surprising strength — good news for President Donald Trump who has taken a beating in the polls over the surging gasoline prices that followed U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran.

Employers added 172,000 jobs in May — roughly double what forecasters had expected — and the unemployment rate remained at a low 4.3%, the Labor Department reported Friday.

Job growth was down slightly last month from a revised 179,000 in April.

Hiring has bounced back this year from a miserable 2025, showing resilience in the face of economic uncertainty and painfully high energy prices since the Iran war started in late February.

The job gains are broad-based. Local governments added 55,000 workers, restaurants and bars 48,000, healthcare companies 35,000.

In another sign of job market strength, Labor Department revisions added a combined 93,000 jobs in March and April. Job growth averaged 188,000 a month from March through May, marking the best three months of hiring since early 2024.

"The hiring recession is over. American firms are hiring again," said Heather Long, chief economist at Navy Federal Credit Union. "The job rebound is happening in almost every industry ... This is encouraging news for job seekers and for the U.S. economy. The labor market has stabilized and is showing early signs of a genuine rebound."

With just five months to go before consequential midterm elections in the U.S., Americans have grown increasingly frustrated by rising costs, and it's unclear if the strong job numbers this year will change their gloomy view of the economy.

Inflation data last week showed that in addition to gasoline, prices for groceries, clothing and electricity are also on the rise, indicating that inflation may be growing more entrenched.

Polls show that Trump's approval rating on the economy is falling sharply after being reelected largely on the promise of taming inflation.

And despite the pickup in hiring, wage gains were modest. Average hourly wages rose 0.3% from April and 3.4% from May 2025.

Many young people are still finding it tough to catch a break on a job, and workers who have been laid off have struggled to find another. Nearly 28% of the unemployed in April had been jobless for more than six months, the largest share since December 2021.

But the labor market is clearly improving. Last year, employers added just 9,700 jobs a month, the fewest outside of a recession since 2002. Hiring has rebounded, averaging 114,000 new jobs a month so far this year.

Friday's report "really is a positive surprise, particularly given the headwinds from the Iran conflict, which clearly led to much higher energy prices and which are going to act to slow economic activity to some degree," said Ryan Nunn, research director at Yale University's Budget Lab.

The economy, Nunn said, has been boosted by a surge in investment in artificial intelligence. Also helping are lower tariff rates since President Donald Trump has effectively lowered the massive import taxes he imposed last year — and the Supreme Court in February struck down his most sweeping levies, setting the stage for businesses to get back money they'd paid.

Big tax refunds — the product of Trump's 2025 tax cuts — have given the economy a lift, offsetting the impact of higher energy prices. But the refunds have mostly been pocketed, and gasoline prices have remained above \$4 per gallon since March.

U.S. financial markets retreated after the jobs data was released Friday. Healthy hiring has raised the odds that the Fed's next move will be an interest rate increase, a sharp change from the start of the year when central bank officials had still penciled in two rate cuts for 2026.

Wall Street now expects a rate hike in December, which would be sharply at odds with Trump's repeated

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demands for a cut. An increase by the Fed could lead, over time, to higher borrowing costs for mortgages, auto loans, and business loans.

"Higher rates are coming, particularly when inflation is above target and clearly moving in the wrong direction," said Dario Perkins, an economist at TS Lombard. "The only question is when."

Uncle Giuseppe's Marketplace, which operates 12 grocery stores across New York and New Jersey, is on a hiring spree. President Mike Nelson announced last fall that he wanted to add 1,000 workers over the next year, pushing the company's payroll over 3,500.

Nelson says his problem is finding skilled workers.

"We're looking for a butcher who can cut meat in the store and engage with our customers and give them cooking ideas and speak to them about what makes the product special," he said. "You don't find that everywhere now."

Like other grocery stores, Uncle Giuseppe's has benefited as Americans cut back on dinners out as the cost of living marches higher. The company is marketing specials to lure inflation-scarred shoppers, like a \$39.99 chicken Parmesan and pasta meal for a family of four that includes a loaf of bread and a salad.

Michael Wieder, the co-founder of the baby products maker Lalo, is also hiring a few new workers.

Wieder is feeling optimistic because he expects \$2 million in tariff refunds after the trade policies of President Trump were shot down by the courts. He is planning to use that money for hiring, but gotten less than \$50,000 back to date.

He has roughly 20 employees who work in marketing, operations, customer service and other areas for his New York company. He said he's looking for applicants that will embrace artificial intelligence. Lalo has already been using AI tools in areas like marketing and plans to launch an AI tool on Monday that helps parents potty train their children.

"We're evaluating the type of people we hire in this rapidly changing environment," he said.

Putin rejects Zelenskyy's offer to meet, saying he sees 'no point' in it

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday rejected a proposal by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for a face-to-face meeting on the 4-year-old conflict, saying he sees "no point" in it.

Thursday's letter, the first public message Zelenskyy has written directly to Putin since Russia sent troops into Ukraine in 2022, was a sweeping critique of the Russian leader's 26 years in power as well as some taunts about his age.

Speaking at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, Putin described Zelenskyy's open letter proposing the meeting as "boorish."

"Is it a way to create conditions for personal meetings and talks, or create an environment which makes any personal meetings impossible?" Putin said at a question-and-answer session at his annual St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. "I think it's the second."

Putin added that a Russian businessman whom he didn't identify traveled to Kyiv last month and met with Zelenskyy to hear his offer of a personal meeting.

However, Putin said that he currently sees "no point" in such a meeting, especially after a May 22 drone attack by Ukraine on a college dormitory in the Russian-controlled Luhansk region that Moscow said killed 21 and wounded scores of others.

In response to Zelenskyy's barbs about his age and long stay in power, the 73-year-old Putin pointed at other global leaders who are older, adding that "the main thing isn't age; the main thing is the ability to work."

He also mocked Zelenskyy's rocky Oval Office meeting in 2025 and thanked U.S. President Donald Trump for "educating" Zelenskyy "before the eyes of the whole world" and teaching him a proper dress code.

"There is still a lot to be done," he said.

