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Wednesday, July 1

Senior Meal: Beef hot dog on a bun, potato salad, baked beans, all American Apple Pie Bars
Chamber meeting, noon, at City Hall
Groton Legion hosts Lake Norden, 6 p.m.
U12 Baseball at Britton, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
U12 Softball (W&G) hosts Webster, 7 p.m. (DH)
U10 Softball (W&G) hosts Webster, 6 p.m. (DH)

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



U8 Softball (G&B) hosts Webster, 5:30 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

Thursday, July 2

Senior Meal: Meatloaf, au gratin potatoes, peas and carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

U12 Baseball hosts Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (DH), Nelson Field

U10 Baseball (W&R) hosts Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. Falk Field (DH)

U8 Baseball (red), at Clark, 5:30 p.m., (DH)

U8 Baseball (blue), at Britton, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Friday, July 3

Saturday, July 4

Firecracker Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course, 10 a.m.

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1440

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

SCOTUS Term Wraps

The Supreme Court ruled 6-3 yesterday to strike down President Donald Trump's executive order to end birthright citizenship. The order would have withheld citizenship from babies born to undocumented immigrants and foreign visitors (9% of births in 2023, or 260,000 babies).

Most justices cited the 14th Amendment in their decision, saying it guarantees citizenship to "every free-born person in this land." Dissenting justices pointed to language in the Constitution finding the person must be "subject to the jurisdiction" of the United States to gain citizenship; they suggested foreign citizens do not qualify.

On the final day of the term, justices also upheld state laws restricting transgender athletes' participation in female sports. They also struck down a 50-year-old law restricting political parties' campaign contributions. In the near term, the ruling favors the Republican Party, which has a cash advantage of tens of millions of dollars over Democrats.

GLP-1 Medicare Pilot

Medicare launched a pilot program today that expands access to GLP-1 drugs for people managing obesity and prediabetes.

Roughly 3.8 million Medicare beneficiaries who have paid about \$350 a month for medications such as Zepbound, Foundayo, and Wegovy are now eligible for a \$50 copay. The program, which runs through 2027, operates under special research authority to test a federal law barring Medicare from covering drugs prescribed solely for weight loss. Congress enacted the ban in 2003, citing safety concerns with earlier medications and potentially high program costs. GLP-1s emerged as a new class of weight loss drugs in 2014, and officials estimate the pilot will cost the federal government \$2.5B to \$4.4B annually.

The US adult obesity rate has nearly tripled since the 1960s to roughly 40%, increasing the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic conditions. Clinical trials show GLP-1s can help patients lose an average of 15% to 20% of their body weight over approximately 15 to 17 months.

Egg Price Crackdown

Three of the nation's largest egg producers agreed yesterday to settle allegations that they artificially inflated egg prices during bird flu outbreaks between 2022 and 2025.

The companies—Cal-Maine Foods, Versova, and Hickman's Egg Ranch—will pay a combined \$3.3M to 17 states, donate 53 million eggs to food banks and nonprofit organizations, and adopt stricter antitrust compliance measures. Investigators allege they manipulated a key pricing benchmark used by egg sellers and buyers, making demand appear stronger and driving up wholesale prices. The companies deny any wrongdoing.

The bird flu outbreak forced farmers to cull roughly 200 million birds, shrinking egg supplies and sending prices above \$6 per dozen in early 2025. The shortages prompted restaurant surcharges, grocery store purchase limits, and even a brief trend of coloring potatoes instead of eggs for Easter. Prices have since fallen to roughly \$2 per dozen.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Serena Williams, 44, loses first singles match since 2022 US Open, is eliminated from Wimbledon singles.
LeBron James, 41, to leave LA Lakers for record-extending 24th season, is reportedly being pursued by Golden State Warriors.

Blake Lively seeks \$8M in legal fees from "It Ends With Us" costar Justin Baldoni after settling harassment and defamation suit earlier this year.

Director Carl Rinsch sentenced to 30 months in prison for defrauding Netflix of \$11M.

Erling Haaland scores winner as Norway beats Ivory Coast 2-1.

England plays Democratic Republic of Congo at Noon ET, Belgium and Senegal meet at 4 pm ET, and USA faces Bosnia-Herzegovina at 8 pm ET.

Science & Technology

Tesla begins testing steering wheel- and pedal-free Cybercab in Austin, Texas,.

Electric vehicle battery lifespans could potentially be doubled by applying physical pressure, without changes to battery chemistry.

National Institutes of Health debuts world's largest database linking human genomes to clinical data to inspire discoveries in precision medicine; over 747,000 people across the US have contributed.

Lab-grown retinal cells shown to help protect eyesight in mice, pointing toward new preventative and early-stage vision loss treatments.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close up (S&P 500 +0.8%, Dow +0.3%, Nasdaq +1.5%); S&P 500, Nasdaq post best quarter since 2020.

US job openings rise to two-year high.

Magnificent 7 group of megatech stocks sheds roughly \$2.3T in value in June as investors pull away from companies spending hundreds of billions of dollars on AI infrastructure.

Chinese billionaire Guo Wengui sentenced to 30 years in US prison after \$1B fraud scheme conviction.

Guo, who relied on numerous aliases, used investor funds for purchases, including \$37M yacht and \$3.5M Ferrari.

Politics & World Affairs

Rep. Tom Kean Jr. (R, NJ-7) shares depression diagnosis to explain four-month absence from Congress, including during his primary win.

First-ever GOP midterm convention to be held Sept. 9-10 in Dallas, Texas.

Breakaway Catholic group is due to consecrate bishops today without the Vatican's consent, paving the way for possible excommunication.

Search is underway in Monaco after an explosion at an apartment building in the country wounds Ukrainian-born businessman Vadym Yermolaiev and two others; police are investigating the attack as an attempted murder.

Life is messy,
wear an apron ♥

“Taste and see that the Lord is good.”

Psalm 34:8

❖ Ladies Luncheon ❖

Bethesda Lutheran Church, Bristol

Wednesday, July 15, 2026

By Bethesda Women of the ELCA



Silent Auction opens at 10:30



Guest Speaker: Tiffany Hoeft, Bristol
Graduate and owner of “Minds Matter”



Luncheon at Noon

TICKETS
\$15.00

Deadline to purchase
tickets is Friday, July 10



Kay Espeland 605-492-3507



Jane Goehring 605-290-1420



Or contact any WELCA member



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Groton Legion sweeps Webster behind dominant pitching, explosive offense

GROTON — Groton Legion Post 39 received overpowering pitching performances from Alex Abeln and TC Schuster while the offense piled up 28 runs in a doubleheader sweep of Webster Post 40 on Tuesday.

Groton opened the twinbill with a 15-0 victory as Abeln was nearly untouchable on the mound. The right-hander struck out 10 batters over four innings, allowing just two hits and one walk while keeping Webster off the scoreboard.

Abeln also led the offensive attack, going 4-for-4 with a double and three singles. Braeden Fliehs added three hits, while Isaiah Scepaniak, TC Schuster, Gavin Englund and Nick Groeblichhoff each drove in two runs.

Post 39 wasted little time taking control, scoring four runs in the first inning. An error brought home the opening run before Groeblichhoff ripped a two-run double and Fliehs followed with an RBI double for a 4-0 advantage.

Schuster added an RBI single in the second inning to stretch the lead to 6-0 before Groton broke the game open with four more runs in the third. Abeln singled home a run, Englund added an RBI single and two Webster errors helped the lead grow to double digits.

Groton finished the opener with a five-run fourth inning highlighted by Scepaniak's two-run single, Abeln's RBI single and another run-scoring hit by Schuster.

Webster's only hits came from Tucker Acree and Sheldon Schmieg.

The momentum carried into the second game as Schuster matched Abeln's dominance, striking out 10 while allowing just one hit and one run over four innings in a 13-1 victory.

Webster scored its lone run in the first inning on an RBI single by Acree, but Groton answered immediately with four runs. Gavin Englund doubled home two runs, Schuster lifted a sacrifice fly and Ryder Schelle was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded to force in another run.

Nick Groeblichhoff tripled home a run in the second inning before Post 39 erupted for eight runs in the third to put the game away. Tristin McGannon singled in a run, Abeln drew a bases-loaded walk, Schuster drilled a two-run double, Scepaniak drove in two runs with a groundout, Karsten Fliehs added an RBI double and another Webster error capped the outburst.

Schuster finished with a team-high three RBIs, while Englund and Groeblichhoff each collected two hits. Groton also swiped six bases in the nightcap.

Over the two games, Groton's offense produced 22 hits and 28 runs while Abeln and Schuster combined to strike out 20 batters in eight innings of work, allowing just three hits and one earned run.

Land for Sale

**800 Acres Spink
& northern
Clark County
646 tillable acres,
133 pasture**

**For more info, visit:
www.keminklandco.com**



**Rod Kemink, Broker
605-880-2112
Watertown, SD**

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Transmission line towers were destroyed by the strong wind 13 miles north of Miller from the storm that went through the area on Monday. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The town of Highmore was devastated with damage as 131mph wind whipped through the city on Monday. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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A farm site was destroyed from the high wind Monday. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



There was nothing left of the electrical infrastructure in Highmore after the storm on Monday. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Many of the wind turbines south west of Highmore were destroyed by the 131 mph wind on Monday. (Left photo by Paul Kosel. Right photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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This driver of the semi driver was not having a good day as we came upon this accident between Pierre and Rapid City on SD 34. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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The concrete was poured on Tuesday for the new 10-stall garage going up just north of the Groton American Legion. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

GROTON SENIOR NUTRITION PROGRAM ≡ RELOCATION NOTICE ≡

The Groton Senior Nutrition Program is moving
to the **Groton Community Center**
beginning **July 1, 2026**.



Meal Pick-Up:

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
at the Community Center



Home Delivered Meals:

No changes to delivery service



Suggested Donation:

\$6 per meal



Congregate Dining:

Temporarily suspended
during the transition



For reservations call

Barb Pohlkamp at 612-388-2099

Thank you for your patience and support!



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WIC Program Announces New Income Guidelines Starting July 1, 2026

PIERRE, SD – The Department of Health has released new income guidelines for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program effective July 1, 2026.

WIC is a supplemental nutrition program, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provided at no cost to eligible moms, infants, and children. It aims to empower families through support with healthy eating, nutrition, and breastfeeding, as well as offering referrals to other essential services. WIC strives to help improve the overall health and well-being of families.

“WIC provides more than nutritious foods. It connects families with trusted support, nutrition education, breastfeeding resources, and services that help children thrive,” said Department of Health Secretary Melissa Magstadt. “We encourage families to review the updated income guidelines and learn whether they qualify for this valuable program.”

If your family’s annual income does not exceed the following amounts for the size of your family, you could qualify for WIC:

Family Size	185% of Federal Poverty Level	Family Size	185% of Federal Poverty Level
1	\$29,526	6	\$82,066
2	\$40,034	7	\$92,574
3	\$50,542	8	\$103,082
4	\$61,050	9	\$113,590
5	\$71,558	10	\$124,098

To find out if you or children in your household are eligible for the WIC Program and to apply online, go to the South Dakota WIC website, or you can call for an appointment at your local WIC office. Offices can be found under the county listings in your phone book or on the web at the South Dakota WIC website.

WIC is an equal opportunity provider. More information about the program is available at <https://www.sd.gov/wic>.

At the heart of the Department of Health’s mission is a simple goal: to protect and improve the health of all South Dakotans. The department is entrusted with the vital task of promoting wellness, preventing disease, and ensuring access to quality healthcare for all South Dakotans.

GROTON 1912 ★ HISTORICAL JAIL

★
315 1ST AVE. E, GROTON

Open House

**SUNDAY,
JULY 12,**

★
10 A.M. TO 3 P.M.
★



★ *Come see the
newly restored jail* ★



**Jeremiah
Schneider,
Secretary
South Dakota
Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Celebrating America's 250 Years

As our nation marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, we pause to reflect on the people who have carried America forward for two and a half centuries.

America's story is one of resilience. It is shaped by ordinary people who stepped up when it mattered, by neighbors supporting neighbors, by families making sacrifices, and by generations of service members defending the freedoms we often take for granted. That story is also South Dakota's story.

For generations, South Dakotans have answered the call to serve. They have left their homes, jobs, and communities to wear the uniform. They have served in every branch of the military, in times of war and peace,

and around the world. Wherever they served, they carried the values that define our state: hard work, humility, integrity, and a deep commitment to others.

From the earliest conflicts in our nation's history to more recent missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, their service helped build the foundation we stand on today. That foundation did not appear all at once. It grew over time through countless acts of courage, sacrifice, and dedication.

We also recognize the quiet strength of military families. They hold things together during long separations, face uncertainty with courage, and continue serving in their own way every day. Their sacrifices are an essential part of our military story.

That legacy of service continues. We see it in the men and women serving at Ellsworth Air Force Base, in the South Dakota National Guard and Reserve, and in communities across our state. We see it in veterans who still lead, mentor, and give back, and in young people just beginning their journey of service to something larger than themselves.

As we celebrate 250 years as a nation, we remember that the freedoms we enjoy were earned by those who came before us. It is now our responsibility to carry that legacy forward by supporting our veterans, listening to their stories, strengthening our communities, and teaching the next generation what service really means.

Throughout July, communities across South Dakota will host events to honor our nation, our military, and our veterans. A full list of events and observances is available at <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/>.

As you celebrate, enjoy time with family and friends, but also look out for one another. Check in on neighbors, be mindful of those who may be affected by large gatherings or fireworks and help ensure everyone has a safe and meaningful holiday.

America's first 250 years have given us much to be proud of. What comes next is up to all of us. Let us move forward with gratitude, a strong sense of community, and a renewed commitment to serving one another, and to build the next 250 years together.

Happy 250th birthday, America.

Jeremiah J. Schneider, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

Effective Immediately

CITY OF GROTON WATER RESTRICTIONS

*We appreciate your immediate cooperation
to keep our water levels safe.*

If your house number is odd, you may only water
on odd days (& **only before 11am or after 6pm**).

If your house number is even, you may only water
on even days (& **only before 11am or after 6pm**).



**Absolutely NO WATERING
between 11am - 6pm.**

Failure to comply will result in fines.
After a warning is issued, fines will start
at \$50 and double with each offense.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Q&A: South Dakota's Missing and Murdered Indigenous People liaison reflects as she departs

'It was far more than a job for me,' says woman who was first to fill the position

BY: JOHN HULT

Allison Morrisette isn't a detective. She's more of a conduit.

As the state's liaison for Missing and Murdered Indigenous People, Morrisette knows and works with prosecutors, police chiefs and sheriffs all over the state. She also knows the people who operate domestic violence shelters and other social service agencies.

For the families of Native American victims in far-flung corners of South Dakota who feel disconnected from the criminal justice system or lost somewhere within it, Morrisette's there to make sure they're not left out and left wondering where things stand.

It can be a heavy lift.

Most victim-witness assistants in South Dakota work in small geographic areas. Morrisette has an entire state to cover, and Native Americans represent a disparate number of those who need the kind of help she offers.

Around 60% of missing persons cases listed on the state attorney general's website at any given time involve Native Americans. The percentages are higher for missing women and girls. About 9% of the state's population is Native American.

When she's not working with victims and families, Morrisette will sometimes travel throughout the state presenting statistics like those to various organizations, explaining the difficulties of finding the missing or seeking justice across state and tribal jurisdictional lines.

Morrisette is a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and lived on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation as a youth. She's been aware of the issue her whole life. Over the past few decades, activism and awareness campaigns have made it more visible for non-Native people.

In South Dakota, state lawmakers voted to create Morrisette's position within the Attorney General's Office in 2021, in part as an acknowledgment of the impact of the MMIP issue in a state that shares its lands with nine tribal nations.

The role won't be Morrisette's much longer. She recently decided to take a new job with the state, working with young offenders for the Unified Judicial System.

She said diversion programming for at-risk youth, which is what she did previously in Pennington County, remains a passion for her. She also called it the best decision for her family.

Morrisette called the opportunity to serve as MMIP liaison an honor, said she's working on a transition plan for the next person, and said she looks forward to seeing that person continue building trust between families and the law enforcement agencies that aim to help them.

"I hope somebody really good applies for this position, and that it's not just a job for them," she said. "Because it was far more than a job for me, that's for sure."

The following conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

What drew you to criminal justice?

I think for me, it was being involved with the system on the other side. I wanted to be an example for the younger people on my reservation, to be able to show them that you can make systemic change from

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within.

I have a family that's involved with the system. I kind of wanted to not go down that path, so I was drug- and alcohol-free all the way up until I was 19 years old. I just grew up around it, and I didn't have any interest or desire. I saw all the bad in it, and the bad that it brought to people. I just never understood why people gravitated towards doing it when you saw the outcomes.

A lot of it too was that I joined the military at such a young age, when I was 17. My mom had to sign a waiver for me. I left the reservation as soon as I turned 18. I think getting exposed to a different culture and a bigger reality at such a young age definitely showed me that there was more out there.

Can you tell me a little bit about what you do in the day to day?

Everything changes on a daily basis, but mainly I'll be staffing a lot of our cases, whether those be cold cases or active murder cases, partnering with domestic violence centers to get victims resources, talking to our investigators, seeing where we're at with everything. Then also I'm partnering with grassroots organizations and supporting them through their events.

I'm there if a shelter reaches out and says, "We have an individual here who needs resources from the Oglala Sioux Tribe," like she needs a certificate of Indian blood for her child, or she needs potential financial assistance to get from here in Rapid City back to Pine Ridge. A lot of the shelters work with each other, so sometimes someone can pick them up and take them back down, or vice versa.

It's a lot of just collaboration, really. I've established these relationships all over the state with tribal entities, so sometimes it's just being able to give them just a simple phone number — or a direct line, versus like a generic number — of somebody to reach.

Do you get involved with investigations?

People sometimes get upset because this position isn't investigating cases, but I'm not a detective. I'm not a certified law enforcement officer.

I push people, if they know there's a missing person, to call 911 right away. For myself and my victims' families, if they don't know who to contact or which investigator has their case, it's being able to say, "OK, where did this happen?" If somebody says, "Hey, this happened up in Brookings," well, I worked on a case with (Brookings County State's Attorney) Dan Nelson, so I'm able to reach out to Dan and say, "Hey, so and so's family called. Do you guys have this case? If so, who's prosecuting it? Can you get me in contact with the victim-witness assistant from your office?"

What does the cold case workload look like? Are they separated out between active investigations and those that have stalled?

I wouldn't say that there are really any on the back burner. When I have downtime, I'll go through and review some of the cold cases we have with the Division of Criminal Investigation. For a lot of our cold cases, there is an investigator that's assigned to it, and so it's just touching base with them, and reaching out to the families and letting them know, "hey, this is where we're at with it," whether or not we have new information. I just want families to know that their case is not forgotten.

What is the biggest misconception you find as you go out and talk about the issue of Missing and Mur-

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dered Indigenous People?

There are a lot of people who don't necessarily know what it means. It's just getting people to know that it does happen, that it is an issue, and getting them to understand the importance of it. There are so many Native Americans who do essentially go missing, but when a non-Native person goes missing, it's so much more focused on, maybe because that's not the norm. Maybe that's the misconception, that it's normal for Natives to go missing, but it shouldn't be. It's become normalized here. And not just here. It happens in North Dakota, as well, and Montana and Minnesota.

How do you convince families that you're here to help?

That is a tough one to try to grasp, because coming from the state, sometimes there's that distrust. Even being Native or being from the community, there are some families that just don't trust this program.

It comes down to just being consistent for them when they do allow you to help, and helping wherever you can, going above and beyond for families. It's not like they distrust the state for no reason. They usually have a reason, so it's being respectful of their viewpoints and letting them know that, "hey, I'm here, and if you're comfortable, I can connect you to somebody." And then just keeping tabs from that point.

Do people call you and want to know about old cases, or cases where a death was ruled accidental and the family suspects foul play?

They do call and ask for an understanding of their case and if we can get it reopened, so we do review those. It is kind of difficult, because we want to be respectful, too, of the law enforcement agency that investigated it. So it's kind of just balancing boundaries.

And then we do have a few of our cold cases where the primary agent, or two primary agents, are deceased. So that does make it difficult when you have questions about some of the narrative things.

What do you think the improvements have been recently in this area? And where are the places where there are gaps to be filled? Do we need a few more of you, for example?

It would be nice to have a couple more of me. I feel like even one more, to have someone on the eastern side of the state, would be really beneficial, because there are some events over there that I'm just not able to make it to.

I also want to acknowledge the collaboration that law enforcement has. Just because there is a primary agency that's the lead agency on the case doesn't mean there weren't multiple agencies involved. I think that's what's evolving currently is the collaboration across multiple jurisdictions, and realizing that it takes everybody to get justice for families.

John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.

Group wants help for voters affected by proof-of-citizenship law and federal-only designation

Differences in implementation noted by League of Women Voters in request for consistency

BY: JOHN HULT

An organization that advocates for South Dakota voters wants new rules clarifying the administration of what one of its members called a "hastily constructed bill allowed to become a poorly constructed law" on voter registration.

The League of Women Voters petitioned the state Board of Election to create eight rules in response to Senate Bill 175, which became law when Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden signed it in March.

The bill changed South Dakota's laws on registration and the kinds of ballots voters get. It requires that first-time registrants show proof of citizenship in the form of a birth certificate, passport, driver's license, non-driver's identification card or tribal identification card, or "any other type of acceptable documentation" under federal law. A photocopy of that proof is acceptable for any of those forms except a state- or tribally issued identification card.

The law was also designed to dull the impact of voters who register in South Dakota but don't live in the state, such as full-time travelers. It defines residency for the purposes of voter registration, and says voters without a physical address in the state get ballots for federal races, but not state or local contests.

At least 1,500 people were designated as federal-only voters ahead of the June 2 primary election, according to a South Dakota Searchlight analysis of voter registration data.

The proposed rules would make a handful of adjustments to voter registration, designed in some cases to clarify the rules, and in others to offer impacted voters a chance to challenge their designation as ineligible or federal only.

Among the proposals:

Allowing photocopies or pictures of tribal identification cards or state-issued ID cards to be used as proof of citizenship.

Recognizing tribal IDs from any federally recognized tribe, rather than just the nine tribes in South Dakota.

Allowing voters given federal-only ballots an opportunity to cast provisional ballots for local elections as they appeal their eligibility to participate.

Adding specific language to the state's voter registration form to explain that not offering a physical South Dakota address would cause them to be designated as federal-only voters.

Adding language to notifications confirming a voter's registration clearly saying if the registrant is a federal-only voter, as well as language explaining how to remedy the situation.

Supporters: It should be easier to vote

On Tuesday in Pierre, representatives with the League of Women Voters were joined by supporters from groups for sexual assault and domestic violence survivors, advocates for disability rights and civil rights, and a tribal representatives through about two hours of testimony on rules, which the supporters say would protect legitimate voters from disenfranchisement.

County auditors have applied the law inconsistently around the state, according to Amy Scott-Stoltz, a Sioux Falls-based board member for the League. She said one woman contacted the board after trying to switch her registration to Republican in order to vote in that party's primary on June 2. The voter was asked to show proof of citizenship, Scott-Stolz said, "even though the law explicitly states that it only applies to people registering to vote for the first time."

The person had proof of citizenship, Scott-Stoltz said, but "she never should've needed it, and many South Dakotans in her position wouldn't have had it."

People fleeing domestic violence might be among them, according to Melissa McCauley of the South Dakota Network Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault. Women on the run, jumping from location to location to avoid contact with their abuser, will often leave documents like birth certificates behind,

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McCauley said.

Getting replacement copies can be a hassle for people dealing with such stressful situations, and McCauley said they shouldn't have to worry about losing their right to vote in local contests because they don't have them.

"Voting is more than casting a ballot for many survivors. It's a powerful step towards reclaiming their independence and having a voice in decisions that are affecting their lives and their communities," McCauley said. "We should be making it easier for eligible citizens to participate in democracy, not more difficult."

Tribal citizens also struggle at times to get replacement documents, according to Cody Russell, vice chairman of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe.

Russell was among those testifying who said photocopies of ID cards ought to be accepted, just as photocopies of a birth certificate might be.

"That clarification matters directly to all of our members," Russell said.

Russell also said it's important for the state to recognize the citizenship of tribal citizens whose ID cards were issued by a federally recognized tribe outside the state's borders, as some tribal residents of South Dakota maintain membership in out-of-state tribes.

'Hastily-written bill'

Erin Rudner, a longtime social studies teacher in Aberdeen, identified herself as a member of that city's chapter of the League of Women Voters but said she was testifying on her own behalf.

Rudner said she'd spent years guiding students through the registration process after her classes, in which she'd discuss the importance of civic engagements and the right to vote. The students were sometimes a little unsure of what to do when faced with registration forms before the law change. Now, she said, "some kids will be fine" when asked for a birth certificate or ID card to prove their citizenship, but others won't be prepared for the additional steps.

Rudner thanked the League "for spearheading this push to make right a hastily constructed bill that was allowed to become a poorly constructed law," and said that the Legislature had left the group to deal with the unintended consequences.

"It shouldn't be the job of the League of Women Voters to fix this," Rudner said, adding that "it wouldn't be the first time some bright and able prairie women" have had to clean up messes created by the Legislature.

Secretary of State Monae Johnson, who heads the Board of Elections, was not in attendance. Tom Deadrick, the deputy secretary of state, ran the meeting in her absence, which he said was due to illness.

The League's petition for a rule change, submitted on June 2, would typically need a response in 30 days. The group's lawyer said at the start of the meeting that the League is willing to waive that requirement, but hopes to have an answer from the board by July 7 – one week after Tuesday's meeting – to make sure the rules can make it through the multi-step administrative process in time for the Nov. 3 general election.

Supportive votes from the board for the rules would open up a public comment period, after which the rules would get a public hearing. The Legislature's Rules Review Committee would ultimately vote to adopt or reject the rules.

Possible vote on rules next week

Deadrick promised to try and get the board back together by July 7. He told the board, however, that "you are all busy" and suggested that it might be a heavy lift. He noted that two board members weren't able to come to Tuesday's meeting due to other commitments.

No one from Johnson's office spoke for or against any of the proposed rules on Tuesday, but her office did submit written comments on some of them.

Adding language on the impact of registering without a South Dakota physical address would make the registration form "unwieldy," the document says, and voter confirmation notices with a rundown of how to appeal federal-only status would also create an "unwieldy" document. Allowing photocopies of licenses would put the rules in conflict with the text of the law, Johnson's office said, suggesting that a change to

state law would offer a more appropriate fix.

Board member Kent Alberty of Sioux Falls thanked the people who came to the meeting to offer input. He did not throw support behind any particular rule change, but said the law did spark a need for some rule changes, and that "it certainly is worth our time to take this under serious consideration."

Board member Kristin Matsuda of Spearfish said she didn't "agree wholeheartedly" with every aspect of the proposed rules, but said "I do generally agree that we need uniformity and consistency."

John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.

More states tighten voting rules ahead of midterm elections

Supporters say the new laws will protect elections, critics say they create barriers to the ballot

BY: ANNA CLAIRE VOLLERS

At least nine states have passed voting laws this year that will make it more difficult for some voters to cast their ballots during the midterm elections in November.

Lawmakers in Florida, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Utah and West Virginia passed laws between January and May of this year restricting access to voting, according to an analysis of publicly available data by the Brennan Center and the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley.

Champions of such laws say they protect election integrity and ensure that only U.S. citizens vote in elections.

"Safeguarding the electoral process to improve oversight and prevent unlawful influence has been a top priority for my administration since my first days in office," said Florida Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis in an April statement announcing his signature on a sweeping new elections bill.

"This legislation strengthens the security, transparency and reliability of Florida's election system."

But the new laws have alarmed voting rights advocates, who say they will disenfranchise eligible voters and add extra burdens for older people, people with disabilities and those, such as married women, whose last names don't match their birth certificates due to a name change.

"In Mississippi, rural voters may have to drive hours roundtrip to reach the office where they can obtain official records," said Sonya Williams Barnes, Mississippi policy director for the Southern Poverty Law Center, in a March statement condemning a new state law that beefs up citizen verification requirements for voters.

"For people living on fixed incomes, cost matters."

Even some Republicans have noted that noncitizen voting is extremely rare. A yearlong review of Utah's voter rolls completed in May found just 27 confirmed noncitizens out of more than 2 million registered voters.

"This demonstrates that there is not a widespread problem (with noncitizens voting), and that states and our county clerks, for the most part, do a very good job of making sure that our voter rolls are clean, and that only eligible voters are registering," Utah's Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson, a Republican, said at a news conference in May announcing the results, as reported by the Utah News Dispatch.

The new raft of laws only applies to state and local elections; voters who don't provide proof of citizenship as outlined in the state laws are still able to vote in federal races. Federal law doesn't require proof of citizenship to vote, though only U.S. citizens can legally cast a ballot.

Many of the new laws focus on the identification documents required to be able to vote. Florida, Mississippi, South Dakota and Utah now require proof of citizenship before a person can register to vote in state and local elections. Some, such as Florida, New Hampshire and Utah, have narrowed the types of identifying documents that will be accepted.

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Florida's sweeping new elections law has been dubbed the Florida SAVE Act. It won't go into effect until next year, but it's similar to the federal SAVE Act backed by President Donald Trump. He's currently trying to push Congress to approve it by refusing to sign a bipartisan housing bill.

Florida's new law requires proof of U.S. citizenship for anyone registering to vote, and requires the state to cross-check registration applications against government databases. Much like the proposed federal SAVE America Act, Florida's version stipulates that if someone's name on their citizenship document is different from the name on their current ID, they must provide proof of a legal name change. Experts believe this will particularly burden married women and others who have changed their surnames.

Other states have granted federal authorities the right to check voter lists for people they believe aren't citizens.

Kentucky's omnibus elections law, passed in April, includes a provision granting federal authorities the right to check voter lists for people they believe aren't citizens. Mississippi's law requires the state to check prospective voters against a federal citizenship database.

And some new laws that aren't explicitly about election integrity have the potential to impact who votes in the midterms.

In Kansas, a new law that requires Kansans to use the bathroom of their biological sex at birth in government buildings also says Kansans must use the gender of their biological sex at birth on their driver's licenses. This could invalidate one major type of accepted identification that Kansas voters must show to be able to cast a vote in person. It particularly affects transgender voters because it invalidates documents such as birth certificates and drivers licenses that were previously issued to them.

Many of the states that have passed new voting laws, such as Kentucky and Utah, are being sued by the U.S. Department of Justice for not providing voter registration data to the feds.

Republican officials in these states have resisted sharing state voter rolls, which include personal information like birth dates and Social Security numbers, without court order.

"Neither state nor federal law entitles the Department of Justice to collect private information on law-abiding American citizens," Henderson, the Republican lieutenant governor of Utah, said in a post on X in February.

Many state Democratic leaders also have criticized the laws.

"We already have a system in place to verify people's citizenship and it is working," South Dakota Democratic Party Chair Shane Merrill said in a statement after the state's new proof of citizenship law passed in March. "There have been no instances of noncitizens voting in our elections. Instead, this law creates a two-tiered system in our state, telling some South Dakotans that they aren't good enough to vote."

Some state voting laws are now facing legal challenges. In Florida, voting rights advocates filed a lawsuit in federal court against the state's SAVE Act, hoping to block it before it goes into effect in 2027. The plaintiffs claim the new law throws up barriers to voting and will disenfranchise people who are otherwise eligible to vote.

In New Hampshire, a federal judge struck down a 2024 Republican-backed law that required hard proof of citizenship to register to vote; the state has just appealed the ruling with a few months to go before the September state primary.

Some states are still considering new voting restrictions. Next week, the North Carolina House is expected to vote on an election bill that passed from committee without unanimous Republican support. The legislation would require voter identification from military and overseas voters, among other restrictions.

Stateline reporter Anna Claire Vollers can be reached at avollers@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.

Anna Claire Vollers covers health care for Stateline. She is based in Huntsville, Alabama.

Come on down to the Great American State Fair — there's plenty of room

BY: SAM GAUNTT

WASHINGTON — The Great American State Fair on the National Mall has all the trappings of a classic state fair: food vendors, merchandise, a Ferris wheel and scores of activities.

But on Tuesday, just days before the nation's 250th anniversary, one thing was, for the most part, notably absent. The crowds.

Early in the afternoon, few of the exhibits representing every state had lines to enter. Most were small rooms with a few tables showcasing artwork or cultural items, with a trickle of guests politely making their way through. Concessions areas were plenty and unfilled.

Some attendees said the heat might have hurt attendance. The Washington, D.C. area saw temperatures in the high 80s to low 90s most of the day Tuesday, according to the National Weather Service.

It's only going to get hotter. Temperatures through the rest of the week are expected to reach highs of up to 105 degrees, with a heat index of more than 110 degrees.

'Every state has something to contribute'

Pamela Lathrop, 56, of Florida, said more people will likely attend as it gets closer to the Fourth of July. "It's getting busier as the day lets on, and so I hope everybody comes today, because I hear tomorrow's gonna be really hot," she said. "But I don't really pay attention to crowd size. I'm just here enjoying myself, and I'm glad that D.C. put this on, and I think it's a good thing to celebrate our 250 years."

Lathrop, who traveled from The Sunshine State for the 250th, added that she's staying through the weekend to attend Independence Day celebrations and President Donald Trump's speech on Saturday. What's billed as an extraordinary fireworks display is scheduled to finish out the Fourth in the nation's capital.

Despite the rising temperatures, more guests continued to arrive throughout the day, and the state exhibits started to fill up.

Doug Woody, 66, of Fairfax, said the event felt different from a classic state fair, but that it was well put together.

"I think this is really more to promote the U.S.A. and give the individual states a chance to show what they bring to the table," he said. "Every state has something to contribute, you know? Maybe some states have put a little bit more time and energy into it than others, but overall, I mean, they're here, so they're representing, so that's good."

Trump's Freedom250

The Great American State Fair is part of Freedom250, the Trump administration's marquee celebration of the nation's semiquincentennial. It is separate from America 250, the nonpartisan commission created by Congress tasked with organizing its own celebration of the anniversary.

Not all states are staffing booths at the fair. A spokesperson for Washington state's lieutenant governor's office told States Newsroom the administration declined to join because of "the costs to the state associated with participating."

According to news reports, Connecticut, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island and Vermont did not contribute exhibits, though many are still represented by flags outside the individual booths.

Pennsylvania did not initially take part but on June 27, Pennsylvania's two U.S. senators, Dave McCormick and John Fetterman, announced that a coalition of Pennsylvania organizations would represent the state in its booth.

Oregon resident Michael Lowe Mackenzie said he was surprised there weren't more people in attendance Tuesday. He added that the celebration should not be partisan toward any one side or political figure, but rather "disconnected from all of that."

"I want to celebrate our nation's history, warts and all, unobfuscated," he said.

Sam Gauntt is an intern at States Newsroom's Washington bureau through the Dow Jones News Fund internship program. He is a senior journalism major at the University of Maryland and editor in chief of The Diamondback, the university's independent student newspaper. He previously interned with Maryland Matters, an affiliate of States Newsroom.

US Supreme Court upholds birthright citizenship, rejecting Trump order

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court Tuesday struck down President Donald Trump's attempt to redefine the constitutional right to birthright citizenship.

In the decision, a majority of the justices upheld the country's long understanding of automatic citizenship by birth on American soil, regardless of the immigration status of a newborn's parents. The majority opinion, written by Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr., found the president's executive order violated the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

"Citizenship, then and now, was the right to have rights—to freely participate in our political community," Roberts wrote. "The Framers of the Fourteenth Amendment extended that promise to 'every free-born person in this land.' We keep that promise today."

While six of the justices agreed — Roberts, Amy Coney Barrett, Brett Kavanaugh, Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson — that the president's executive order was unlawful, conservative Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito and Neil M. Gorsuch dissented.

Only five of the justices agreed that the 14th Amendment extends citizenship to the children of immigrants, with Kavanaugh partially dissenting along with Thomas, Alito and Gorsuch.

Kavanaugh argued that Trump's executive order did not violate the 14th Amendment, but instead violated federal statute. He added in his dissent that Congress could "enact new legislation establishing exceptions to birthright citizenship for children born to foreign citizens unlawfully or temporarily in the country. But Congress has not yet done so."