Zelenskyy acknowledged shifting U.S. priorities, saying it would be wrong to simply wait for the Trump

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administration to return its attention to ending the fighting in Ukraine while it remains heavily focused on the Iran war.

In Washington, Trump said Thursday it "would be great" if Putin and Zelenskyy meet.

Putin has previously offered for Zelenskyy to come to Moscow for talks, an offer that the Ukrainian leader pointedly rejected. Putin said last month he doesn't exclude a meeting in a third country, but only when there is a deal to sign.

On Thursday, Putin again rejected Zelenskyy's push for an immediate ceasefire, arguing that Moscow wants a comprehensive settlement, not a temporary truce.

Putin said Russia is open for a compromise on Ukraine in line with understandings reached at his last year's summit with Trump in Anchorage, Alaska, adding that Ukraine needs to accept them to make a deal to end the conflict.

"Naturally, the Ukrainian side would like us to suspend the advances made by Russian troops," he said. "But it would be better to end the war by agreeing to the compromises that were discussed in Anchorage."

Asked about Iran, Putin voiced hope for an eventual deal to secure lasting peace. He shrugged off claims that Moscow provided Iran with satellite images, saying that Tehran could use widely available commercial ones.

"As for weapons, Iran hasn't asked us for them and we haven't supplied any weapons to Iran," he said, adding that Russia stands ready to take enriched uranium for storage as part of a potential peace deal, and that Moscow has stayed in contact with Iran, the U.S. and Israel.

Global turbulence

In a speech earlier Friday at the forum, Putin said developing countries have gained an increasingly important role in the global economy, while the share of output by Western countries has shrunk.

He accused the West of undermining the global economy and finances with unilateral sanctions. By freezing Russian assets abroad through sanctions, Western nations eroded trust in their own currencies, he said.

"The sanctions and blocking of Russia's sovereign reserves have irreversibly impacted the standing of international currencies, the dollar and the euro," he said. "Just like Russia, any other country could lose access to their legitimate assets in dollars or euros, as well as Western financial and payment systems."

He alleged that high state debt had helped undermine global trust in Western institutions.

"The roots of the current global turbulence lie in the transition from a vertical, hierarchical model, which served the interests of a small number of states, to a more complex, distributed and multipolar one," Putin said. "Russia views global changes not only as a threat but also as immense opportunities. And to capitalize on them, we aim to act swiftly and pragmatically."

The Russian leader said the world needed a "modern, flexible and responsible financial architecture — free from risks, bans and barriers."

Putin stresses Russia's macroeconomic stability

Putin played down Russia's economic slowdown and sought to emphasize its macroeconomic stability. He noted that Russia's state debt is a fraction of that in Western countries and its budget deficit is considerably smaller, compared with the West.

The forum comes at a time when Russia's economic outlook has clouded amid the conflict in Ukraine. The government raised taxes and increased domestic borrowing to keep its budget deficit under control.

On Thursday, Putin told heads of international media on the forum's sidelines that it was an exaggeration to say Russia's economy was struggling. He noted that his government had taken deliberate steps to cool the economy to keep inflation under control.

Putin has used the St. Petersburg forum, likened to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, to showcase his country's economic advances and encourage foreign investment. While Western officials and business leaders have stayed away after Putin sent troops into Ukraine in 2022, Russia has sought guests from elsewhere to underline its declared goal of promoting a "multipolar world."

Saudi Arabia sent a large delegation this year, and the presidents of Uzbekistan and Tanzania and vice

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president of China also gave speeches Friday. A U.S. official, Rodney Mims Cook Jr., head of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, is attending for the first time in years.

Cook was singled out in the audience during a question-and-answer session following Putin's speech. Cook praised the beauty of St. Petersburg and Putin thanked him for the remarks about his hometown and asked to convey his greetings to Trump.

Hours before the forum opened Wednesday, a Ukrainian drone attack set ablaze an oil terminal in St. Petersburg and also hit a nearby naval base.

Putin declared that Russia was "calmly and resolutely" moving to reach its goals in Ukraine. He acknowledged the damage from Ukrainian drone attacks deep inside Russia and vowed to build up defenses.

"They do inflict a certain damage," he said. "For us, it means only one thing: we need to strengthen our security, strengthen air defenses, and we will do that."

Lebanese leaders lash out at Iran and say their country should not be used as a 'bargaining chip'

By FADI TAWIL and HUSSEIN MALLA Associated Press

DIBBINE, Lebanon (AP) — Lebanon's president and prime minister criticized Iran on Friday for opposing the latest ceasefire deal between the Lebanese government and Israel, saying their country should not be used by Tehran as a "bargaining chip" in its talks with Washington.

The comments came as the Israeli military struck multiple parts of southern Lebanon and issued evacuation warnings for nine villages, including one that has sheltered thousands of people displaced by the three-month war between Israel and the Iranian-backed militant group Hezbollah. The strikes killed nine people in six locations in southern Lebanon, the state news agency reported.

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard issued a statement Thursday vowing that "there will be no calm in the region" if Israel doesn't withdraw its troops from Lebanon. In an interview with CNN, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun responded: "It's not your job to interfere into our country. I reject the statement totally because our people (are) being killed, our houses being destroyed."

In separate remarks, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam called on the Lebanese people to put their country's interest first, saying that Lebanon "should not remain a battlefield for others."

Both he and Aoun complained that Iran was treating their nation as "a bargaining chip" in talks with Washington about ending the U.S.-Israeli war against the Islamic Republic. Iran has demanded that any lasting truce should extend to Lebanon.

Some Lebanese return to ruined villages

Even as new evacuation warnings forced hundreds of Lebanese families to flee from some areas, people elsewhere began returning to their homes to survey the aftermath of fighting between Israeli forces and Hezbollah. The militant group has rejected the ceasefire deal and demands a complete Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon.

An Associated Press team traveling in southern Lebanon Friday saw multiple villages in ruins, including Dibbine, near Marjayoun town, from which Israeli troops withdrew a day earlier. It was the first time Israeli troops exited an area in southern Lebanon since the latest Israel-Hezbollah war began in early March.

U.N. peacekeepers and Lebanese troops were at an entrance to Dibbine, clearing rubble and opening roads. The Lebanese army set up barbed wire at one of the entrances, preventing some residents from returning.