The White House did not immediately respond to States Newsroom's request for comment, but a day before the decision, Trump said in the Oval Office that he would accept the Supreme Court's ruling.

"It's up to them, but in terms of for the good of the country, it'd be great if they ... didn't allow it," Trump, who in a highly unusual move for a president attended the oral arguments on the case, said of birthright citizenship.

After the ruling, the president called on Congress, which is controlled by Republicans, to pass legislation to codify his executive order into law, dismissing the need for a constitutional amendment.

However, a constitutional amendment would be needed, not legislative law, because a majority of the justices still found that any change to birthright citizenship violated the Constitution's 14th Amendment. Utah's GOP Sen. Mike Lee, who previously clerked for Alito, noted that "we're going to need a constitutional amendment."

The opinion is a major blow to Trump, who has sought to redefine who is American as part of his broader immigration agenda.

But it also follows two decisions from the high court that vastly expanded the president's authority over immigration policy by allowing him to limit asylum seeker claims at the Southern border and strip legal protections for 350,000 Haitians and 6,000 Syrians.

Tuesday's decision is based on one of the first executive orders that the president signed on the first day of his second term. It aimed to deny citizenship to children born to parents who either do not have legal status, or hold temporary legal visas.

Experts warned if the order were to take effect, it could create an entire class of stateless people and cause chaos for hospitals and local governments.

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Case brought by expectant parents

The case, Trump v. Barbara, was brought by expectant mothers who feared their children would not be American citizens because of their immigration status.

During oral arguments in April, a majority of the justices seemed skeptical of the Trump administration's arguments, presented by Solicitor General D. John Sauer.

Before the justices, Sauer argued that the citizenship clause of the Constitution's 14th Amendment, which is the basis for birthright citizenship, was meant to apply to newly freed African American slaves after the Civil War, not to children of immigrants.

Most legal scholars and historians disagree with that interpretation and have argued the Supreme Court in the 1898 case United States v. Wong Kim Ark already settled the idea that automatic citizenship was granted to children born on U.S. soil.

Ark was born in San Francisco to Chinese immigrant parents. When he left California, he was denied entry back into the United States after visiting relatives in China.

Officials at the time argued that because Ark's parents were Chinese citizens in the United States on temporary visas at the time of his birth, and therefore were not "subject to the jurisdiction" of the U.S., he was not a citizen.

Ark took the issue to the Supreme Court. In 1898, the high court affirmed that he, along with any child born on U.S. soil, were guaranteed citizenship, and rejected the argument that the 14th Amendment only applied to newly freed African American slaves.

American Civil Liberties Union lead attorney Cecillia Wang, who argued before the justices, said that when the federal government tried to strip Ark of his citizenship, "largely on the same grounds (the Trump administration) raised today," the Supreme Court at that time rejected those efforts and upheld the 14th Amendment.

"This Court held that the 14th Amendment embodies the English common law rule (that) virtually everyone born on U.S. soil is subject to its jurisdiction and is a citizen," Wang, who is the daughter of Taiwanese immigrants, said.

Her parents were in the U.S. on student visas when she was born in Oregon, meaning that if Trump's executive order were in effect at that time, she would have been denied U.S. citizenship.

Roberts agreed that the Supreme Court made the correct decision in 1898 about Ark's case.

"What the Court held in Wong Kim Ark was simple: the Citizenship Clause incorporated the common law and granted citizenship to nearly all children born in the United States," he wrote. "Not surprisingly, then, in the 128 years since, we have repeatedly understood the rule of Wong Kim Ark to guarantee citizenship to all children born in the United States and subject to its power."

"We see no reason to depart from that view today," he continued.

One of the mothers in the case, who appeared under a pseudonym, gave another ACLU attorney who worked on the case, Cody Wofsy, a statement following the high court's decision.

"It is a difficult time in the world to stand up. We were scared to come forward, but the decision today showed me that I stood up for the right thing," Wofsy read from her statement during a virtual press conference.

14th Amendment argument

During April's oral arguments, Sauer made that case that the phrase in the 14th Amendment "subject to the jurisdiction thereof" means that children born to parents without legal status or temporary visitors are not "subject to the jurisdiction of the United States" and are instead subject to the laws of their home country.

The 14th Amendment reads: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall

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make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Roberts rejected Sauer's position, and wrote that the Trump administration's "[a]rguments for limiting birthright citizenship to those domiciled in the United States fail."

"Children born in the United States to parents unlawfully or temporarily present are 'subject to the jurisdiction' of the United States and are citizens at birth under the Fourteenth Amendment's Citizenship Clause," he wrote. "Under the Constitution, they are citizens at birth."

The 14th Amendment was passed to rectify the Supreme Court's decision in *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, in which justices ruled that neither free or enslaved Black people could have citizenship or rights. The amendment was also meant to give African Americans citizenship while also denying citizenship to the mass migration of Chinese laborers not born on U.S. soil.

The "jurisdiction" language in the amendment, tribal scholars have said, was aimed to exempt Indigenous people who resided in Native nations — part of their tribal governments — from birthright citizenship, along with the children born to foreign diplomats.

Congress in 1924 specifically passed the Indian Citizenship Act to grant birthright citizenship to Indigenous people, regardless of their residence in Native nations.

Because of this, tribal scholars have explained the language "subject to the jurisdiction" was never meant to apply to immigrants and their home country, and instead refers to the political alliance of tribes.

Congress reacts

Following Tuesday's decision, Democrats praised the decision.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York, said in a statement that "despite Trump's best efforts to bully them, the Supreme Court just reaffirmed that if you are born in America, you belong in America."

"No matter how much President Trump tries to steal citizenship from people that the Constitution has said have earned it and reverse the grand American tradition of welcoming newcomers to our nation, the Supreme Court confirmed today that those born in America are American," he said.

Chairs of the Congressional Tri-Caucus — the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and Congressional Black Caucus — issued a joint statement that the high court's ruling was a rejection of "Trump's dangerous and exclusionary vision of America."

"We are American, we belong here, and we will continue to defend birthright citizenship for generations to come," said New York Reps. Adriano Espaillat of the CHC; Grace Meng of the CAPAC; and Yvette Clarke of the CBC.

Wang, of the ACLU, who argued the case before the Supreme Court, said in a statement that Tuesday's decision reaffirmed a core American principle.

"If you are born here, you are a citizen," she said. "A president cannot change the Constitution by executive fiat."

An immigration advocacy group that has also challenged the Trump administration's efforts to redefine birthright citizenship, We Are CASA, said the decision was a victory for immigrant families.

"The Trump administration's attempt to deny citizenship to United States-born children, threaten generations of children with legal uncertainty, and overturn more than a century of settled constitutional law has failed," said Shana Khader, the deputy legal director at We Are CASA.

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

US Supreme Court upholds transgender athlete bans in Idaho, West Virginia

BY: JACOB FISCHLER AND SHAUNEEN MIRANDA

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday kept in place state laws banning transgender athletes from participating on women's and girls' sports teams.

The decision stems from challenges to bans in Idaho and West Virginia and marks a major setback for transgender rights across the country. The opinion also came as President Donald Trump's administration has pursued a broad anti-trans agenda that has extended beyond athletics.

The nation's highest court found, 6-3, that the bans in Idaho and West Virginia do not violate the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment — a key question in both cases before the court.

The court was unanimous that Title IX, a landmark 1972 law that mandated sports teams be equally provided to male and female students, does not block bans like the ones in Idaho and West Virginia.

The majority opinion, written by Justice Brett Kavanaugh, rejected the argument from Becky Pepper-Jackson, the transgender West Virginia girl in the case, that excluding trans girls from girls' teams ran afoul of a 1974 amendment to Title IX that schools set "reasonable" provisions about sports participation.

West Virginia's law — similar to those imposed by 26 other states, the International Olympic Committee, the NCAA and other sports bodies — was at least reasonable, Kavanaugh said.

"Whether biological males may participate on women's and girls' sports teams may be a debated policy question," he wrote. "But the legal question for Title IX purposes is whether West Virginia may limit women's and girls' sports teams to biological females. As a matter of text and history, West Virginia may do so."

Liberals would impose more scrutiny

The court's three liberal justices agreed that Title IX did not prevent laws such as West Virginia's and Idaho's.

But they disagreed on the equal protection issue, and would have remanded the case back to the West Virginia federal trial court for further fact-finding.

"In not taking this modest step, the majority badly errs in two ways," Justice Sonia Sotomayor said in a dissent joined by Justices Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson.

There is an "unresolved factual dispute" about if transgender and cisgender girls "are similarly situated," Sotomayor said. And the majority invoked "scientific uncertainty" to give too much deference to West Virginia. Both matters could have been resolved at lower courts, Sotomayor wrote.

"None of this is to suggest what the eventual outcome of this litigation would have been, or even should have been, had the majority allowed the courts below to make the missing factual determinations and had those courts correctly applied heightened scrutiny with the benefit of those facts," she said. "The point, rather, is that this Court's equal protection precedents require a very different approach."

Idaho law

The Idaho case contested the Gem State's 2020 law categorically banning trans athletes from competing on women's and girls' sports teams.

Lindsay Hecox sued over the ban in 2020, just months before the law — the first of its kind in the nation — was set to take effect.

Hecox wanted to try out for the women's track and cross-country teams at Boise State University, but the Idaho law would have prevented her from doing so because she is transgender.

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

In July 2024, Idaho appealed to the Supreme Court.

Hecox later asked both an Idaho federal court and the Supreme Court to drop the case.

Though a federal judge in Idaho rejected that attempt in October, the Supreme Court deferred the re-

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quest until after oral arguments were heard back in January.

Idaho Republicans cheer

Several of Idaho's leading elected officials, all Republicans, issued statements praising Tuesday's ruling. Gov. Brad Little noted in an emailed statement that the Idaho law was the first of its kind at the state level. "We are leading the nation in supporting generations of women and men who fought hard to uphold Title IX protections and keep girls and women safe," he said. "I want to thank the Idaho Legislature and Representative Barbara Ehardt in particular for her leadership on this issue of great importance to female athletes across Idaho and the nation. This is a historic moment for common sense!"

Ehardt, who sponsored Idaho's ban in the state Legislature called the decision the end of an "amazing journey."

"I said from the very beginning that it would end up at the Supreme Court, and when it did, I was privileged enough to sit in that courtroom and listen," Ehardt said. "I expected my legislation, and thus Title IX, to be upheld as it should be. Opportunities for girls and women should never be confused with male feelings!"

West Virginia law

The case in West Virginia surrounded a 2021 Mountain State law that also bans trans athletes from participating on women's and girls' sports teams.

Pepper-Jackson wanted to try out for the girls' cross-country team when starting middle school, but would have been prevented from doing so under the state law because she is transgender.

In 2021, Pepper-Jackson's mother sued on her behalf.

A federal appeals court in 2024 barred the state from enforcing the ban, which prompted West Virginia to ask the Supreme Court to weigh in.

Trump's anti-trans agenda

Meanwhile, the Trump administration has sought at the federal level to prohibit trans athletes' participation in women's sports teams aligning with their gender identity, including through an executive order Trump signed last year.

That executive order made it the policy of the United States to "rescind all funds from educational programs that deprive women and girls of fair athletic opportunities, which results in the endangerment, humiliation, and silencing of women and girls and deprives them of privacy."

The NCAA promptly changed its policy to comply with the order, limiting "competition in women's sports to student-athletes assigned female at birth only."

Trump has signed other executive orders targeting trans people, including orders that make it the "policy of the United States to recognize two sexes, male and female," restrict access to gender-affirming care for kids and aim to bar openly transgender service members from the U.S. military.

Trump posted on his social media platform, Truth Social, to commend the justices.

"BIG WIN: The United States Supreme Court just RULED AGAINST MEN PLAYING IN WOMEN'S SPORTS," he wrote. "Wow! That takes that ridiculous situation off the table!!!"

Other reaction

Reaction poured in Tuesday from lawmakers and other officials, both in favor and against the court's ruling. Many who endorsed the decision, including U.S. House Education and Workforce Committee Chairman Tim Walberg, made some version of the declaration that "women's sports are for women."

"Unfortunately, radical gender ideology bolstered by policies pushed under the Biden-Harris administration chipped away at Title IX protections. As a result, the very female athletes the law was meant to empower were sidelined in the name of 'equality,'" Walberg, a Michigan Republican, said in a statement.

He added that he was "grateful" to the justices and said his committee's Republicans "will always stand

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with women athletes.”

U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito made a similar statement in a social media post

“Girls’ sports are for girls. It’s common sense,” the West Virginia Republican said. “I’m thankful SCOTUS has upheld West Virginia’s law protecting female athletes.”

Critics of the ruling vowed to continue efforts to create protections for trans people.

League of Women Voters CEO Celina Stewart said the decision “sends a dangerous message that some students are less worthy of dignity, opportunity, and belonging.”

“Policies that intentionally target and marginalize young people simply for who they are weaken our democracy and violate the values of fairness and inclusion that define who we are as a nation,” she said. “The League stands in solidarity with all affected students, and we remain committed to ensuring that equality becomes a lived reality for everyone.”

U.S. Rep. Melanie Stansbury, a New Mexico Democrat who co-chairs the Democratic Women’s Caucus, said in a post to social media the decision centered on “whether LGBTQ+ rights are civil rights protected by federal law.”

“The answer is YES—and we will keep fighting until it is clear this is the law of the land!” she added.

And leaders in blue states that do not have laws like the ones upheld Tuesday said they would not be affected.

“Today’s ruling, while predictable, is yet another disturbing affront to personal liberties by providing states with a license to discriminate,” Maine Attorney General Aaron Frey said. “The Court was clear that this decision had no bearing with respect to a state’s choice to include transgender athletes and as such, will not implicate the Department of Justice’s case against Maine.”

South Dakota approved ban in 2022

FROM SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

In 2022, South Dakota banned transgender girls and college-age women from playing in school sports leagues that match their gender identity, becoming the 10th state with such a law.

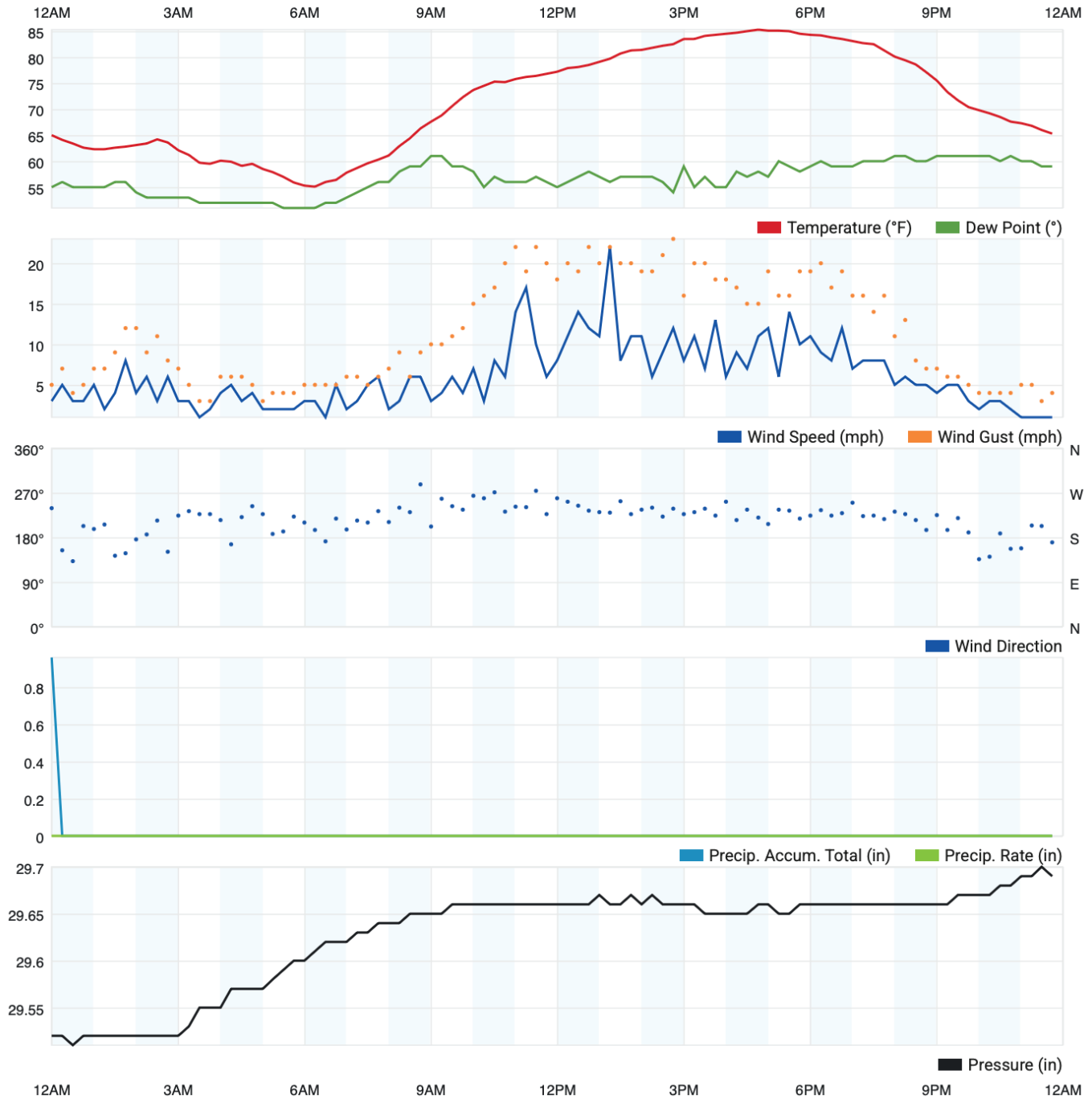
Jacob covers federal policy and helps direct national coverage as deputy Washington bureau chief for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

June 30, 2026



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Today



High: 89 °F

Decreasing
Clouds

Tonight



Low: 61 °F

Mostly Clear

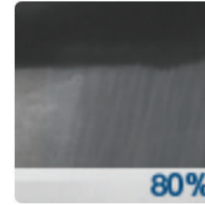
Thursday



High: 94 °F

Hot

Thursday
Night



Low: 64 °F

Showers

Friday



High: 89 °F

Mostly Sunny

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Isolated Severe Storms
Possible

3 AM through 8 AM &
4 PM through 8 PM CDT

PRIMARY THREATS

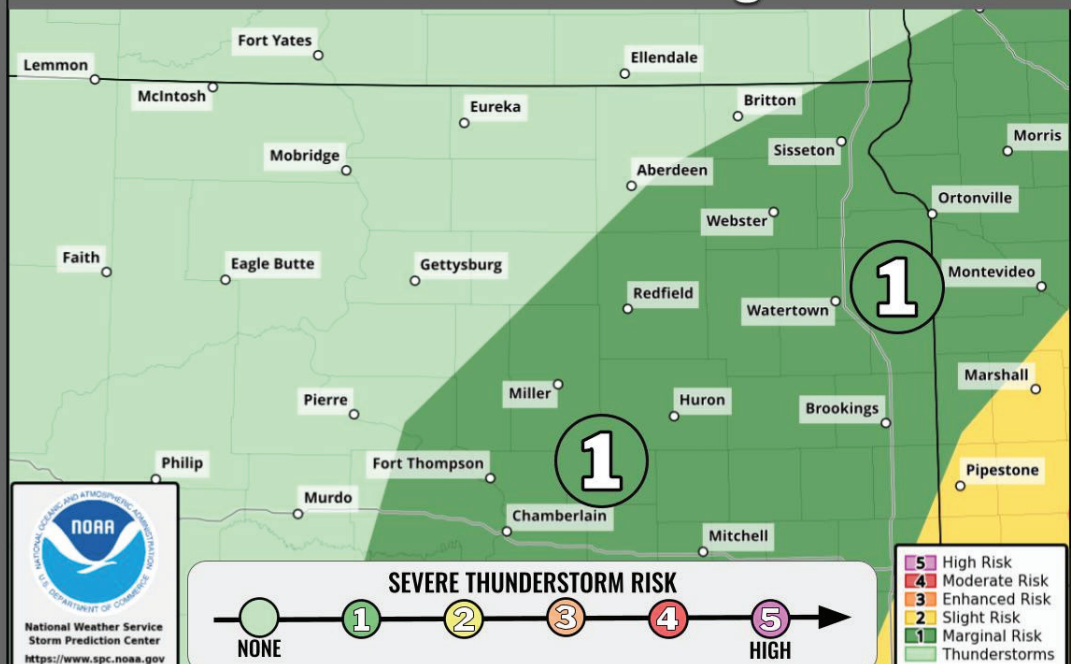


DAMAGING
WIND
GUSTS
of 60 mph



LARGE HAIL
of 1" in
diameter

Marginal Risk For Early Morning & Afternoon/Evening



A cluster of storms will move across central and eastern South Dakota this morning with potential for strong winds and large hail. A second round of isolated severe storms is possible this afternoon across a similar area.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 85 °F at 4:35 PM

Low Temp: 55 °F at 6:11 AM

Wind: 23 mph at 2:44 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 101 in 1911

Record Low: 41 in 1995

Average High: 84

Average Low: 59

Average Precip in July.: 0.12

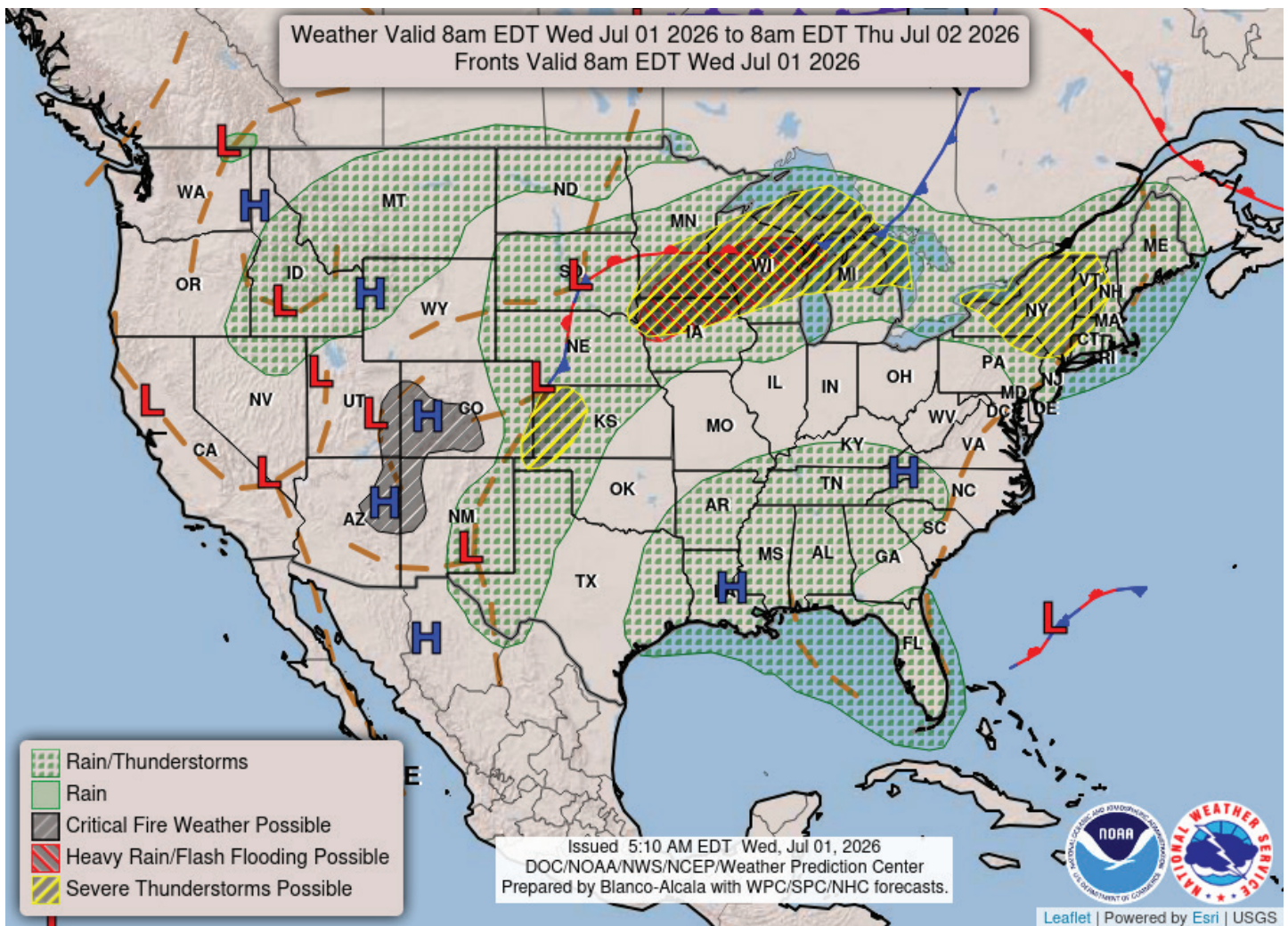
Precip to date in July.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 11.13

Precip Year to Date: 9.47

Sunset Tonight: 9:24 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:48 am



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Today in Weather History

July 1, 1928: A powerful, estimated F4 tornado moved southeast from 6 miles west of Miller, Hand County, destroying farms near the start of the path. All buildings were leveled to the ground, including two homes. A checkbook from one residence was found 10 miles away. Estimated property damaged was set at \$50,000.

July 1, 1955: An estimated F2 tornado moved northeast near Bowdle. Two barns were destroyed. A small girl and a pony were reportedly carried a quarter mile without injury. A tornado was also spotted in Emmons County in North Dakota, causing \$10,000 worth of damage.

July 1, 2005: Torrential rains of three to seven inches fell across far eastern Brown, western and northern Day, and most of Marshall Counties in late June causing widespread flooding. The flood waters slowly receded through July 10th. Many township roads and highways were flooded along with thousands of acres of cropland. Water surrounded several homes resulting in people being rescued. Some of the houses were flooded. Many bridges were damaged, and roads and culverts were washed out. In Day County, 30 roads were washed out, and 15 bridges needed repairs.

July 1, 2006: With continued little or no rainfall along with much above average temperatures, a drought expanded and intensified through July across central and north central South Dakota. Severe (D2) to an extreme (D3) drought early in July worsened to an extreme (D3) to exceptional (D4) across all of the areas by the middle of July and remained there until the end of the month. Rainfall was 1.50 inches to 2.25 inches below average for the month and from 7 to 8 inches below average for the year. Soil moisture was 4 to 5 inches below average, and lakes and river flows were well below normal. Crops and pastures were devastated due to the extreme dryness and burn bans were in effect across all of the areas. Many ranchers had to sell off much of their cattle. Throughout July, periodic high winds, low relative humidity values, along with many lightning storms resulted in several fires across central and north central South Dakota. The fires burned tens of thousands of acres of pastureland and cropland. Hundreds of firefighters worked throughout the month to contain the flames. The governor of South Dakota declared a statewide emergency and the United States Department of Agriculture declared all of the counties drought disasters. Swan Lake, in north-central South Dakota between Lowry and Hoven, had completely dried up from the long period of dryness. The last time this happened to the lake was 30 years prior in 1976. Also, Lake Oahe at Pierre was four feet above its all-time low.

1792 — A tornado or hurricane hit Philadelphia and New York City. Many young people were drowned while out boating on that Sunday. (David Ludlum)

1861: Cherrapunji, Meghalaya, India measured 366 inches of rain during the month of July 1861. From August 1, 1860, to July 31, 1861, Cherrapunji received a record-breaking 1,041.75 inches of precipitation.

1911 — The high of just 79 degrees at Phoenix AZ was their coolest daily maximum of record for the month of July. The normal daily high for July 1st is 105 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1979 — It snowed almost half a foot at Stampede Pass WA, a July record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Lake Charles LA was drenched with a month's worth of rain during the early morning. More than five inches of rain soaked the city, including 2.68 inches in one hour. A thunderstorm in the southern Yakima Valley of Washington State produced high winds which downed trees up to six feet in diameter. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Twenty-six cities in the north central and northeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Lows of 48 degrees at Providence RI, 48 degrees at Roanoke VA, 49 degrees at Stratford CT, and 48 degrees at Wilmington, DE, were records for the month of July. Boston MA equalled their record for July with a low of 50 degrees. Five inches of snow whitened Mount Washington NH. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Showers and thunderstorms associated with the low pressure system which was once Tropical Storm Allison continued to drench parts of Mississippi, Louisiana and eastern Texas. Late night thunderstorms produced 12.58 inches of rain at Biloxi, MS, in six hours, and 10.73 inches at Gulfport MS. Flooding in Mississippi over the first six days of the month caused 55 million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2002: San Antonio, Texas recorded 9.52 inches of rain on this day to set a new record for its greatest rainfall for the entire month of July.

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Daily Devotion

Mighty in Spirit

To become mighty in spirit, you must draw on strength greater than your own

Ephesians 3:14-16: 14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,
16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,

Most of us want to be healthy in mind, body, and spirit. To become physically fit, we need to exercise and eat well. If our goal is a strong mind, then we must apply ourselves to acquiring knowledge and self-control. However, to become mighty in spirit requires something more than human effort.

You see, none of us was born with a spiritual connection to God. Because of Adam and Eve's transgression, we were all dead in our sins and separated from the Lord (Ephesians 2:1). But by accepting Jesus into our heart, we are forgiven, reconciled to God, and made alive in our spirit (Ephesians 2:5). This is the first step of the Christian life.

Once we are born again, the indwelling Holy Spirit teaches us how to view life as Jesus does, embrace the Lord's values and priorities, and follow His example. The more we yield to the Spirit's instruction, the sooner we'll be transformed into Christ's image, equipped to carry out His will, and strengthened in our inner spirit to serve Him.

God desires followers who will dedicate themselves to His plan and show His love to the world. However, He doesn't expect us to go it alone—He has sent the Helper to strengthen us for the work ahead.

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:
06.30.26

1 4 9 45 54 2

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

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 13 Mins 34
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.30.26

26 41 50 53 62 12

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$542,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 58
Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.29.26

8 13 29 30 31 4

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$31,160,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 13 Mins 35
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.27.26

2 21 25 30 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$157,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 28 Mins 35
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.29.26

2 9 24 25 39 14

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 57 Mins 35
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.29.26

10 14 41 53 59 3

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$375,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 57 Mins 35
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Mourners attend funerals for 14 Pakistani children killed in tutoring center roof collapse

By BABAR DOGAR AND K.M. CHAUDHRY Associated Press

LAHORE, Pakistan (AP) — Mourners gathered Wednesday in Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore to bury 14 schoolchildren who were killed when the roof of a tutoring center collapsed on Tuesday.

Police are investigating whether negligence during ongoing construction work caused the collapse that left another eight children injured and hospitalized in stable condition.

Residents and preliminary police findings indicate the tutoring center was operating in an aging building. Investigators believe the unfinished roof of the second floor may have collapsed because of poor construction.

At least two people, including the building owner, were arrested as investigators tried to determine who was responsible, senior police official Kamran Faisal said, adding that negligence by the owner and construction workers appear to have caused the collapse.

"We are still investigating to determine exactly whose negligence resulted in this tragic incident," Faisal said.

Funeral prayers for the children, who were up to 14 years old, began before dawn and continued through Wednesday morning. Most of the victims were buried in a local graveyard, while some families planned to take the bodies to their native towns for burial.

Ambulances transported the victims' bodies overnight to their homes in Kahna, a neighborhood on the outskirts of Lahore. As the bodies were returned to their families, cries echoed through the neighborhood. Mothers and female relatives sat beside the bodies throughout the night while classmates and friends of the victims stood nearby in tears.

The funeral mourners Wednesday morning included Mohammad Ashfaq, a laborer whose 7-year-old son and nephew were killed in the collapse.

"I cannot express my pain and grief in words," Ashfaq said through tears as relatives tried to comfort him.

Nearby, Muhammad Farooq mourned the loss of his young daughter.

"Yesterday she went to her tuition class at around 4 p.m.," Farooq said. "Around 4:45 p.m., my family called me and said the roof of the tuition center had collapsed. They told me many children were trapped under the debris. Fourteen children were killed, and the injured were taken to the hospital."

Local resident Mohammad Tahir said neighbors were the first to respond after the roof gave way.

"Rescuers arrived quickly, but before they reached us, neighbors rushed in with shovels and even dug through the debris with their bare hands," Tahir said. "We also pulled children from the rubble, but many could not be saved."

Building collapses are common in Pakistan, where construction standards are often poorly enforced. Structures are frequently built with substandard materials and safety regulations are sometimes ignored to reduce costs.

Grief has turned to anger for some people. Residents blamed the owner of the tutoring center for holding classes in what they described as an old and unsafe building despite ongoing construction and demanded strict punishment for those responsible.

"We don't know whose funeral to attend first or whose home to visit first to offer condolences," Tahir said.

Turkey tightens security and showcases strength and commitment ahead of NATO summit

By SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey is rolling out sweeping security measures for the upcoming NATO summit, deploying tens of thousands of police and placing air defenses on high alert, while banning public gatherings and imposing controversial restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly.

That's meant to safeguard the summit, but also to display strength and underscore Turkey's commitment to the military alliance, even as it is often portrayed as an outlier within it.

On July 7–8, leaders from all 32 member states are expected convene in the Turkish capital, including U.S. President Donald Trump, whose threats to withdraw from NATO and reduce U.S. troop levels have cast uncertainty over the alliance's future.

Turkey has also unveiled a new VIP airport, converted from a former military airfield, specifically to host NATO leaders.

Allies will aim for unity

At the Ankara summit, NATO members are expected to address questions over defense spending and the U.S.'s evolving role in the alliance.

The main agenda will center on unity after Trump has criticized allies for failing to support the U.S.-led war on Iran and efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

"The important aspect of the meeting is to what extent the rift between the United States and Europe can be healed or narrowed during the summit," said Fatih Ceylan, a former Turkish ambassador to NATO and security analyst at the Ankara Policy Center. "We should not expect miracles, but nonetheless if there is a convergence of ideas emphasizing the importance of NATO, that should be seen as a success."

Turkey's role as host seems to have helped win an appearance by Trump, who has a close rapport with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"Well, except for the fact that it was being held in Turkey by President Erdogan, I don't think I would have gone to it," he told reporters following a meeting with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte at the White House.

Turkey has often acted independently in NATO

In the run-up to the summit, Erdogan described Turkey as a reliable ally that consistently shoulders responsibility on NATO's southeastern flank and will continue to play a leading role in the alliance. He said his country was working to ensure that the Ankara Summit "will stand as a reference point in NATO's history."

A NATO member since 1952, Turkey has the alliance's second-largest army after the United States, a fast-growing defense industry, and a strategic location the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East, the Black Sea, and the Caucasus.

Yet it has often acted independently, frustrating allies by refusing to participate in sanctions on Russia, engaging in disputes with Greece, and purchasing Russian missile defense systems — a move that led to its expulsion from the U.S.-led F-35 program in 2019.

Turkey also delayed Finland and Sweden's NATO membership until it secured concessions on counter-terrorism cooperation and the lifting of arms export restrictions, and blocked the appointments of NATO chiefs Anders Fogh Rasmussen in 2009 and Mark Rutte in 2024 until other demands were met.

But Turkey's independent streak has also enabled it to play a mediating role, from brokering a deal to ship grain across the Black Sea between Ukraine and Russia in 2022 to supporting recent initiatives aimed at ending the war in Iran.

Ankara, too, has at times been frustrated with its NATO allies, particularly over what it saw as the alliance's lack of solidarity during a failed coup attempt in 2016, and the arms sales restrictions imposed on Turkey after its intervention in Syria.

Murat Aslan, an analyst at the Ankara-based SETA think tank, said Turkey learned to "play it alone" due to its turbulent relations with the United States and Europe, adding that Europe is now also talking about "strategic autonomy" from the U.S.

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Turkey can help NATO navigate U.S.–Europe tensions by showing how to “balance” independence with alliance commitments, he said.

Ankara is tilting back toward the West

More recently, however, Turkey has leaned closer to NATO, whose importance was underscored during the Iran war when alliance missile defenses intercepted four missiles fired from Iran into Turkish territory. Weeks before the summit, Italy and Germany deployed air defense systems to help Turkey respond to heightened threats.