At least one family arrived to search the rubble of its home along the road leading to the village, while the owner of a petrol station in Dibbine looked at his destroyed property and called village residents to report on the destruction he saw from behind the barbed wire.

Shrapnel and pieces of missiles were seen in the wreckage of homes lining the road into Dibbine. Israeli troops entered the village weeks ago for the first time and were engaged in heavy clashes with Hezbollah fighters in the area. The troops returned this week, before withdrawing Thursday.

The road to Dibbine was dotted with villages entirely emptied of residents and destroyed by Israeli

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strikes, including Khiam. But no Israeli troops were visible from the road.

Nearby Christian villages were largely untouched, and many of their residents decided to stay. The strategic Beaufort castle, recently captured by Israel, appeared in the distance, with a flag of the Israeli Golani Brigade. Smoke from strikes around the nearby Nabatiyeh city billowed above.

New evacuation warnings and strikes

The Israeli military issued a new set of evacuation warnings on Friday, prompting people to leave the village of Anqoun and the area of Aarnaya, on the edge of the predominantly Christian community of Maghdoucheh, near the southern port city of Sidon.

Nearly three hours after the warning, Israeli warplanes struck Lebanese villages, including Anqoun. About 2,500 people displaced by the fighting were sheltering in Anqoun, the Lebanese news agency NNA reported.

Israel had warned Lebanese residents against returning to villages in the south, saying the area is still a combat zone.

The U.S. brokered the ceasefire agreement Wednesday in Washington. The deal sought to pull Lebanon away from Iran with a statement that any agreement to cease hostilities must be reached directly through Lebanon and Israel "and not through any separate track."

Aoun said Hezbollah should understand that negotiations and diplomacy are the only way "to save what's left" of Lebanon. Its government accuses Hezbollah of dragging the country into war and had made efforts to disarm the group before the latest hostilities.

Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally who has been acting as a mediator on behalf of the group, echoed the militants' demands for a broad Israeli withdrawal. In his first comments since the agreement was announced, Berri said the ceasefire should be "complete and comprehensive," without any exceptions for land, sea or air, and "without bulldozing and demolishing everything that exists."

Israeli troops have seized around a fifth of Lebanon, pushing further into the country's south than at any time since the end of Israel's 1982-2000 occupation.

More than 3,500 people have been killed in Lebanon since the war began. The fighting has killed at least 29 Israeli soldiers and three civilians.

The Israeli military said two soldiers were wounded, one severely, in an encounter Friday with militants in southern Lebanon, where another officer was severely wounded Thursday by a suspicious aerial object or projectile.

US forces board tanker linked to Iran

The war in Lebanon threatens efforts to end the Iran war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a globally important conduit for oil, natural gas, fertilizer and other commodities.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who faces elections later this year, wants to press ahead with Israel's offensive until Hezbollah no longer poses a threat.

In Iran-related developments, the U.S. military said Friday that its forces boarded a sanctioned oil tanker linked to the Islamic Republic in the Indian Ocean.

U.S. forces around the world have sought to prevent Iran from profiting off its oil and other goods. They have been directed to stop ships tied to Tehran or those suspected of carrying supplies that could help its government.

The U.S. Navy has imposed a blockade of Iran's ports as part of an effort to force Tehran to open the strait and accept a deal to extend a tenuous ceasefire in the war.

The U.S. also targeted Iran's energy sector Friday with new sanctions on a group of people, firms and tankers. The Treasury Department said they were associated with exporting Iranian-origin liquid petroleum gas disguised as an Omani product to customers in South and East Asia.

A federal judge strikes down Trump administration immigration policy affecting 39 countries

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A federal judge on Friday struck down a Trump administration policy enacted after the

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shooting of two National Guard members that made it harder for immigrants from dozens of countries to stay and enter the U.S.

In a ruling harshly criticizing the administration, U.S. District Chief Judge John McConnell Jr. said the policy "threw the lives of countless immigrants living in the United States into indeterminate legal limbo," and he accused the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services of ignoring the law.

"In enacting its latest immigration policies, USCIS: claims statutory and regulatory authority that it does not possess; makes decisions without the reasoned explanations that it must provide; acts without regard for the reliance interests of applicants that it must consider; and justifies its actions with pretextual concerns of 'national security' that mask anti-immigrant sentiments that it is forbidden from letting influence its decision-making," he wrote. "In legal terms that means USCIS's actions are contrary to law and arbitrary and capricious."

A spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The policies enacted after the National Guard shooting last year meant that immigrants from 39 African, Asian, Latin American, and Middle Eastern countries have been "categorically barred" from receiving final decisions on, among other things, their asylum, work permit, green card, and citizenship applications.

"This ruling reaffirms a basic principle: the federal government cannot shut down lawful immigration pathways or discriminate against people based on where they come from," said Skye Perryman, president and CEO of Democracy Forward, which represented the plaintiffs in the case. "These unlawful policies caused enormous harm to families, workers, asylum-seekers, and communities across the country who were left in limbo, unable to work, access protections, or move forward with their lives."

The policies apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services or USCIS, which approves applications for immigrants to work and become citizens. The agency, which is within the Homeland Security Department, often grants asylum, but only for those already in the United States when they apply. Immigration judges grant asylum to those stopped at the border; the ruling does not affect them, nor do the policies that sparked the lawsuit.

The broad ruling would impact all pending cases at USCIS involving people from the travel ban countries, not just those included in the lawsuit, Shev Dalal-Dheini, senior director of government relations at the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

"It is an important legal victory to ensure that legal immigration pathways remain open and that USCIS is held accountable to doing their congressionally mandated job of adjudicating applications," she said.

It is part of an ongoing effort by the administration to tighten U.S. entry standards for travel and immigration, which critics say unfairly prevent travel for people from a broad range of countries. The administration suggested it would expand the restrictions after the arrest of an Afghan national suspect in the shooting of two National Guard troops over Thanksgiving weekend.

In its motion to dismiss, which the court denied, the government argued that Congress gave the executive branch broad authority over immigration policy, including "the entry of aliens into the United States as well as discretion within the statutory scheme to confer as well as withdraw various discretionary benefits."

"This case rests on a remarkable premise: that a federal court should prevent an agency from issuing the very policy guidance that provides government personnel with the guardrails necessary to ensure consistent, non-arbitrary, and individualized decisionmaking consistent with federal law," the government wrote in its brief.

Immigration groups celebrated the ruling.

"This ruling sets a powerful precedent that the administration cannot ignore the law as laid down by Congress and cannot arbitrarily bar immigration benefits on the basis of national origin by fiat," Jamal Abdi, president at the National Iranian American Council, said. "Fortunately, this is still a nation of laws, and those who uphold America's values have recourse to challenge and push back on such discriminatory, arbitrary policies."

Shawn VanDiver, a Navy veteran who heads a coalition that supports Afghan resettlement efforts called

#AfghanEvac, said the ruling was a "significant victory for the rule of law and for thousands of Afghan allies and other immigrants who followed every requirement asked of them."

"Just this week in Dallas and Fort Worth, we met people who feared losing jobs because delayed work permit renewals threatened their livelihoods, families who postponed education, travel, and homeownership because they did not know when their cases would be resolved, and future Americans who had expected to become citizens only to see their applications stall without explanation," VanDiver said.

Actor Anthony Head, known for 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer,' has died at 72

By JILL LAWLESS and BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Anthony Head, the suave, smooth-voiced British actor known for roles in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Ted Lasso," has died, his family said Friday. He was 72.

Head's daughters, actors Emily and Daisy Head, told the Press Association news agency that the actor passed away due to complications from pneumonia.

The stage and TV performer became well known to British audiences in the 1980s as one half of a will-they, won't-they romantic couple in a series of ads for Nescafe Gold Blend instant coffee. The ads were later re-shot for a U.S. audience for Taster's Choice.

Head achieved wider fame as librarian Rupert Giles, mentor to the title character in the cult-favorite supernatural series "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," which ran from 1997 to 2003.

He most recently played Rupert Mannion, the villainous ex-husband of Hannah Waddingham's character Rebecca, in "Ted Lasso."

"Our grief is far greater than the hole he has left behind, but we know his legacy will live on, in the shows he was a part of, and in the audiences that love them," his daughters said. "How lucky we are to know we are able to watch him doing what he loved, even when he is no longer with us."

Head was born in London on Feb. 20, 1954 to Seafeld Head, a documentary filmmaker, and Helen Shingler, an actor. His older brother, Murray, is also an actor.

Other notable roles included playing Geoffrey Howe, the deputy to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, played by Meryl Streep, in the Oscar-winning "The Iron Lady."

Head portrayed a prime minister himself in the sketch comedy show "Little Britain," as well as King Uther Pendragon, the father of Prince Arthur, in the "Merlin" TV series. He also appeared in "Motherland," "Manchild," and "Silent Witness," along with acting in many plays, musicals, and recording music as a singer.

He was predeceased by his longtime partner, animal welfare activist Sarah Fisher, 61, in 2025.

Trump's troop reversals in Europe could cost millions and have left soldiers in limbo, officials say

By EMMA BURROWS, BEN FINLEY and KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military is waiting for clarity from the Pentagon following President Donald Trump's back-and-forth on troop levels in Europe, upending the lives of military personnel and potentially costing taxpayers millions of dollars, two U.S. defense officials told The Associated Press.

NATO allies were bewildered in May when Trump said he would send 5,000 U.S. troops to Poland just weeks after ordering the same number pulled from Europe, following a spat with Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz over the Iran war. The Trump administration says troop reductions in Europe have long been planned and coordinated with allies.

The Republican president announced on social media two weeks ago that he was sending troops to Poland — the same day the Pentagon had officially ordered the cancellation of a rotation of soldiers heading there, one of the defense officials said.

The unit's equipment was already on the way. Sending it cost the military \$32 million, said U.S. Transportation Command, the military agency largely responsible for moving troops and gear across the globe.

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The abrupt changes are forcing the military to “retroactively engineer” a policy in line with the president’s latest pronouncement, the official said. Both officials were briefed on the decisions and, along with others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military matters.

The uncertainty is not only rattling European allies worried about the message being sent to Russia, but it also risks hurting morale among American troops — some of whom had their rotations canceled shortly before departure — and comes as the Army budget is already strained.

Changes to troop deployments to Poland add up

The rotational deployment to Poland of 4,000 troops from the Army’s 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, based in Fort Hood, Texas, was canceled in a memo sent to the military at the beginning of May. European allies found out mid-month.

Some of those troops were told shortly before traveling not to get on a flight to Poland, while those who had been sent ahead — initially around 1,000 troops — are still waiting for confirmation they are being sent back, a U.S. military official said.

The military also is still waiting for details from the Pentagon on how to satisfy Trump’s order to send 5,000 troops to Poland, that official said. The working assumption is that they will come from units already in Europe, rather than an additional deployment from the U.S., the official said.

U.S. Transportation Command had chartered a ship to take the team’s equipment from Texas to Poland and transport a departing unit’s gear back to America. The incoming team’s portion of the cost was \$32 million, including chartering the ship and loading and unloading the gear.

Because the ship was chartered to take one unit to Europe and bring another back, it is hard to say if that amount would have been saved had the decision to halt the deployment been made before the new team had already begun moving overseas.

However, the military official said the unscheduled move of personnel and equipment back from Europe is most likely not a cost the Pentagon budgeted for and would be an additional expense.

Total costs of canceling the rotation are hard to quantify because of many factors, said Joe Costa, a former senior Pentagon official who now focuses on challenges faced by the U.S. military as director of the Atlantic Council’s Forward Defense program.

They most likely stem from returning equipment and troops sent ahead of the deployment and would probably be on the low end of the rotation’s overall cost, Costa said. The greater impact is on the readiness of troops who were trained for one mission and may be deployed on another, he said.

U.S. military contracts with private companies to transport troops and equipment contain cancellation clauses that often add extra fees if a deployment is called off, said John Deni, a senior nonresident fellow at the Atlantic Council who has studied such costs.