“Turkey wishes to distinguish itself as a foreign policy actor that is independent of NATO and the West,” wrote Hamish Kinnear, principal Middle East and North Africa analyst at risk intelligence company Verisk Maplecroft, in a note. “While Turkey is not abandoning its balancing approach, it is tilting closer to the West, primarily because of NATO.”

Authorities roll out strict security measures

In Ankara, strict access restrictions will be imposed on several of the city’s main arteries, around airports, the presidential complex where the summit will be held, and around hotels hosting the delegations, severely disrupting life in the city of nearly 6 million.

As the country prepares for the summit, Erdogan unveiled a new airport which was transformed from a former military airfield into a modern facility with expanded runways. The new Ankara Airport is expected to remain a VIP airport after the summit and is not expected to serve the general public, officials have said.

Facades of houses along the route from the new airport have been painted over as part of city beautification efforts, the newspaper Cumhuriyet reported.

With a history of terrorist attacks, Turkey’s capital is no stranger to tight security, but the measures being taken in connection with NATO appear to go beyond the usual.

Authorities have also banned demonstrations, concerts, and graduation ceremonies during the summit, while nonessential state employees have been placed on leave to ease congestion.

Security units have detained more than 200 people suspected of links to extremist groups, including the Islamic State group, authorities said. Media reports said that several activists, lawyers and an academic were caught up in the sweep.

A Turkish court, meanwhile, blocked access to websites critical of NATO and the summit on security and public order grounds, according to Engelli Web, a website that tracks websites banned in Turkey. Several journalists from Turkish opposition-leaning media organizations were denied accreditation to cover the summit, sparking outrage from media rights groups.

“In the history of the organization, we have never witnessed security measures as stringent and suffocating in a host city for a summit as we are seeing this time in Ankara,” wrote Namik Tan, a former Turkish ambassador and legislator from Turkey’s main opposition party.

Personal trainer Selin Karakoc said she breathed a sigh of relief after she was told that her wedding on July 5 falls just before the start of the restrictions.

“Ours could be one of the last weddings in Ankara that week,” she joked.

Explosion in Monaco reportedly wounds Ukrainian tycoon with ties to Russia

By PHILIPPE MAGONI, SYLVIE CORBET and OLEG CETINIC Associated Press

MONACO (AP) — An explosion at an apartment building entrance in Monaco reportedly wounded a Ukrainian tycoon with ties to Russia and two other people, the chief prosecutor in the exclusive Mediterranean country said Tuesday.

A search was underway for a suspect who fled on foot after the blast late Monday, Prosecutor Stéphane Thibault said, adding that the motive was unclear.

Media reports identified Ukrainian construction tycoon Vadym Yermolaiev as being among the injured. He has said he renounced his Ukrainian citizenship nearly a decade ago, and he was targeted by Ukrainian sanctions in 2023 for ties to Russia. A woman and a child were also hurt.

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"It appears that the family was specifically targeted," said Christophe Mirmand, the minister of state for Monaco. He said the suspect "had walked around the area several times while waiting for the victims," according to surveillance footage.

It was not clear why the family was targeted or by whom.

Russia has a long history of targeting its enemies abroad, and Western intelligence officials have recently said that a campaign of targeted killings has ramped up since President Vladimir Putin's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Ukraine is also believed to have carried out attacks and targeted killings of Russian figures in the course of the war, although those attacks have largely been confined to Ukrainian or Russian territory.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said its embassy in France, which is also responsible for Monaco, was in touch with local authorities. Ukrainian diplomats were at the scene providing assistance, it said.

Attack shocks glamorous Monaco

The attack shocked the country on the Mediterranean coast, one of the world's smallest sovereign states known for its high concentration of wealthy residents. Monaco's Prince Albert II described it as "an odious act" and said all public services were mobilized to ensure security.

Monaco police opened an attempted murder investigation, but they did not describe it as a terrorism investigation, Thibault told reporters.

The family members are "regular" residents of Monaco, and authorities did not yet know whether they had been threatened in the past, Mirmand said.

The blast occurred around 9 p.m. Monday at the entrance of a residence near the French border.

Silvano Ippolito, who lives across from the building where the explosion happened, described hearing it and seeing a little boy on the ground being attended to by other people. He then called his wife, a doctor, who provided first aid to the badly wounded woman.

"She intervened very quickly, before the emergency services arrived, to apply tourniquets and perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, as the woman was losing consciousness," Ippolito said.

A man came out of the building covered in blood and staggering. As he tried to go down the stairs, the staircase collapsed, and he fell on Ippolito's wife and a firefighter, he said.

The woman's injuries were "a real disaster," Ippolito said. "I'm telling you, she had no foot."

The woman was in life-threatening condition, Thibault said. He did not provide the identities of the people who were hurt.

The woman was being treated at a hospital in Nice, Mirmand told French news broadcaster LCI. Her partner and the 13-year-old child suffered less severe injuries but were still hospitalized Tuesday, he added.

The suspect got away via steps to a small street to the neighboring French town of Beausoleil, according to surveillance footage.

In a picture captured by surveillance cameras and published by French media, the suspect could be seen in a street wearing a black jacket, light-colored pants, white shoes and a black bucket hat that partly concealed his face.

The three people were "apparently returning home peacefully," Mirmand said, citing surveillance footage. "They were caught in the explosion as they crossed the threshold of their apartment building."

Ukrainian tycoon is a well-known real estate developer

Yermolaiev, a Ukrainian-born businessman originally from the city of Dnipro, built his fortune through the Alef Group, a diversified business that includes commercial real estate, manufacturing and agriculture. He became one of the country's best-known property developers, leading projects that reshaped parts of Dnipro's city center. He has regularly appeared in rankings of Ukraine's wealthiest entrepreneurs.

In an interview with Forbes Ukraine, Yermolaiev said he renounced his Ukrainian citizenship and became a Cypriot citizen in 2017.

In December 2023, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy imposed sanctions on Yermolaiev as part of a broader package targeting individuals and companies Kyiv said had business links to Russia or Russian-occupied territories.

The Cyprus Registrar of Companies lists a man called Vadym Iermolaiev as the director of Vespano Ltd., a company in the Cypriot city of Limassol first registered in January 2019. Cyprus' Interior Ministry told The Associated Press it could not provide information about the man's citizenship status due to confidentiality rules.

A coastal playground for the rich and famous, Monaco is renowned as much for its tax-friendly incentives and Formula 1 Grand Prix as its glamorous royal family. The small principality is widely regarded as one of the safest places in the world, in part because of its network of thousands of surveillance cameras covering most public spaces.

Monaco's population of 38,000 is multinational, with only a fifth of the population actually citizens of the principality.

Ukrainian drone attacks on oil refineries plunge Russia into a summer fuel crisis

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

The lines are growing at Russian gas stations -- and so is the frustration and uncertainty as several months of Ukrainian attacks have set oil refineries ablaze and choked supplies for motorists across the vast country.

Fuel rationing has been introduced in many regions, with hourslong queues of cars snaking beside roads. Social media videos show drivers aghast at the lines or swearing at empty gas pumps and rising prices. The mayor of the Siberian city of Irkutsk even ordered portable toilets brought in to accommodate those in line.

The fuel crisis — unprecedented for a nation that is one of the world's biggest energy producers — has brought Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine home to ordinary Russians like few other events in the war, now in its fifth year.

It drew a rare admission from President Vladimir Putin, who acknowledged that "problems persist for both motorists and businesses," and "there are still queues at petrol stations, and finding the right grade of petrol isn't always easy."

Putin insisted the shortages are "not critical" and "temporary."

But that appeared to do little to reassure at least one motorist in Moscow, the wealthy capital typically better-insulated from economic shocks than the rest of the country.

"I think the situation is not very good," the motorist waiting in line told The Associated Press on Monday, the day after Putin's televised remarks.

"They say one thing on television, and in reality it's another. ... People are queueing everywhere," he added, declining to identify himself out of concern for his safety.

Ukraine hits energy targets multiple times

An AP count shows over 50 reported attacks by Ukraine on oil refineries, depots, terminals and other oil infrastructure in Russia and the illegally annexed Crimean Peninsula since late March. Often, the same facility is hit more than once — such as the refinery in the Black Sea town of Tuapse, which was struck four times in just over two weeks.

As a result, the amount of crude oil Russia processed into fuel in June was down 25% from a year ago, to 3.95 million barrels per day — the lowest level in over two decades, said Gary Peach, oil markets analyst at Energy Intelligence.

"The outages are extraordinary," he said.

Gasoline production has fallen 17% to 850,000 barrels a day, from 1.03 million a day a year ago — far short of what's needed for the domestic market. Russia exports relatively little gasoline.

About a third of Russia's oil refining capacity is offline, said Chris Weafer, CEO of Macro-Advisory Ltd. Consultancy, noting that because refineries don't publicly confirm the extent of the damage, his estimate comes from anecdotal evidence and oil industry sources.

"It comes at a very critical time for the Russian economy, in that the agriculture season, particularly the

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harvest season, is now starting to ratchet up," increasing demand, Weafer said.

Ukrainian officials describe the strikes as a campaign to pressure Moscow to end the war by undermining its military logistics and supply lines and weakening its ability to mount assaults along the front.

In particular, Kyiv has sought to isolate Crimea, which was seized from Ukraine in 2014 in a move that most nations do not recognize. Attacks earlier this year forced the Moscow-installed authorities to enact fuel rationing on the peninsula in May and halt sales to civilians there altogether several weeks later. Limited sales later resumed in the city of Sevastopol.

Attacks — and fuel shortages — spread

Ukraine has carried out major drone strikes on Russia's two largest cities, embarrassing the Kremlin with images of black plumes of smoke that circulated widely online, despite regulations restricting their publication.

A June 3 attack on an oil terminal in St. Petersburg darkened the sky as Putin prepared to host his annual economic forum to attract foreign investment. On June 18, a similar cloud rose from the Moscow Oil Refinery on the outskirts of the capital, sending greasy black droplets raining down.

By late June, some form of gas rationing was reported in over half of Russia's regions. Some of them slapped strict limits on all gas stations; in others, gas station chains limited how much fuel could be bought.

Officials blamed hoarding and panic-buying, urging motorists to fill their tanks only when needed.

Exports of gasoline and aviation fuel have been restricted, and authorities weighed banning diesel fuel exports, too.

Importing fuel was being considered, with Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov saying contacts with some countries were "underway." He described the move as "another step toward stabilizing the market and aimed at reducing panic-buying."

Shortages in Siberia

The shortages have reached distant Russian regions where no refineries have been hit by Ukraine's drones.

Viktor Shkurenko, who owns retail stores in the Omsk region and other businesses, called announcement on limits on gasoline sales there to 40 liters (10.5 gallons) per vehicle "unexpected."

"Nothing was bombed here. We have the biggest oil refinery in Siberia right here, and it gave us confidence that this fuel crisis won't come to us," he said, expressing worry about how limits could affect his businesses. As of Saturday, however, he said his company has not had any problems refueling its vehicles.

In the Siberian region of Zabayakalye, east of Lake Baikal, media reports said a garbage hauler suspended pickups and some bus services were curtailed.

In addition to ordering portable toilets outside gas stations, the city of Irkutsk raised public transport fares as of Wednesday, citing rising fuel costs.

Pavel Kharitonenko, acting head of the Irkutsk branch of the opposition Yabloko party, told AP he now finds it easier to walk or use public transport.

"I don't have the fuel, and I don't want to queue at gas stations," he said. The Irkutsk region, home to a Rosneft oil refinery, has experienced acute shortages for several days, with lines growing, Kharitonenko said.

Repairing refineries will take time

Putin said Russia's stockpiles of gasoline are only 4% lower than what it had last year. Weafer, the analyst, says that "reportedly, there are good supplies of fuel around the country. The problem is it's in the wrong place."

Supplies need to be reallocated to regions experiencing shortages, and in a big country like Russia, "it's not something that can be done overnight," Weafer said.

"There should be enough, but it will take several weeks to get it from where it is to where it's needed," he says. "It's just a huge logistics operation to do that."

Fixing the war-damaged refineries is complicated. Ukraine's attacks damaged specialized equipment that is often sourced abroad, making repairs time-consuming and expensive as workarounds or replacements are sought by evading sanctions.

"They manage to get these things up and running, not necessarily at full capacity," Peach said. "But the extent of the damage this time is so extensive that they won't get back to winter levels of refining this

summer.”

Some refineries won't be worth repairing until there's a ceasefire or armistice, he said, because they will just "get knocked down again."

Repairing the Moscow Oil Refinery, which supplied 40% of the fuel to the capital and the surrounding region, is expected to take at least three months, Weafer said.

If there's no further damage to Russia's oil infrastructure, he estimated the shortages will last "probably throughout the summer" because demand from agriculture will likely remain high into September.

Defying Pope Leo XIV and risking schism, traditionalists go ahead with Latin Mass consecrations

By JAMEY KEATEN and NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ECONE, Switzerland (AP) — A breakaway group of traditionalist Catholics directly defied Pope Leo XIV by consecrating four bishops without his consent Wednesday, dismissing the resulting excommunications and schism by declaring it was a "sacred duty" to defend the Catholic faith.

The Society of St. Pius X, which opposes modernizing reforms in the Catholic Church, went ahead with a ritual-filled ceremony at its seminary in Econe, Switzerland, despite a last-ditch appeal by Leo to call it off. The American pope warned in a letter Tuesday that consecrating bishops without his approval amounted to a "sin of extreme gravity" that will actually harm their faithful.

And yet bells tolled through the misty Alpine mountain valley as hundreds of priests processed two-by-two to the altar under a tent at the start of the service, which was attended by thousands of faithful Catholics who prefer the traditional Latin Mass over modern liturgies.

The Mass, rich in velvet and gold-trimmed vestments, chant and incense, was livestreamed on the society's YouTube channel, with simultaneous translation in several languages. The highly organized religious extravaganza underscored the society's international reach, despite its schismatic outsider status, and appeal to conservative, traditionalist Catholics wary of the modern, secular world.

The consecrations amount to a major crisis for Leo, who has prioritized church unity and healing tensions with traditionalists that worsened during the Pope Francis pontificate.

The SSPX, as the society is known, is a threat to the Holy See since it represents a parallel, ultra-Catholic, pre-Vatican II church. It now has six bishops, 751 priests, 264 seminarians training in five seminaries, 145 religious brothers, 88 oblates and 250 religious sisters representing 50 nationalities, according to SSPX statistics.

At the start of the Mass, a priest read aloud a statement justifying the consecrations as a necessary "sacred duty" and dismissing the resulting penalties. "We consider every punishment and censure brought to bear against this step will have no validity," he said.

Midway through, Bishop Alfonso de Galarreta, who himself was consecrated without papal consent in 1988, placed his hands on the head of the four new bishops. The ritual laying of the hands confers the Holy Spirit from one bishop to another and recalls Christ's gesture to his apostles.

According to church law, the mere act of consecrating a bishop without a papal mandate incurs the harshest penalty in the Catholic Church: automatic excommunication for the four new bishops and the bishop administering the rite. It also amounts to a schismatic act, or an intentional rupture of the unity of the Catholic Church.

A society founded in opposition to Vatican II

The French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre had founded the SSPX in opposition to the modernizing reforms of the Second Vatican Council. Among other things, the 1960s church meetings revolutionized the Catholic Church's relations with other Christians, Jews and people of other faiths, and allowed Mass to be celebrated in the vernacular rather than Latin.

In 1988, exactly 38 years ago Wednesday, Lefebvre consecrated four bishops without papal consent. The Vatican promptly excommunicated Lefebvre and the four bishops and declared the consecrations a "schismatic act." Pope Benedict XVI in 2009 lifted the excommunications, but the SSPX today has no legal

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standing in the church.

The SSPX has accused the modern church of being rife with heresies and errors, including modernism, liberalism and ecumenism. The society insists that only the SSPX is upholding the true faith of Christ and has justified the consecrations, citing a "state of necessity" to minister to its faithful.

It identified the new bishops as Pascal Schreiber of Switzerland, Michael Goldade of the United States, Michel Poinciset de Sivry of France and Marc Hanappier, also of France.

In his homily, SSPX superior the Rev. Davide Pagliarani defended the consecrations as necessary for the salvation of souls but also insisted they served Leo and the church.

"We are accused of not respecting the pope," Pagliarani said. "But it is precisely because we love the pope as the vicar of Christ, as the head of the church, that we don't want to see the pope humiliated anymore, on the side of false shepherds representing false religions."

The Vatican didn't immediately comment.

A rupture but a celebration nevertheless

And yet everything about Wednesday's ceremony had the air of a joyous celebration, even though a downpour eventually doused the faithful in the field outside the tent. The website for its consecration has had a countdown clock running for days. Participants received a baseball cap with the "Econe2026" seal on it.

And in perhaps the most obvious sign of a celebration, registered participants were able to purchase a souvenir set of wine to commemorate the "historic" event. The 75 Swiss franc (\$92.50) "Cuvee des Sacres" gift box features pinot noir, Syrah, Petit Arvine and Fendant, each bottle with a bishop-themed label: an image of a bishop's pointed miter hat, his ring, cross or crozier staff.

The field, located under giant power lines, was awash in smiling nuns, priests posing for photos, Girl Scouts handing out water bottles, black-clad security guards with earpieces and orange-vested volunteer escorts keeping journalists on a short leash, occasionally cutting short interviews with faithful. Morning mist coated the nearby Rhone River that snakes through the Alpine valley as worshippers flocked in.

Arlina Onglao, a 71-year-old travel agent who trekked from her home in Manila, the Philippines, said she wanted to come to Econe for the "historic event" and didn't care about the prospect of excommunications.

"For me, because the Vatican has lost -- well, should I say this? -- has lost credibility, I don't think it's going to scare any of us. Me, I'm not scared," she said. "I feel like I'm on a safer road to heaven."

Medical researcher Wulfran Lindzondzo, 42, a native of Gabon who today lives in France, said he wanted to "re-discover tradition" through the society, noting its presence in the African country.

"The Holy Father doesn't really agree with it, but I hand over -- I will pray to the Good Lord that the authorities in Rome can one day accept coming back to the church's traditions," he said before the Mass began.

Other traditionalists and conservatives oppose the consecrations

For the society itself, neither the threat of a declared schism nor an excommunication matters. "We don't fear it. It pains us immensely, but we believe that the good we seek is greater than the pain that will be inflicted upon us," said Marc-André Mabillard, SSPX media manager.