“The question is what additional costs were incurred by deciding to send them back prematurely, changing the arrangements, changing the plan?” said Deni, a former U.S. military adviser and planner who focused on forces in Europe.

It is not clear if the Pentagon can recoup those costs or those associated with moving the unit to Europe. The Defense Department did not answer questions about the costs of changing the deployment plans, and the White House referred a request for comment to the department.

Pentagon officials have repeatedly said they planned to lower troop levels to have Europe shoulder more of its own defense and that the decision was part of a “comprehensive, multilayered process.”

Last month’s memo also led to the cancellation of a deployment to Germany of a battalion trained in firing long-range rockets and missiles.

Pulling troops stationed in Germany would be more expensive

When Trump first threatened to remove 5,000 troops from Europe, Pentagon officials initially suggested pulling back the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, which is based permanently in Germany, the defense official said.

Instead, officials decided to cancel the rotation of the other unit to Poland. Then Trump threw that plan into confusion as well.

Pulling the troops stationed in Germany could cost in the low billions because there is no dedicated space

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and infrastructure in the U.S. to accommodate them and their families, Costa said.

"The other option is basically breaking up the unit," Costa said. "They move the equipment in different places. They move the people to different places. That carries significant readiness costs because now you're artificially jamming pieces of units into places where they don't necessarily belong."

Pulling or pausing deployments also can hurt morale among soldiers and families because they plan for them months and years in advance, Deni said. The uncertainty can be disruptive.

"That's often the last thing you want to do to military families," Deni said.

It is still unclear what will happen to U.S. troops stationed in Europe, the two officials said. Options include moving military units assigned to Germany to Poland, but that could take several years and cost more, the military official said.

Troop changes happen during an Army budget shortfall

The moves come as the Army is facing a budget shortfall, which the service's top uniformed officer, Gen. Christopher LaNeve, recently acknowledged to Congress.

Estimates put the deficit somewhere between \$2 billion and \$6 billion, according to an Army official who also spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive defense matters. One impact has been cutting training courses for soldiers nationwide, which ABC News earlier reported.

In a statement, the Army said it has issued guidance to its commands to "make tough and sound resource decisions that optimize and prioritize resources toward their most critical requirements, to include major training and readiness events."

The Army official also noted that the service has been tasked with missions like the National Guard deployment in Washington, a bolstered presence along the U.S.-Mexico border and its part in the Iran war — all of which have strained its budget.

The Department of Homeland Security expects to reimburse the Army for its role in the border mission.

Army Secretary Dan Driscoll told lawmakers at a May 15 hearing that he was "optimistic" there would progress on those payments "within a week or two." But to date, the Army has not been reimbursed.

"We want those backfilled payments," Driscoll said then.

The U.S. military in Europe also is scaling back support for non-combat related training and ruthlessly prioritizing critical functions, the military official said.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping will travel to North Korea next week in first visit since 2019

By KEN MORITSUGU and HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese leader Xi Jinping will travel to North Korea next week, both countries announced Friday, in what will be his first visit in nearly seven years.

His trip will be the latest in a series of steps by China to reinforce its close ties with its nuclear-armed neighbor. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has reached out to Russia in recent years, notably by sending troops and conventional weapons to support its war against Ukraine.

But in the past year, Kim has likewise been trying to improve ties with China, the North's biggest trading partner and provider of aid.

"As North Korea builds closer ties with Russia, China seeks to use Xi's trip to reassert its influence over Pyongyang and safeguard its strategic interests in northeast Asia," said William Yang, an analyst for the International Crisis Group.

Xi will make a state visit from Monday to Tuesday, Chinese and North Korean state media said in brief dispatches. His last visit was in June 2019.

The trip will serve to advance ties and strengthen regional peace and stability, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Friday.

"The traditional friendly and cooperative relations between China and the DPRK have continued to develop in a sound and stable manner, bringing tangible benefits to both countries and their peoples," spokeswoman Mao Ning said, using the abbreviation for North Korea's full name.

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The trip is coming just a few weeks after Xi hosted U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in quick succession in Beijing.

North Korea's nuclear weapons program has long been a major concern for the United States, which opposes it. The U.N. has imposed economic sanctions on North Korea because of its nuclear and missile development.

The announcement of the trip came a day after North Korea unveiled a new facility to produce the material for nuclear bombs. It is believed to be a uranium enrichment plant, though North Korea has not confirmed that.

During a visit to the plant, Kim announced plans to bolster the country's nuclear forces "at an exponential rate." Experts say the plant's disclosure implies that Kim was eager to cement his country's status as a nuclear weapons state ahead of Xi's visit.

The experts say Kim wants international recognition as a nuclear state so he can demand the lifting of the sanctions. They say Kim would ultimately push for arms reductions talks with the U.S. to win concessions in return for a partial surrender of his country's nuclear capability.

Kim has been focusing on expanding his nuclear arsenal since his high-stakes diplomacy with Trump collapsed in 2019.

Trump has repeatedly expressed his desire to restore diplomacy with Kim, but the North Korean leader has said the U.S. must first drop its demand for North Korea to denuclearize as a precondition for talks.

Analysts will be watching to see what if anything China says during Xi's visit about calls for North Korea's denuclearization.

Xi and Kim met in Beijing in September and pledged mutual support and enhanced cooperation. Kim was in the Chinese capital to attend a Chinese military parade alongside other foreign leaders including Putin.

Russia and China, both veto-wielding members of the U.N. Security Council, have previously frustrated efforts by the U.S. and others to toughen international sanctions on North Korea, despite its banned weapons tests.

At their meeting in Beijing last month, Putin and Xi expressed their opposition to "foreign policy isolation, economic sanctions, military pressure and other methods of creating threats to the security" of North Korea, according to a statement from the Kremlin.

Embracing the ideas of a "new Cold War" and a multipolar world, Kim has pushed for a more assertive foreign policy by expanding ties with countries locked in confrontation with the United States.

The trip abroad is a relatively rare one for Xi, who has curtailed his international travel sharply since the COVID-19 pandemic. His last overseas visit was to South Korea last fall for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, where he met Trump.