In a late response to Leo's letter, the SSPX urged Leo to wait before declaring any penalty.

But many Catholics, including conservative and traditional ones, opposed the consecrations as an act of severe disobedience to the pope that hurts the church.

"You can't serve tradition while disobeying the church and her authority," said the Rev. Robert Gahl, an ethics expert at the Catholic University of America.

Ship runs aground in Strait of Hormuz, Iranian state TV reports

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A ship ran aground in the Strait of Hormuz while using a route not approved by Iran, state television in Tehran reported Wednesday. The report identified the affected vessel as a foreign container ship, but offered no other immediate details.

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The report appeared aimed at underlining Tehran's claims to control the strait, which has long been considered by the world as an international waterway and saw a fifth of all oil and natural gas pass through it in peacetime.

Iran has used its ability to choke off the narrow waterway as a key source of leverage since the war began, disrupting global markets for energy and other critical goods.

The report also came as U.S. Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law, were in Doha, Qatar, for talks over reaching a permanent end to the Iran war.

Technical talks between diplomats began Wednesday in Qatar, said two regional officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door discussions. Those discussions see negotiators aiming to nail down specifics to pave the way for top leaders to seal an agreement, though the differences over the strait and Lebanon still loom large.

Iran offered no immediate acknowledgment of the negotiations starting.

The Strait of Hormuz is a key sticking point in talks

Iran and the United States agreed as part of an interim deal to allow ships to pass uncharged for 60 days, but Tehran insisted it must control the routes of the vessels and later charge fees for passage, upending decades of practice in the waterway. The U.S. and many Gulf Arab states say they won't agree to the charges. An effort by Oman and a U.N. agency to launch a new route near Oman's shore sparked attacks across the Mideast over last weekend, highlighting the tensions still gripping the Mideast.

Iranian state TV said the ship "ran aground with its cargo because of shallow waters along the route it had chosen and was unable to continue sailing." It said shippers needed to follow the instructions of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard in the strait.

The Guard's navy "has repeatedly warned captains, shipowners and officials of shipping companies around the world that any entry or exit through routes other than the 'Route of Authority' in the Persian Gulf could lead to irreparable incidents," it said. The report did not mention the two ships Iran attacked in recent days for daring to head out through the strait without Tehran's permission, including one that was carrying crude oil from Qatar.

US negotiators are in Qatar and Iranians are expected

Witkoff and Kushner arrived in Qatar on Tuesday ahead of talks with Qatar mediating. While Iran has insisted it planned no meetings with the Americans, their comments left open the possibility of so-called "indirect negotiations," in which the two nations pass messages through Qatari officials. That has happened multiple times during negotiations in the second Trump administration.

Qatar early Wednesday morning acknowledged a meeting between the Americans and its foreign minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani. A readout from Qatar's Foreign Ministry said the men talked about the interim deal "along with the efforts aimed at promoting security and stability in the region through dialogue and diplomacy." Lebanon also was discussed, another key point in a final deal as Iran has been insisted that all fighting between the Iranian-backed militia Hezbollah and Israeli military forces end.

Iran also has called for Israel to give up the land it occupies in southern Lebanon now. Israel insists it must hold the territory and have a free hand to attack Hezbollah, which has been launching attacks into northern Israel.

Iran did not immediately acknowledge any talks on Wednesday. However, Iranian parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, a key negotiator, told Iranian state television overnight that work continues to try to reach a permanent end to the war.

"We are engaged in dialogue, but if they refuse to implement what has been agreed through dialogue, we are prepared for war," Qalibaf said.

More ships get out of Strait of Hormuz

While ship traffic in the strait dropped after this weekend's attacks, more countries say their vessels have gotten out.

Thailand's Foreign Ministry said Tuesday that 10 out of 11 Thai-flagged vessels or vessels chartered by Thai operators have departed the Strait of Hormuz safely. South Korean officials say all but two of the

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country's 26 vessels that were stranded have left safely.

Iraq shoots down drone over Baghdad

Also Wednesday, Iraqi authorities shot down a small drone over Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, where many embassies and government buildings are located, two Iraqi security officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly. One of the officials said the drone was unarmed and likely was being used for surveillance. No group immediately claimed the drone as theirs.

After the U.S. and Israel launched their war on Iran in late February, Iranian-backed Iraqi militias launched frequent attacks on U.S. military and diplomatic facilities in Iraq. The drone being shot down overnight Wednesday was the first security incident in Baghdad since the U.S. and Iran agreed to a ceasefire.

Spotless uniforms, stalled cranes: Inside Venezuela's faltering quake rescue effort

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

LA GUAIRA, Venezuela (AP) — Angelica Mundrain wants the bodies of her son, niece and nephew to be pulled from the rubble of her flattened beachfront apartment. She has spent every minute of the past six days waiting for the heavy machinery needed to remove the slabs of concrete and twisted metal that trapped them.

So have other Venezuelan earthquake survivors.

They, like others across the northern state of La Guaira, have the same question: Who is in charge? Venezuela's self-described socialist government, which long prided itself on being protector and provider, has been neither when it mattered most, many said.

The powerful back-to-back earthquakes on June 24 have brought to the forefront the inability of the party that has ruled the country for 27 years — now with acting President Delcy Rodriguez at the helm — to carry out basic governmental functions.

"We've been abandoned," Mundrain said, sitting in a chair on the street Tuesday in front of what remained of the 11-story building she once called home. "We feel helpless. What we have seen is a lack of organization, a lack of empathy, a lack of everything."

In the critical 72 hours after residential buildings, food joints, pharmacies, hotels and convenience stores imploded in La Guaira state, Caracas and surrounding regions, the on-the-ground response was primarily focused on directing traffic, with police officers, intelligence agents and members of the armed forces manning intersections.

Residents take on rescue and recovery amid government failure

Civilians, mostly alone and some with the help of foreign rescuers, searched for loved ones among piles of rubble. Ambulances were stuck in miles-long (kilometers-long) traffic jams. Hospitals were undersupplied and understaffed. Emergency personnel responded with little to no equipment.

A week later, many residents in coastal communities of La Guaira were attributing most rescues and recoveries to fellow Venezuelans and foreign teams with know-how and equipment like thermal cameras and sound detectors as well as trained dogs. They also pointed out that while civilians and foreign rescuers worked, men and women in Venezuelan uniforms stood watching and state workers took selfies.

Tulane University professor David Smilde, who has studied Venezuela for three decades, said the tragedy has made clear that the stunning Jan. 3 capture of then-President Nicolas Maduro by U.S. forces was not a one-off "in which the Venezuelan state was not able to defend itself at all."

"It also can't do anything like get started with digging people out," he said, adding that it should be a worrying concern for Rodriguez, who was sworn in after Maduro was deposed and taken to New York to face drug trafficking charges.

Smilde said the dismal response is linked to the huge numbers of people who have left the public sector because of extremely low pay as well as corruption, such as the many people who are included in the government's payroll but who have not worked in months or years. In a functioning government, he

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added, people have specific duties to design protocols spelling out procedures in case of emergencies, including earthquakes.

"It's like trying to have a baseball team with three people on the field. You're not sure who's going to be the pitcher, who's going to be catching, and who's going to be outfielder," he said of the government's lack of organization.

Wealth and government connections mean some get help

Wealth and government connections also influenced the government's response, with some sites given preferential treatment.

When one collapsed building was teeming with police and military school students, people accurately guessed that officials or politically connected individuals must have lived there. The police officers from a neighboring state were indeed searching for a captain, while the students and a few members of the national guard were hoping to locate a major general.

A telescopic crane, like the one Mundrain needs for the recovery of her family, was parked for several hours in what was that building's entrance. The relatives of the well-off families who lived in the building were able to rent it. Mundrain cannot.

"I think that if there were someone in a position of authority in each of these apartments, there would be a well-oiled machine working like they have in other residences," Mundrain said pointing to her building.

People's anger over the response has also led to altercations between residents and machine operators. In one instance, when a government-provided excavator tried to leave the site of a flattened public housing building, people blocked traffic to keep it in place and even pulled the operator from the cab.

The government has reported that 1,943 died and more than 10,500 were injured in the 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude earthquakes that struck June 24. Thousands more have been reported missing.

Rescuers on Tuesday continued to free some survivors from mountains of debris, offering anguished families a sliver of hope even as the likelihood of finding people alive diminished with each passing hour. The first 48 to 72 hours after a natural disaster are crucial to rescue efforts, though survival can be extended if people have access to food and water.

Electrician Daniel Castillo was able to pull his mother and son alive from their second-floor apartment in a collapsed public housing building in La Guaira just hours after the earthquake struck. The body of his brother remained inside for another day until he could reach him.

On Tuesday, he decried the government's response while he waited in line to get a free bag of hygiene products, including toilet paper and soap, from a tent staffed by the Venezuelan armed forces.

"You see the guards, and their uniforms are spotless, not dirty at all," Castillo said, contrasting members of Venezuela's National Guard with dust-covered civilians and foreign rescuers who have dug through rubble for days. "The government did nothing."

Writer E. Jean Carroll calls for Trump to pay \$5.8M after high court appeal fails

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Advice columnist E. Jean Carroll asked a judge Tuesday to require President Donald Trump to pay her \$5 million from a jury verdict that concluded Trump sexually abused her in the 1990s and defamed her after she publicly described the attack in 2019.

Lawyers for Carroll filed papers in Manhattan federal court to say Trump is unjustly trying to further delay release of the money after the Supreme Court refused Monday to hear an appeal of the 2023 civil jury verdict.

The amount has grown to nearly \$5.8 million with interest and should be required by the court to be disbursed, the lawyers wrote, saying Trump has resumed his defamatory attacks against Carroll as his lawyers considered asking the high court to reconsider its decision.

The jury reached its verdict in a trial that Trump did not attend after Carroll testified that she was sexually

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abused by Trump in spring 1996 in the dressing room of a midtown Manhattan luxury department store after a flirtatious and friendly chance encounter between them turned violent.

Carroll, 82, first talked about the attack publicly in 2019 while Trump was president. He repeatedly insisted that he never knew Carroll. He also accused her of trying to sell books at his expense and having political motives.

Trump promised on social media Monday to keep fighting what he called a "Weaponization and Lawfare Case" after the Supreme Court's rejection became known.

They said lawyers for Trump contacted Carroll's attorneys minutes after Trump published a response to the high court's action, asking that the payout be delayed while the Supreme Court is asked to reconsider its decision.

But Carroll's lawyers — Roberta Kaplan, D. Brandon Trice and Maximilian T. Crema — said in their court filing that there was no reason to delay the payment, especially since the Supreme Court expressed no division in its decision not to hear the case.

"To date, Carroll has agreed to each of Defendant's many requests to delay the payment he owes her. Given the extraordinary lengths he has taken to avoid such payments and that each of those efforts has been denied in full, that cooperation ends today. It is time for him to pay Carroll," they wrote.

Lawyers for Trump did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump is also appealing \$83 million in defamation compensation granted to Carroll from a separate Manhattan jury after a January 2024 trial at which Trump briefly testified.

At that trial, Judge Lewis A. Kaplan, who is unrelated to Carroll's attorney, required that jury to accept the findings of the previous jury and only determine how much money, if any, Trump owed Carroll for comments he made about her as president.

Democratic socialist Melat Kiros defeats longtime US House incumbent in Colorado

By JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press

Democratic socialist Melat Kiros beat U.S. Rep. Diana DeGette in a Colorado House primary Tuesday, a stunning victory for the first-time candidate against a nearly 30-year incumbent and another win for progressive challengers across the country.

Kiros, a 29-year-old lawyer turned doctoral student, is the latest candidate to rise from the party's left flank and boot establishment-backed candidates. That includes two self-described democratic socialists and a progressive who won their Democratic primaries in New York last week.

Kiros' victory adds to a nascent but clear uprising, stirred by frustration among some voters, that has vexed party leadership. Colorado's 1st Congressional District covers the dark blue city of Denver, and Kiros is expected to win in November and reach Congress in January.

"We are winning from coast to coast," Kiros said to an ecstatic audience and the blast of air horns. "We are taking back our party and our country!"

There were mixed results for progressives in Tuesday's other races.

Sen. John Hickenlooper fended off a primary challenge from self-fashioned "insurgent progressive" state Sen. Julie Gonzales. And a smaller divide separated the two Democrats competing for U.S. House in the state's lone swing district, where the candidate considered more progressive, state Rep. Manny Rutinel, won.

Kiros says 'we are just getting started'

Taking to a stage under a sign that read "Power to the People," Kiros told her supporters that her win belonged to every one of them.

"This is a movement," Kiros said. "We are just getting started."

To an excited crowd, which had been singing and dancing moments before she got on stage, she laid out her plans: taking the fight to "Donald Trump and the oligarchy," abolishing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, passing "Medicare for all" and ending the "genocide in Palestine."

Those she thanked included DeGette, for standing up for women's rights, and Sen. Bernie Sanders, who

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endorsed her.

DeGette — a more progressive lawmaker herself — had comfortably controlled her House seat in Denver for nearly 30 years and was backed by Colorado's established Democratic House delegation.

The incumbent had argued that experience in Congress is needed right now to combat Trump, while Kiros, a former attorney, accused DeGette of ineffectiveness.

DeGette did not speak or release a statement after the race was called Tuesday night.

Hickenlooper fends off a challenge from the left

His victory didn't come as a surprise to the political world, though it dampened a broader wave of progressive candidates beating establish-backed Democrats across the country.

Gonzales, the state senator who challenged the more centrist Hickenlooper, had attacked him for being an "incrementalist" and had said she previously joined the Democratic Socialists of America but that her membership had lapsed.

After his victory, Hickenlooper quickly turned his attention to Trump and said he'd never lost an election and didn't intend to in November.

"Coloradoans have once again made their voices clear. We are not going to accept Trump's broken promises and cost of living emergency, or his constant corruption," he said in a video posted to YouTube.

Rutinel to face GOP Rep. Gabe Evans in race key to House control

Colorado's 8th Congressional District is relatively new, stretching from the northern suburbs of Denver up through farming country, and has flipped party control in recent elections.

Evans now holds the seat, after beating the Democratic incumbent in 2024.

Party leaders thought the more moderate Shannon Bird, a former state representative, was best equipped to challenge Evans. But Rutinel, who had the more progressive record, beat Bird Tuesday night.

The district is heavily Hispanic and poorer than much of the rest of the state, and that's where Rutinel, who is Latino, planted a flag, arguing his personal story and more aggressive economic agenda would be more potent against Evans.

"This is the moment for all the kids out there who had the deck stacked against them," Rutinel said in his victory speech. "I'm going to work with everything I have so that those kids have the same opportunities to live out the American Dream that I did."

Progressives could find new ally in governor's mansion

Phil Weiser, the state attorney general, won the Democratic primary Tuesday and will be favored to win come November. Term-limited Democratic Gov. Jared Polis will depart after two-terms governing with a more moderate touch, at times stymieing progressive state lawmakers.

Weiser, who formerly served in the presidential administrations of Barack Obama and Bill Clinton, is considered to be more sympathetic to the party's left. Michael Bennet, the U.S. senator who Weiser beat Tuesday, would likely have brought a similar change.

On the campaign trail, Weiser and Bennet struggled to show major differences in their political agendas, and instead often attacked each other over who could better stand up to Trump.

Weiser hammered his point home in a victory speech to ecstatic, sign-waving supporters who crowded around the candidate.

"In the face of a lawless bullying Trump administration trying to intimidate us, rip away our rights and freedoms," Weiser said, "you made it clear that we need a leader who will fight back and never bend the knee."

After his loss, Bennet spoke to supporters. "Sometimes the harder path is the right path, even when it doesn't lead where you'd hoped," he said.

The three candidates seeking the Republican nomination included state Rep. Scott Bottoms, a further right state lawmaker. State Sen. Barbara Kirkmeyer was considered the more conventional Republican, while Victor Marx was something of a wild card candidate with an eclectic past.

Kirkmeyer and Marx were locked in a tight race that was too early to call Tuesday night.

A US missile killed Iranian schoolchildren four months ago. We still don't know the full story

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — It was the deadliest reported strike in the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran. Most of the victims were children.

In almost any other conflict, these haunting truths would be seared into national memory. Yet more than 120 days since at least one U.S. missile struck an Iranian primary school, there remains no final accounting of what happened.

The Trump administration has yet to directly accept the blame or formally release findings of a Pentagon investigation into the bombing, even though the military possessed evidence almost immediately that the site of the school had been struck, a U.S. official with knowledge of the situation, who spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss an ongoing investigation, told The Associated Press.

The AP has reconstructed the story of the attack, beginning in the schoolyard on the morning of Feb. 28, drawing from open-source information, video footage, human rights reports and interviews with researchers and civilians inside and outside Iran to reveal previously unreported details about the bombing in Minab, including the diversity of children killed.

Still, many details about the blast remain elusive, as a lack of information from the Pentagon and politicization of the attack by Iran's theocracy have complicated independent reporting efforts. That has created an accountability vacuum, leaving the families of the victims without resolution. Among the mysteries remaining are the number of munitions that hit the school and a complete list of the dead.

When asked last week about the incident, President Donald Trump said he hadn't read the Pentagon's report and had seen nothing to make him believe the U.S. had carried out the attack.

"I don't know that they're ever going to solve that problem in terms of whose fault was it, because there were missiles flying all over the place," he said. "I don't think it was us."

Iran's mission to the United Nations did not respond to a request for comment from the AP.

Video evidence, interviews and other sources yield a fuller picture

The reconstruction draws from interviews with U.S. officials, Iranian human rights workers, a resident of Minab, an international representative of the Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers' Trade Union and researchers from major international rights groups.

Several people who spoke to the AP were in direct contact with the families of victims and rescuers who rushed to the scene. Most requested anonymity for fear of retribution against them and those with whom they spoke.

Teachers called parents to pick up their kids. Then the bomb fell

Skies over the city of Minab, located in southeastern Iran about 16 miles (25 km) from the Strait of Hormuz, were clear and bright on the morning of Saturday, Feb. 28, a school day in Iran. It was Ramadan.

Students of the Shajareh Tayyebbeh school, Farsi for "Good Tree," jostled past the colorful murals lining the schoolyard and into the building. Boys and girls filtered into separate spaces with brightly painted desks.