As Ebola spreads in Congo, a radio station tries to stop health misinformation

By JUSTIN KABUMBA and OPE ADETAYO Associated Press

BUNIA, Congo (AP) — The rare Bundibugyo type of Ebola that Congo is battling took locals by surprise after weeks of spreading unnoticed. Hundreds of cases were suspected when Congolese authorities announced the outbreak on May 15, but many dismissed the news as a "Western conspiracy."

At least 63 people have died from 397 confirmed cases, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said Friday. Yet the outbreak has been challenged by skepticism, attacks on health workers and misinformation.

Vérité Johnson, a journalist and editorial secretary at the Radio Télévision Mont Bleu station in Bunia, the capital city of the eastern Ituri province where the outbreak is concentrated, decided to produce a new program to combat rumors.

The radio show has emerged as a vital tool to win over some residents who have been unaware or skeptical about the facts of Bundibugyo.

WHO chief says misinformation almost as dangerous as the virus

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The 45-minute program runs daily at 10 a.m., reminding people of the dangers of Ebola and regularly featuring health specialists who provide updates and answer questions. The show's jingles about the virus play intermittently throughout the day and residents are able to call in with questions.

"So far, there's still a layer of resistance within the population, and that's where the media plays an important role," Johnson said.

"Misinformation is almost as dangerous as the virus itself and spreads just as fast. Earning and keeping the trust of communities is at the heart of everything we do," World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Friday as WHO and the Africa CDC launched an Ebola response plan with partners.

Tedros said the new plan aims to raise \$518 million to "stop the outbreak where it is, support countries that are responding today and ensure that neighboring countries are ready to detect and act quickly if cases appear."

Resistance to protocols during public health emergencies is common in Congo, which is battling its 17th Ebola outbreak since the virus was first identified there in 1976. There currently is no approved vaccine or treatment for the Bundibugyo type of Ebola, which has added another layer of fear.

Widespread rumors, often arising from fear and misinformation, discourage residents from adhering to health warnings or seeking medical help during an outbreak, health officials say.

Mistrust among residents leads to delays in seeking care

Many residents remain distrustful of health authorities, with some alleging that officials are profiting from the outbreak.

"I can never take the vaccine, I prefer to die because if the vaccine arrives, it can scare us even more," said Samson Gerson, a 52-year-old Bunia resident and father of seven children.

Analysts say some people in Congo have been receptive to disinformation due to mistrust of the health-care system and because some local officials have not become actively involved in containing the disease.

"What is key is to involve the local actors at all levels. If we try to impose what we think is right to the community, we are running towards failure," said Basile Rambaud, emergency programs director for Mercy Corps in Congo. "If people do not trust the response, they end up delaying to seek care, rejecting protective measures, or avoiding working with health teams, giving the virus more time to spread."

Ituri province residents have launched at least three attacks against health centers, demanding the bodies of deceased patients. Some people who are believed to have Ebola left the centers during the attacks and health workers could not account for their whereabouts.

"We don't even know what the body of a person who died of Ebola looks like, but we just see images and montages on our phone," said Bunia resident Chantal Francine, who expressed doubts over the reported deaths.

Full scale of the outbreak is unknown

The virus has rapidly spread from an initial three health zones to 24, according to WHO chief Tedros.

Experts and WHO officials have warned the numbers might not reflect the true scale of the epidemic as weeks of testing for the wrong type caused a delay in containing the virus.

The outbreak has been worsened by an ongoing armed conflict between Congo's government and the Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group, as well as attacks by the Islamic State-affiliated group the Allied Democratic Force, which killed 16 people in Beni territory in North Kivu on Tuesday.

The attacks by both groups have caused massive displacement of people living in the conflict areas, officials said.

Despite the growing Bundibugyo outbreak and the conditions that are enabling the disease to spread, Johnson said Radio Télévision Mont Bleu continues providing residents with vital facts.

"Everyone is free to think what they want, but the information remains the same. The epidemic is here," Johnson said.

Senate OKs \$70B immigration bill after rejecting efforts to permanently ban Trump's settlement fund

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate passed legislation to fund President Donald Trump's immigration enforcement agencies early Friday, after weeks of delays and fierce backlash to an unrelated \$1.776 billion settlement fund that threatened to derail the bill.

Senators voted 52-47 to pass the \$70 billion legislation to fund Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol for the next three years, through the end of Trump's term, after Democrats blocked the money for months. The bill will now head to the House, which is expected to take it up next week.

The final vote came just before 5 a.m., after Republicans narrowly defeated multiple attempts by members of both parties to add language to the bill that would permanently ban Trump's settlement fund for allies who believe they've been politically persecuted.

Republicans cleared the last major hurdle overnight when they defeated an amendment proposed by one of their own members, Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy, that would have redirected payments from the settlement to members of law enforcement who were injured when a mob of Trump supporters seeking to overturn his 2020 presidential election loss attacked the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

The amendments were a test of party unity that complicated what should have been an easy vote for Republicans who wanted to keep the focus on immigration enforcement in an election year. Instead, they spent almost a full day haggling among themselves over whether to block the settlement fund, even after acting Attorney General Todd Blanche had said earlier this week that it would not go forward.

"This would have been done several hours ago if we weren't having to deal with some of the issues around the fund," Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said shortly before midnight.

Thune himself has criticized the fund, which was part of a settlement that resolves Trump's lawsuit against the IRS over the leak of his tax returns and has angered many of his GOP colleagues. But he has been pushing GOP senators for weeks to keep the bill focused on the funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol and to avoid adding new provisions that could complicate its passage in the House.

Still, a group of Republican senators pushed all day and into the night to block the fund's payouts through legislation. That effort came after Trump, who has been at odds with the Senate in recent weeks, raised new doubts about the fund's future on Wednesday when he told reporters that it is "very important" and said "I don't know" whether it is dead or on hold.

The final 52-47 vote on the bill was nearly party line, with Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska the only Republican to oppose it. Democratic Sen. Michael Bennet of Colorado missed the vote.