The school they entered was one of over 30 with the same name established to serve children from families closely tied to Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard or other state institutions, said Shiva Amerlirad, the international union representative who also worked as a teacher in Iran for 18 years and has been in contact with people in Minab.

Though most schools in Iran operate within guidelines proscribed by the Islamic Republic, the Shejareh Tayyebbeh schools were more explicitly oriented toward reproducing and reinforcing the Guard's worldview, she said, adding that children are civilians regardless of their family backgrounds, and "any attack targeting a school is unequivocally condemnable."

The school lay within the same walled compound as a Guard base, according to an AP assessment of satellite imagery and open-source mapping. It was once part of that neighboring base, before it was fenced off and converted over a decade ago.

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Though some of its pupils were the children of Guard officers working on the nearby base, others were local children from Minab, which is populated predominantly by people of the majority-Sunni Baluch ethnic minority who often face repression from the Iranian government, said the Balochistan Human Rights Group.

Hundreds of students are believed to have been inside the building by the time teachers and administrators received the news that bombs had begun falling on Tehran around 9:40 a.m.

Teachers and administrators thought it prudent to send the children home. They called parents on landline phones, summoning them for an early pickup, two people told the AP. A recently released report by Airwars, a London-based independent group that tracks recent conflicts, also found that parents were called to pick up their children.

At 10:15 a.m., Iran's state media sent out an advisory, closing schools across the country.

One father, who lived a short distance away, went immediately to pick up his 10-year-old son, said a resident of Minab, who relayed the stories of several families to the AP. The AP verified details of the residents' stories against available lists of the dead and rights groups' chronologies of the day's events.

The father noticed his 6- and 7-year-old relatives among the students waiting for their parents, said the resident. He asked them if they'd like a ride home and they said no, that their own father was on the way.

He left with his child and headed to the supermarket. Ten minutes later, he heard the explosions.

Multiple munitions pummeled the compound, striking at least five buildings, according to an AP analysis of satellite imagery. Hundreds of pounds of explosives collapsed the school.

A tiny arm, suspended in the rubble

The father raced back to a scene of chaos, where onlookers gathered, screaming, as men pawed through smoking rubble to dig out bodies, according to video of the aftermath circulated by Iranian state media.

Eventually, the father made out two burned figures he believes were those of his relatives, but he couldn't be sure.

People kept coming. One man from a nearby Sunni village arrived to search for his nephew after receiving a panicked call from the boy's mother. In the rubble, he found her dead son.

Rescuers found small backpacks and children's drawings, colored pencils and worksheets. Gently suspended, a tiny arm lay in the wreckage.

Men carried disfigured limbs and torsos to the local hospital, said the Balochistan Human Rights Group, whose staff spoke with two families of those killed. The AP has not been able to verify how many munitions specifically hit the school, but the attack had left flesh so mutilated that many body parts were unrecognizable.

By the end of the day, doctors at the hospital estimated they had at least 108 bodies, but cautioned that it was likely an undercount, said the resident of Minab.

By the next day, state media was saying around 150 had been killed. Soon, it was reporting a death toll of 168.

'They called the kids martyrs'

Three days after the bombing, state TV showed thousands of Iranians packing a Minab roundabout, where the crowds faced a podium and a large portrait of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the late founder of the Islamic Republic.

The gathering might have been mistaken for a demonstration, if it were not a funeral. All the parents of victims, regardless of ethnicity or religion, had to participate, said the Minab resident. Most women in the crowd donned the black chador garment customary to the Islamic Republic, even though it's not typically worn by Baluch people at funerals.

Parents were told they'd be permitted to take their children's bodies back to their villages and conduct their own observances, said the resident. In the end, though, many decided to bury their children together.

In footage captured by drone cameras and circulated by state media, workers broke ground on an earthen lot, creating a grid of tiny, identical, unmarked graves.

"The state media advocated a narrative based on IRGC interest," said Amelirad. "You can tell because they called the kids martyrs."

The story grows harder to tell

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Strikes continued to ravage Iran, targeting more sites in its opening days than the start of recent U.S. or Israeli military campaigns, including in Gaza, an Airwars analysis found.

Racing to document the ongoing bombardment, journalists and rights groups struggled to verify details from Minab. They had no access to the target site. Government restrictions in Iran prevented most foreign journalists from entering the country. The opening day of the war, Iran shut down the internet, making it nearly impossible to hear from ordinary civilians.

As the war progressed and the Strait of Hormuz became a major battlefield, the situation in the province grew more tense, said the resident. All branches of the military were deployed heavily in the area. Families of the victims feared retribution for speaking out. People were reportedly being detained for trying to communicate with foreign media.

That left Iran's government in control of the messaging around the strike.

Iran's soccer team wore golden "#168" pins on their jackets upon their arrival at the FIFA World Cup.

The Iranian team negotiating for a pause to the war with the U.S. named itself "Minab 168."

The children were depicted as animated Lego figures in viral videos made by pro-Iran groups trolling the U.S.

"In the aftermath of the attack, Iranian authorities ... exploited the suffering of victims' families and surviving children for propaganda purposes," wrote Amnesty International in a March report investigating the deaths.

Through it all, there remained no public list of the names of the dead.

The Pentagon finds clues in archive

Locked out of Iran, researchers focused on the question of responsibility.

Iran blamed the U.S. Trump cast doubt on American culpability and pointed the finger at Iran. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said only that the Pentagon was investigating.

Internally, the U.S. military knew more than it initially let on. The clues were buried in their archives.

When the news first surfaced, the U.S. military knew they had conducted strikes in the vicinity — though it took the military time to verify the Iranian claims that a school was struck and begin a formal investigation, said a U.S. official with knowledge of the situation, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the ongoing inquiry.

It appears that while the building housing the school was identified as such by one analyst as early as seven years ago, that discovery was not sufficiently made known across different intelligence and military staffs and agencies, the U.S. official said.

Ultimately, the building was not known among target developers as a school, revealing potential systematic shortfalls in the target analysis and review process, they said.

One former Pentagon official, similarly speaking on condition of anonymity, said the bombing came as a natural result of changes made by the Trump administration to reduce staff to mitigate civilian harm and Hegseth's emphasis on lethality.

When Hegseth took charge, he slashed the size of an office called the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence, created at the direction of Congress in late 2022. That stopped the office's work on updating "no-strike lists," which are lists of protected sites such as hospitals, schools, churches and mosques, that the Pentagon keeps, said Wes Bryant, who began working at the office in 2024 as the Branch Chief of Civil Harm Assessments.

When he was working at the Pentagon, it was well known that the list was out-of-date, he said.

The search for more answers from Minab

In the last weeks, researchers have made some progress. Airwars, the conflict research group, spent months combing through open-source information to verify the identity of victims. The group determined the names and identities of 157 of the dead, including 123 children, all 13 or younger, and 34 adults. Among the adults are 26 school staff members (one of whom was pregnant) and five parents — each of whom lost at least one child.

The group puts the death toll between 157 and 168 and says between 95 and 111 people were injured.

It's unclear if the formal results of the military's Minab investigation will be published. Much of the in-

vestigative work has been completed, but the U.S. military's Central Command, which commissioned the investigation, is currently reviewing the findings.

Findings from similar past investigations have been more timely. When a Hellfire missile killed 10 civilians in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Aug. 29, 2021, the Defense Department claimed responsibility and gave details on its operations in less than a month.

When asked about the Minab investigation last week, Trump said, "I don't know that they're ever going to solve that problem." Hegseth said the report would be divulged "when the appropriate time is right."

Some members of Congress still push for transparency.

In a recent interview, Sen. Mike Rounds, a Republican from South Dakota and a member of the Armed Services and Intelligence committees, said Congress has not gotten enough information on the bombing and expected a full report.

The issue "has not gone away," he said.

Anti-immigration protesters march in South Africa, as some immigrants leave the country

By MICHELLE GUMEDE and MOGOMOTSI MAGOME Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Thousands of demonstrators gathered in parts of South Africa to rally against illegal immigration on Tuesday in the biggest migration-related protests since the wave of anti-migrant violence in 2008. Authorities said the marches were largely peaceful despite isolated incidents of looting and attempted looting.

Police reported that several people were arrested, although they did not disclose how many. At a press conference late on Tuesday, Justice Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi praised the peaceful nature of the protests but warned that anyone involved in violence or other criminal acts would be prosecuted.

"Those who chose to exploit the marches to commit criminal acts will face the full might of the law," she told reporters. "Police will continue to identify, arrest and prosecute all those responsible for criminal conduct."

Protesters blame migrants, but root of South Africa's problems disputed

The demonstrations come after some protest groups set their own June 30 deadline for the departure of all migrants who are in the country illegally. The activists blame those migrants for causing unemployment among South Africans by accepting low wages, and for other problems, including high crime.

South Africa's government has rejected the deadline, saying only authorities can enforce immigration laws.

The most prominent groups opposing illegal immigration include March and March, Operation Dudula and Progressive Forces. President Cyril Ramaphosa, who has challenged the protesters' allegation that migrants are to blame for the country's social and economic challenges, met Monday night with leaders of some of the groups and asked them to conduct peaceful demonstrations.

Ngizwe Mchunu, one of the protest leaders, told The Associated Press that he blamed illegal migration for a proliferation of illicit drugs in South Africa. He also complained about the high percentage of informal neighborhood shops run by immigrants from other African countries, saying they should all be owned by South Africans.

"It's a very sad story that we have been telling our government since the dawn of democracy that illegal immigration here is out of hand," Mchunu said. "It is time for our government to put South Africa first."

Amnesty International South Africa said migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are being unfairly blamed for the country's unemployment, inequality and struggling public services, arguing that those challenges stem from the legacy of apartheid, persistent inequality and failures in the asylum system.

The rights group warned that scapegoating foreign nationals distracts from the government's responsibility to address those underlying problems and said misinformation and xenophobia risk fueling further violence against migrants, according to a statement from Amnesty International South Africa executive director Shenilla Mohamed.

Demonstrators express frustration

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Protesters marching through Johannesburg's city center Tuesday included young men carrying traditional fighting sticks and women of all ages. Some wore the South African flag and sang liberation songs.

They carried posters with slogans including "SA withdraw from the U.N. refugee convention," "The future of our kids" and "80% of children born in Limpopo province are born to foreign nationals."

"Today is the last day," protester Nkele Thebe said at the start of the Johannesburg demonstration. "After today, we'll be dealing with our president and our nation. We don't want an outsider to come interfere."

Another protester, Bongani Cindi, said groups opposing illegal immigration were being unfairly labeled as xenophobic for raising legitimate issues.

"Our country has got a lot of problems. We have influx of illegal immigrants who are committing crimes that we can't even take anymore. So we need them to leave us in peace, so we can sort our house. We are not fighting anyone," he said.

Demonstrators also gathered Tuesday in parts of Durban with reports of more protesters in parts of the North West and Free State provinces.

The South African police deployed hundreds of officers in cities including Johannesburg in Gauteng province and Durban in KwaZulu-Natal province to prepare for potential violence.

Previous marches against illegal immigration have resulted in attacks on migrants and vandalism of foreign-owned businesses. In Johannesburg, most shops owned by both foreign nationals and locals were closed before protesters arrived on Tuesday. In some parts of the country, private security firms were protecting businesses.

Protests fuel an exodus of migrants

Thousands of migrants, primarily from neighboring Zimbabwe and Malawi, gathered at their embassies and consulates to request transport back to their countries.

There has been increased traffic over the past few days at the Beitbridge checkpoint along the Zimbabwe border as buses carrying migrants left South Africa. Thousands of Malawian nationals also have returned to their country from a temporary repatriation center in Durban.

Three groups of Nigerian migrants returned to Nigeria this month amid rising anti-immigrant tensions, including a group of 271 people who arrived in Lagos on Tuesday.

According to Nigerian officials, 632 Nigerians have been repatriated out of the more than a thousand Nigerians who have registered for the voluntary repatriation and more flights are expected in coming days.

Emmanuella Akagbosun, a 44-year-old who moved to South Africa in 2017, said she left because she feared she would be killed. She said the shop that she shared with her sister was ransacked by the anti-migrant protesters and their wares looted.

"We are not safe, so we had to leave," Akagbosun said in Lagos.

Fintan Opara, another Nigerian national repatriated after 18 years in South Africa, said most Nigerians no longer feel welcome in the country.

According to Justice Minister Kubayi, South Africa has successfully repatriated 4,286 individuals thus far and deported an additional 419 in recent days.

Trump's actions signal a move toward institutionalizing people with disabilities, advocates warn

By ANNIE MA AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — For decades, disabled people have fought for their rights to go to school and live alongside peers without disabilities — rights that some fear could be losing ground under the Trump administration.

Last month, the Education Department announced it would offload oversight of special education to the Department of Health and Human Services, led by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., whose comments on the limits of disabilities such as autism have drawn sharp rebukes from advocates and lawmakers.

Meanwhile, following a White House push to police homelessness, the Department of Justice released guidance that lowered the barrier to institutionalizing any person with a disability.

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Taken together, the actions signal a worrying return to a reality where people with disabilities are pushed to the margins of society, advocates said.

"It's a direct, frontal assault on the rights of people with disabilities to live their lives the way that people who are nondisabled live their lives," said Selene Almazan, legal director for the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates. "I can't imagine that as a country, that would be something that we would agree we should go back to."

The move away from confining people with disabilities

Since the 1960s, legislation and court decisions have progressively expanded supports and protections for people with disabilities to go to school with nondisabled peers and to live and work in their communities. Before that, people with mental illnesses or developmental and intellectual disabilities were largely confined to institutions.

Advocates have pushed back on what's known as the "medical model," where an individual's disability is viewed as a defect to be cured. Instead, under a "social model" of disability, differences can be accommodated and supported, as people with and without disabilities learn and work alongside each other.

Families and advocates have warned that moving special education to a health department marks a return to the medical model. They've also been angered by Kennedy's attempts to link vaccines to autism, going against decades of research that show no such link, and his framing of autism as a debilitating disease.

Kennedy's comments last year, where he said children with autism would never write a poem, pay taxes or hold a job, raised questions about how he would oversee an agency meant to help students develop those skills. Kennedy later said he was referring to people with "severe autism" or those who are nonverbal.

"Many of the things he said autistic people will never do, (special education) is in charge of making sure students with disabilities have the opportunity to do," said Zoe Gross, director of advocacy at the Autistic Self Advocacy Network. "Will he execute that faithfully, or does he consider disabled students a lost cause until we find some medical cure?"

The Supreme Court weighs in

In 1999, the Supreme Court ruled that segregating disabled people who are otherwise able to live in their community with proper supports was a form of discrimination. The *Olmstead v. L.C.* decision led to requirements that government agencies provide disability services in the most integrated setting possible — in mainstream schools, homes and workplaces.

But in a memo issued in June, the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel upended that guidance. It argued that neither the Americans with Disabilities Act nor Section 504, two major disability rights laws, requires states to provide services in the most mainstream setting. While the memo does not change the law, it signals how federal agencies may interpret and enforce civil rights issues related to the topic — and it could embolden states or school districts to decline to support people with disabilities in mainstream environments.

The White House has already acted on a similar philosophy. Last year, President Donald Trump issued an executive order on homelessness that endorsed civil commitment, where a court orders individuals into involuntary hospitalization or treatment programs. Trump directed HHS to reduce barriers to institutionalizing people with mental illnesses.

In its memo, the Justice Department acknowledged its interpretation of the Supreme Court's *Olmstead* decision is "out of step" with the common understanding. If a state starts to provide services in institutional settings, legal challenges likely would follow, the DOJ said.

The Trump administration's steps fit a worldview in which the government has no obligation to support people with disabilities, said Claudia Center, legal director at Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund.

"It's dark, and it's awful," Center said. "And I think it's contrary to the majority view in our country. ... It's out of touch with where our society is."

Families say their kids thrive in mainstream classes

The moves have created a deep sense of uncertainty for students with disabilities.

Lindsey Althaus says home and community-based services in northwest Ohio have been instrumental to her family. Her 12-year-old son, Whitman, has autism and a neurological disorder called apraxia, in which

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the brain struggles to tell muscles how to move to form words or perform other motor skills. For some of his school career, with proper support services, Whitman was able to spend much of his school day in a classroom that included kids without disabilities.

Through a Medicaid waiver program, Althaus pays her mother to care for Whitman in her absence. That allows him to spend time out in the community with his grandmother while Althaus and her husband are working or away with their daughter.

Under the Justice Department's new interpretation of Olmsted, states would have fewer obligations to fund and support those programs. And Kennedy, in testimony to lawmakers on Capitol Hill earlier this year, criticized similar programs as subject to fraud.

"We want to be able to have him in the community," said Althaus, who works as a disability rights advocate. "It's just starting to feel like Whitman's not going to be welcome anymore. We're going back to this: You're either perfect, or you're not in the light."

For many students with disabilities, schools are where they receive the majority of support services and where they are integrated among their peers. Before Magda Nakassis's 8-year-old son, who is autistic and nonverbal, started public school in Maryland, his preschool experience had largely been defined by being kicked out of things, she said.

In school, Nakassis said, she found teachers and staff members who understood her son's needs and told her to stop apologizing for them. A program at his school called Fantastic Friends teaches mainstream fifth graders about autism, and they spend recesses with children in the autism program. Every year, Nakassis said, there is a waitlist to be a Fantastic Friend.

Nakassis said that it has been difficult to see the ways autism in particular has become politicized. Every child is entitled to a public education in this country, Nakassis said, and special education is a response to the fact that some children have differences that require additional support.

Regardless of his diagnosis, his right to an education is not a medical issue, she said, but rather a question of equity and access in a society that often pushes disabled people to the margins.

"There are lots of kids like him out there, and I sometimes wonder, 'what did we use to do?'" Nakassis said. "I can't believe it was better."

California bans 'sell by' food labels to cut food waste and confusion

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — In Kimberley Kausen's home, a passed "sell by" date on a jug of milk means different things to different family members. For her daughter, it means the jug belongs in the trash. For her husband, it means the milk is still good for a few more days.

Kausen, a chef and cooking teacher in Irvine, California, is more discerning and often uses her sense of smell before deciding what to do with the milk.