Senators push back multiple attempts to ban settlement fund

The first vote on Thursday morning, a Democratic effort to ban the settlement fund, was held open for several hours while Cassidy and two other Republican senators decided whether to support it. The Democratic motion was narrowly defeated when Cassidy eventually voted against it and the two other senators — Jon Husted of Ohio and Dan Sullivan of Alaska, both of whom are up for reelection this year — voted for it.

The Senate then rejected a second amendment from Republican Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina that would also have banned the settlement fund but would have moved the money to a separate anti-fraud fund at the Department of Justice. Most Democrats voted against the amendment, guaranteeing its defeat, but more than 10 Republicans supported it.

Tillis said the fund is a political liability for the party.

"If Blanche says this is largely inoperative, why not use this moment to codify that?" Tillis said. "Otherwise, you're exposing every one of our members who are in cycle to having to deal with this between today and Election Day, and that makes no sense for something that the DOJ says they're not moving forward with."

Cassidy's amendment to compensate the injured police officers was a pointed rebuke, as payouts from Trump's fund could have potentially gone to Trump supporters who beat police and attacked the Capitol

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on Jan. 6. Cassidy lost reelection last month after Trump endorsed a primary opponent.

He said that, despite Blanche's comments, the fund is still part of an active settlement and "absolutely can be used."

The Senate rejected several other Democratic efforts to try to block or limit the fund, including amendments to ban payments to Jan. 6 defendants who injured law enforcement officers.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Republicans are now "leaving taxpayers to rely on nothing more than a promise from Donald Trump's personal fixer. That is not accountability. That is a permission slip."

ICE and Border Patrol money has been delayed for months

Enactment of the bill to fund ICE and the Border Patrol would end the blockade by Democrats who demanded policy changes after the fatal shootings of two protesters by federal agents in January.

Senate Republicans used a complicated procedural maneuver to get around the filibuster and pass the budget legislation with no Democratic votes. But it took weeks to get the bill to the Senate floor as Republicans navigated various obstacles to passage created by Trump and the White House — including a \$1 billion proposal for White House security and Trump's ballroom that they eventually scrapped and the fierce bipartisan backlash to the settlement fund.

Democrats say any funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security should place restraints on federal immigration authorities, including better identification for federal officers and more use of judicial warrants, among other asks.

After federal agents shot Renee Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis, Trump agreed to a Democratic request that the Homeland Security bill be separated from a larger spending measure that became law. But bipartisan negotiations went nowhere, and the department funding lapsed in mid-February with no agreement on changes to the Trump administration's immigration enforcement tactics.

Congress eventually funded the rest of DHS at the end of April with Democratic support, but ICE and Border Patrol have remained without regular funding.

4 years running, Southern Baptists weigh tightening ban on churches with women pastors

By PETER SMITH Associated Press

When Southern Baptists gather Tuesday in Florida for their annual meeting, they'll debate for the fourth year in a row whether to formally ban churches with a woman serving in any role resembling that of pastor — not just the top job.

One thing they are unlikely to debate is the politics of many Southern Baptists, the vanguard of broader white conservative evangelical support for President Donald Trump.

Officials for the Southern Baptist Convention, the nation's largest Protestant denomination, say more than 11,000 church representatives have preregistered for the two-day meeting in Orlando.

Revisiting a ban on churches with women pastors

In the previous three annual meetings, a majority of representatives voted to amend the SBC constitution to ban churches with women in any pastoral role. But the measures failed to get a two-thirds supermajority in two consecutive years that is required to pass an amendment.

The denomination's statement of belief, the Baptist Faith and Message, declares that the office of pastor is limited to men. While nonbinding on churches, this has prompted the SBC to expel some churches with women in leading pastoral roles. Now the focus is those who preach or serve in subordinate pastoral roles.

This year, an amendment proposed by Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, would exclude any church that acts "to affirm, appoint, or endorse a woman serving in the office or function of a pastor/elder/overseer, specifically preaching to the assembled congregation."

Mohler noted the debate has consumed too much time and attention. "Clarity in the constitution would settle that," he said.

The outgoing SBC president, Clint Pressley, supports the amendment, as do both candidates running

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to succeed him.

Another nonbinding resolution with similar language will be considered. It requires only a simple majority to pass.

As an association of independent congregations, the SBC can't tell them what to do. But it can expel any church deemed not to be in "friendly cooperation." The convention has ousted churches in recent years that appointed women to top pastoral positions or asserted the right to do so. But the status of churches with female assistant pastors is still debated.

On his own podcast, Mohler recently said it would even be a "problem" for a church podcast to include a woman answering questions about that week's sermon.

Array of issues queued up for debate

That view drew pushback online, including from prominent Bible teacher Beth Moore, who left the SBC after she faced criticism for advocating for victims of sexual abuse and criticizing evangelical support for Trump despite such things as his crude sexual boasts.

"How in heaven's name a woman discussing a sermon on a podcast could be objectionable to some is beyond me and what I believe to be beyond scripture," she posted on X.

She added later: "Which has been the greater problem: women trying to become your senior pastors or pastors misusing or abusing women?"

Amy Sims, associate pastor of preschool and children at Sugarland Baptist Church in Sugarland, Texas, described a now-yearly contrast of preparing for vacation Bible school just as Southern Baptists are debating women's ministry.

"I preach. I teach. I disciple children and families," she wrote on the independent site Baptist News Global. "I walk with parents through crises. I visit hospitals. I help lead people to faith in Christ. I perform baptisms. ... I serve now at a church that is beautifully supportive of my work and calling as a woman and pastor."

Every June, Sims added, "there are those who seem determined to remind me they do not believe God could have called me to do the very work I am doing."

Even as the convention's membership shrinks, the annual meeting serves as a bellwether for religious and political trends among evangelicals. And as is typical, the biggest attention will be on whether the already-conservative SBC decides to move further rightward.

The upcoming meeting follows the release of internal statistics showing a continuation of a nearly two-decade-long decline in membership. It's down to 12.3 million, the lowest since 1973.

Southern Baptists have, however, seen a bump in baptisms. They consider this a key spiritual vital sign because it measures conversions, though the increase is not enough to stem the overall decline.

Southern Baptists will consider other policy statements. One proposed resolution calls for humane treatment of immigrants and rejecting nativistic and dehumanizing rhetoric while also affirming the government's responsibility for immigration enforcement.

Another denounces antisemitic violence and conspiracy theories, notably those arising since the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel. At the same time, the resolution affirms Southern Baptists' hope for Jews' conversion to Christianity.

In 1996, an SBC resolution called for the evangelization of Jews, prompting major Jewish leaders to call it a setback for interfaith relations.

Baptists' long ties to conservative politics

Beyond denominational politics, the majority-white SBC is a core part of the wider, predominately white evangelical constituency that has coalesced behind Trump. Prominent Southern Baptists say they see little change in that.

They like Trump's official policy recognizing only two, biologically determined genders, though they worry about his administration's moderation on abortion. Baptist leaders have largely supported his war against Iran, but were quick to move on from Trump's posting in April of a social media meme they deemed to be blasphemous.

Trump won the support of about 8 in 10 white evangelical Christian voters in 2020 and 2024, according

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to AP VoteCast, a large voter survey.

About two-thirds of white born-again Protestants approved of Trump's overall performance in April, compared to about one-third of U.S. adults overall. That's according to survey findings from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Mohler said evangelicals were widely appalled at the Trump social-media meme depicting himself as a healing savior.

"You had the vast majority of evangelicals saying this is fundamentally wrong," Mohler said. But that's "within the context of the fact that overwhelmingly evangelicals supported President Trump as president."

Robert Jeffress, senior pastor of the large First Baptist Church in Dallas and a longtime Trump supporter, said he appreciated that the president "had enough sensitivity to remove" the meme after the backlash.

Emphasizing that he was speaking for himself and not his church or the SBC, Jeffress added that he supported Trump's creation of a Religious Liberty Commission, where Jeffress testified about what he contended was unfair scrutiny of his church by the IRS.

Jeffress also supported Trump's decision to go to war against Iran, saying a president has "not only the right but the God-given duty to protect our nation."

Mohler agreed, but sought to temper expectations. He said he supported past wars in Iraq and Afghanistan but now realizes that some of their objectives, such as nation-building, were not realistic. A just war needs "limited and honest aims," he said.

Dwight McKissic, senior pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, has criticized fellow Southern Baptist leaders for both their political slant and their gender focus.

The Black pastor posted on X that the SBC and its theologians have been wrong about issues ranging from slavery and segregation to the mistreatment of sexual-abuse survivors.

"And now they expect us to just blindly trust them on gender theology and women in ministry issues?" McKissic wrote.

Actors' union approves 4-year contract with studios and streamers

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Television and movie actors on Thursday voted overwhelmingly to ratify a four-year contract with studios and streaming services, a month after their union leaders negotiated a deal they say provides protections against synthetic actors created by artificial intelligence.

The ratification was widely expected and a walkout never seemed to be in the cards during drama-free negotiations, but the vote assures there will be no repeat of the 2023 actor and writer strikes that seriously shook the entertainment industry.

More than 90% of votes from members of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists approved of the agreement, with about 19% of eligible voters casting ballots.

Like the Writers Guild of America, whose members approved their own contract on April 24, the actors' new deal is for four years instead of the usual three, providing an extra layer of labor stability in the industry.

Actor Sean Astin, president of SAG-AFTRA, said in a statement that the contract "delivers meaningful gains in compensation, strengthens protections around artificial intelligence and digital identity, reinforces the long-term security of members' benefit plans and recognizes the realities of how performers work today."

The contract says AI performers must bring "significant additional value" over a live actor or a digital capture of them if producers are to use them. Union leaders say this and other provisions will keep use of AI actors minimal.

The Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which negotiates for a coalition of Hollywood's major studios, streamers and production companies, congratulated the union on the ratification.

"SAG-AFTRA's leadership brought a genuine commitment to partnership, and together with the WGA agreement, these deals demonstrate what is possible when the industry works toward practical solutions," the alliance said in a statement.

AMPTP negotiators have been in contract talks with the Directors Guild of America since May 11. The ne-

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gotiations are the first under new DGA president Christopher Nolan. That contract is set to expire June 30.

Today in History: June 6, Allies land in Normandy on D-Day

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, June 6, the 157th day of 2026. There are 208 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On June 6, 1944, during World War II, nearly 160,000 Allied troops landed in Normandy, France, on D-Day as they launched Operation Overlord to liberate German-occupied Western Europe. More than 4,400 Allied troops were killed on D-Day, including 2,501 Americans.

Also on this date:

In 1844, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was founded in London.

In 1889, an industrial accident sparked a devastating fire in Seattle, Washington, destroying 120 acres of the city center, including the majority of the city's commercial district and waterfront.

In 1912, Novarupta, a volcano on the Alaska peninsula, began a three-day eruption, sending ash nearly 19 miles (30 kilometers) high; it was the most powerful volcanic eruption of the 20th century and the largest ever recorded in North America.

In 1933, the first drive-in movie theater opened, in Camden, New Jersey.

In 1939, the first Little League Baseball game was played as Lundy Lumber defeated Lycoming Dairy 23-8 in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

In 1966, James Meredith was shot and wounded by a sniper early in the civil rights activist's march from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, to raise awareness about racial injustice in the U.S. South. (Meredith would recover from his injuries and rejoin the march, which had swelled from a small group to 15,000 marchers, the day before reaching Jackson.)

In 2015, American Pharoah became the first horse in 37 years to claim horse racing's Triple Crown, winning the Belmont Stakes by 5 ½ lengths.

Today's Birthdays: Singer-songwriter Gary U.S. Bonds is 87. Civil rights activist Marian Wright Edelman is 87. Country musician Joe Stampley is 83. Olympic track & field gold medalist Tommie Smith is 82. Actor Robert Englund is 79. Folk singer Holly Near is 77. Tennis Hall of Famer Bjorn Borg is 70. Comedian Colin Quinn is 67. Music producer Jimmy Jam is 67. Filmmaker Hirokazu Kore-eda is 64. Actor Jason Isaacs is 63. Actor Paul Giamatti is 59. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth is 46. Actor Aubrey Anderson-Emmons (TV: "Modern Family") is 19.