"I'll put some thought into it, and if we're talking about meat and poultry, I'm very cautious about that and for sure will do the smell test and the touch test," she said.

The debate playing out in Kausen's kitchen is repeated in homes across California and the country, where varying phrases on food packaging have long left shoppers unsure whether food is simply past its peak quality or unsafe to eat. The state is aiming to cut down on confusion — and the food waste it creates when people throw away food early — with a new food labeling law starting Wednesday.

It bans the use of "sell by" labels on food packaging, which experts say act as a guide for retailers on how long to display products on the shelves but are not an indicator of whether they are still safe to consume. Now, manufacturers selling food in California must use two standardized labels — a "Best if Used By" label for peak quality and "Use By" label for product safety.

Food manufacturers can choose to use either label or both, said Democratic Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, the author of the bill.

California became the first state in the U.S. to standardize food labels when it approved the law in 2024 that seeks to reduce food waste and the state's climate-warming emissions. New York state lawmakers

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recently approved a similar law that's awaiting Gov. Kathy Hochul's signature.

Legislation addressing food labeling also has been proposed in Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and South Carolina, though it has not passed in those states.

Nick Lapis, director of advocacy at Californians Against Waste, which co-sponsored the bill, said food labels are the leading cause of household food waste. The "sell by" date labels have also been a problem for food banks in California because people consider those dates as meaning the food has expired, he said.

"We don't need to build some kind of huge infrastructure and invest tons of money to solve this. We just need companies to use the same words across brands," he said.

There are more than 50 different date labels on packaged food sold in stores, according to a 2022 report on food waste published by the University of Maryland. The information in the labels is largely unregulated and often does not relate to food safety.

"Consumers get confused and they just default to assuming that whatever date is on the package means 'don't eat it and throw it away,'" said Kumar Chandran, policy director at ReFED, a nonprofit focused on reducing food waste.

Chandran said California and New York's approval of food-labeling laws has added momentum to the push for a national standard. A bipartisan bill that would establish uniform food labels is pending in Congress. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommended a decade ago that food sellers should switch to "Best if Used By" labeling.

Currently, the only product that is regulated federally with date labels is infant formula.

With no federal regulations dictating what information labels should include, the stamps have led to consumer confusion — and nearly 20% of the nation's food waste, according to the Food and Drug Administration. In California, that's about 6 million tons of unexpired food that's tossed in the trash each year.

Nate Rose, a spokesperson for the California Grocers Association, said some grocers have had to overhaul their labeling systems, but as a whole, the association has been supportive of the change.

The new labels will result in "a win-win where we can reduce food waste and consumers will find these decisions a little bit simpler," he said, adding that shoppers will still find old labels in stores for months to come as grocers sell through the products that already have them.

Adults arrested after 16 children found in 'deplorable' conditions in southern Ohio home

By JAIMIE DING Associated Press

Authorities arrested four adults on felony child endangerment charges after discovering 16 children in dire need of medical treatment Tuesday in a rural southern Ohio home.

The Ohio Bureau of Investigation and local sheriff's department searched a home in the small village of Hamden, where they found the kids in what officials called "deplorable" conditions."

"Conditions you cannot even imagine people being in, let alone children being in," Ohio Attorney General Andy Wilson said at a news conference.

Law enforcement arrested Gary Siders Jr., Gary Siders Sr., Christina Siders and Elizabeth Siders. They have not yet been arraigned and assigned public defenders.

Vinton County prosecuting attorney William Archer said they were being charged with second-degree felony child endangering because it involves "serious physical harm."

Officials did not confirm if the children were related but said it was not a human trafficking situation. They said the adults were not locals and appeared to have been traveling.

Hamden has a population of less than 1,000 people and is about 60 miles (97 kilometers) southeast of Columbus.

The children ranged from ages 1.5 to 18 and included both boys and girls, officials said. Several were in serious conditions when found, and two had to be flown to level one trauma centers because of their injuries.

Wilson said it was the worst scene he had ever encountered in his entire career, describing what he saw

as “pure evil.”

Law enforcement were also executing a secondary search warrant at the home Tuesday, and the investigation is ongoing. The four adults will appear in court Wednesday morning.

“Justice will be served for these children,” Wilson said.

House GOP deadlocks over Trump’s demands, sending lawmakers home early

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Whither the U.S. House?

As the nation celebrates its 250th birthday this weekend, the legislative branch has momentarily called it quits.

The House leadership on Tuesday abruptly canceled votes and sent lawmakers home early for the holiday recess, Speaker Mike Johnson’s majority once again ground to a standstill by a Republican revolt over their own party’s agenda.

In this case, it’s a standoff blocking the annual defense bill — with pay raises for the troops and other matters at a time of war — as the renegade Republicans push to include President Donald Trump’s own priority, the SAVE America Act, a strict voter ID bill. Last week, the Senate similarly shuttered after Trump’s demands.

The emptying Capitol provides another snapshot of the imbalance of power in Washington as a headstrong executive confronts a weakened Congress.

For the second time in as many weeks, the House has simply given up.

“It’s a relatively bad time in Congress,” Republican Rep. Dusty Johnson of South Dakota said recently. “A lot of my colleagues have forgotten how to govern.”

The scene is far different than last year’s Fourth of July

A year ago this weekend brought a wholly different scene in Washington, as Trump gathered Republican lawmakers outside the White House for an ebullient July Fourth ceremony to sign what they called the “One, Big, Beautiful Bill” of tax breaks and spending cuts.

It was a celebratory moment for Trump and the slim Republican majority — and for Johnson, who many doubted could pass the bill over the objections of Democrats who viewed it as tax giveaway at the expense of billions of dollars in cuts to health care and food stamps for Americans in need.

Johnson was so reliant on Trump’s power to help push the bill to approval that he gifted the president a speaker’s gavel, which Democrats and others saw as a worrisome symbol of the transference of power from one branch of government to the other.

“We’re not dealing with Speaker Mike Johnson,” Democratic Rep. Pete Aguilar of California, the caucus chairman, said in a recent interview. “Unfortunately, Speaker Donald Trump does not want us in this week.”

Trump makes conflicting demands on his party in Congress

As Johnson works to keep Trump close, the president’s demands seem to grow in ways the Republican speaker can’t always deliver.

The president’s insistence on the SAVE America Act, which doesn’t have enough support in the Senate to pass, has interrupted almost all other business in Congress. Trump has refused to sign a popular bipartisan housing bill that cleared both chambers until the voting bill is also approved. He calls the housing bill a “yawn.”

Johnson spent four hours last week at the White House and said he spent another two hours with the president this week on a path forward.

“I told him, ‘Mr. President, I don’t have any tattoos, but if I did, it’d say SAVE America on my shoulder,’ OK?” Johnson said over the weekend on Fox News.

“We passed it three times in the House already. We’re going to pass it again.”

But by Tuesday, a House vote to advance the legislation collapsed. Republicans led by Rep. Anna Paulina Luna of Florida argued that Johnson’s plan to attach the voting bill to the defense bill was essentially a

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doomed strategy that would be rejected in the Senate.

"That's disappointing," acknowledged Republican Majority Leader Steve Scalise of Louisiana, who insisted the GOP would try again.

"We're going to keep trying because we have to," he said. "We're not done doing big things."

As America celebrates its 250th birthday, Congress is adrift

The founders of the new democracy clearly had aspirations for the Congress, putting it first in the Constitution as the Article One branch of government, ahead of the executive and judicial branches.

But as lawmakers face voters this fall, they will have to answer for these dwindling days on their calendar.

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries said the problem is not the Congress, it's the GOP.

"Donald Trump is fighting with Senate Republicans, Senate Republicans are fighting with House Republicans, and House Republicans are fighting with each other," said Jeffries, who is in line to become House speaker if Democrats win control in fall.

"It's not the Congress that's struggling. It's House Republicans who are struggling," he said.

Jeffries said Democrats are fighting "to make life more affordable for the American people."

As they left the Capitol for an extended recess, lawmakers voiced frustration with the House's dysfunction.

Rep. Kevin Kiley, who left the Republican Party to become an independent earlier this year, said the situation in the House is "frustrating."

"It's just like déjà vu where many times now we run into some sort of obstacle," he said, "then the solution is just to go home."

Trump announces midterm convention for Republicans in Dallas in September

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

President Donald Trump announced Tuesday that Republicans will hold their first-ever national convention ahead of November's midterm elections, an unusual event aimed at boosting turnout in races that will decide whether the party maintains control of Congress.

The convention will be held in Dallas on Sept. 9 and 10.

Although both major parties traditionally hold blockbuster conventions during presidential campaigns, Trump has long floated the idea of a similar gathering this year to focus voters' attention on a sprawling collection of House and Senate races.

If Democrats regain control of either chamber, they will be empowered to block Trump's agenda and launch investigations into his administration for the final two years of his term.

Republicans have only slim majorities in Congress, and the party in power normally loses ground in the midterms. And without Trump on the ballot, Republican leaders worry that it could be hard to galvanize their voters.

Trump hopes the convention would help change that dynamic, and he's been talking about it since last year. He floated in a social media post that Republicans would use the event "to show the great things we have done since the Presidential Election of 2024."

"We will also have lots of Great Entertainment — It will be a RALLY like none other!" Trump wrote in a Truth Social post announcing the convention details.

The Democratic National Committee considered hosting a similar midterm convention but ultimately rejected the idea. An expensive soiree could have strained the DNC's finances, which are struggling with lackluster fundraising and millions in debt.

Democrats have said the GOP convention will be a chance for them to tie Republican House and Senate candidates to Trump, whose approval rating is underwater.

Locating the convention in Texas places a spotlight on the state's Senate race, which pits Democratic nominee James Talarico against Republican nominee Ken Paxton.

Paxton is the state attorney general who, with Trump's backing, defeated longtime Sen. John Cornyn in a primary earlier this year. Republican Senate leaders fear that Paxton's history of scandals — including an

extramarital affair, an impeachment and a securities fraud case that did not lead to a conviction — could undermine his candidacy and turn a winnable race into a drain on party resources.

It also highlights the aftereffects of Trump's mid-decade redistricting push that began in Texas, an effort to secure more seats for Republicans in this fall's elections.

The Republican National Committee began laying the groundwork earlier this year, voting at its winter meeting in January to make such an event possible by amending procedures centered around quadrennial presidential nominating conventions.

Democrats considered holding a similar gathering ahead of the midterms but tabled the idea. However, the party did hold such conferences in the 1970s and 1980s.

Serena Williams 'enjoyed the moment' despite 3-set loss at Wimbledon in comeback at age 44

By ANDREW DAMPF AP Sports Writer

LONDON (AP) — The roars began even before Serena Williams stepped on Centre Court. Then they grew louder when the 23-time Grand Slam champion arrived to play her first singles match in nearly four years.

And when it was all over and the 44-year-old Williams had performed admirably in a three-set defeat to an opponent less than half her age in the opening round of Wimbledon with her two daughters cheering her on, Williams smiled as she walked off to a loud round of applause.

"It was really great to be back at Wimbledon. I never expected to be here," Williams, who did not meet with media after the match, said in a statement released by Wimbledon organizers. "The atmosphere was amazing. Walking out was amazing. I definitely relished it and missed it and enjoyed the moment more than anything."

In a 6-3, 6-7 (6), 6-3 loss to 20-year-old Maya Joint of Australia on Tuesday, Williams showed she can still crank out serves faster than 120 mph and dictate points with her heavy groundstrokes.

Movement was an issue for Williams, though, and the 87th-ranked Joint was able to handle Williams' pace and win more of the big points by hitting beyond the American's reach.

While Williams played two doubles matches just before Wimbledon to announce her comeback to the sport she once dominated, she hadn't played a singles match since the 2022 U.S. Open.

"She has such an aura, she's just a legend and this court has so many huge names that have played on it," Joint added. "I've been dreaming about this moment since I was a little kid, so this is pretty crazy."

Williams has 98 career victories and seven titles in singles on the hallowed grass of the All England Club. By contrast, it was Joint's first Wimbledon victory in just her second appearance at the All England Club after losing in the opening round last year.

But Joint won a Wimbledon warmup in nearby Eastbourne last year and knows how to play on grass.

Doubles match still to come

Williams, who has no singles ranking after being out for so long, was given wild card invitations by Wimbledon organizers to play singles and also doubles with older sister Venus. Her doubles match will come later in the week.

Williams has said that having her two daughters off from school inspired her comeback and it marked the first time that her youngest daughter, Adira, who is almost three, saw her play singles. Adira sat next to her 8-year-old sister, Olympia in the front row of Serena's players' box.

Standing ovation

Fans started cheering when Williams' name was announced as the next match on Centre Court and then they gave her a standing ovation as she walked out before the match started under a closed roof. Several supporters held up signs with messages like "Welcome Back" and one wore a T-shirt that said "Unstoppable Queen."

Williams executed a delicate topspin lob winner early on and then cranked out a 121 mph ace to hold for 3-3 in the first set. But Williams also had a costly double-fault which led to the only break of the first set.

In the second set, Williams came back from 0-40 and saved four break points to hold for 6-5. Then Wil-

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Williams saved a match point in the tiebreaker with a big serve down the T followed by a forehand approach winner. Another big serve — clocking in at 122 mph — set up Serena's first set point, which she converted when Joint missed a forehand long.

After winning the set, Williams pumped her fist calmly.

But Joint took control early in the third and a forehand from Williams sailed long on Joint's third match point to conclude the encounter after 2 hours, 22 minutes.

Williams and Joint both had 37 unforced errors, while Joint led 40-26 in winners.

Zverev and Swiatek advance

After the opening day featured wins for No. 1s Jannik Sinner and Aryna Sabalenka, along with Novak Djokovic, French Open champion Alexander Zverev and defending Wimbledon champion Iga Swiatek made it into the second round on Tuesday.

In a match between hard servers, the second-seeded Zverev beat Alexander Blockx 6-4, 6-7 (8), 7-6 (5), 7-6 (0).

Swiatek, who had her father and sister looking on from the Royal Box, struggled with her serve and committed nine double-faults before overcoming Taylor Townsend 6-1, 2-6, 6-3.

No. 2 Elena Rybakina also advanced, beating Lois Boisson 6-4, 1-6, 6-3.

Fourth-seeded Ben Shelton, a quarterfinalist here last year, lost to 140th-ranked Finnish qualifier Otto Virtanen in five sets, going out 6-4, 3-6, 6-7 (8), 6-2, 7-6 (9).

Also, 2021 finalist Matteo Berrettini beat Stan Wawrinka 6-7 (7), 7-6 (16), 7-6 (7), 7-6 (5). It was the final Wimbledon match for Wawrinka, who plans to retire at the end of the year.

Aid groups warn Venezuela's healthcare system is near its limit after earthquakes

By JUAN PABLO ARRÁEZ and ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

LA GUAIRA, Venezuela (AP) — Aid groups warned Tuesday that Venezuela's fragile healthcare system is being pushed to its limits nearly a week after two powerful earthquakes, with damaged and understaffed hospitals getting overwhelmed by the injured and infectious diseases flaring in the disaster zone.

Meanwhile, the number of official rescues has dropped dramatically in the last three days, the government said, from 5,380 people saved in the first two days after the quakes to just four people found alive Monday by authorities. The prime window for finding earthquake survivors is typically 48 to 72 hours, but it is possible to survive longer depending on factors such as temperature and access to water or food.

The sole survivor rescued by Tuesday afternoon was a toddler who had been trapped for six days under a collapsed building, said Jorge Rodríguez, the president of the National Assembly.

Those numbers do not include the many rescues carried out across the country by volunteer groups that, frustrated with the government's sluggish response, scrambled to save their trapped loved ones days before the arrival of expert international teams.

The government puts the death toll at over 1,900. Experts say that is a significant undercount as more bodies are hauled from the rubble every day and morgues struggle to handle the influx.

Among the living, a humanitarian crisis is unfolding. United Nations agencies estimated on Tuesday that the earthquake amassed 1.2 million tons of debris of destroyed buildings and belongings. They expressed concern about the health effects of thousands of displaced people sleeping for days in the open or in crowded, unsanitary shelters.

A healthcare system in crisis

The Venezuelan healthcare system, strained by decades of underinvestment and years of economic crisis is "under extreme pressure now, with facilities operating beyond the capacity of the surge of the trauma cases," said World Health Organization spokesperson Christian Lindmeier at a media briefing in Geneva.

Venezuelan officials say that more than 15,800 people have been affected by the earthquakes — a figure that reflects the official number of displaced people, U.N. refugee agency spokesperson Carlotta Wolf said Tuesday. Newly homeless Venezuelans are sleeping in cars, parks and elsewhere.

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Wolf said that number would continue to rise. Many of those displaced in the hardest-hit state of La Guaira, just outside the capital of Caracas along the coast, are suffering from widespread food shortages, she said.

Without access to toilets, showers or soap, displaced Venezuelans have also become increasingly vulnerable to the outbreak of preventable diseases like measles, given the population's low vaccination rates, Lindmeier said, adding that conditions are ripe for waterborne infections such as dengue, yellow fever and malaria to spread.

According to the government, last week's earthquakes damaged or otherwise compromised 38 hospitals nationwide. WHO said it so far has evaluated 21 of those facilities, three of which are no longer operating. Another six have sustained damage and the rest are now buckling under the influx of injuries.

Many specialist doctors are missing in the ruins, including officials in charge of maternity care in La Guaira, WHO said, compounding the challenges to healthcare in a country that 8 million people, including many doctors and nurses, have fled in recent years.

"Findings reveal chaotic service delivery and patient flow, marked by overcrowding, growing surgical backlogs ... and a breakdown in biosafety measures," Lindmeier said.

An increased presence of nongovernmental organizations was noticeable Tuesday in La Guaira and adjacent communities, with tents from the Red Cross, the World Food Program and other organizations set up on sidewalks, waterfront esplanades and athletic facilities. People lined up throughout the day under the blistering sun to receive free toiletries, food, medications and face masks.

A struggle to grasp the true toll

With the government tight-lipped about victims and survivors and offering no official count of missing people, ordinary Venezuelans are struggling to find relatives. Many have turned to WhatsApp groups and nongovernmental digital databases to report their loved ones as missing. One such registry listed at least 43,220 people as missing.

In his daily televised casualty update, Jorge Rodríguez, brother of interim President Delcy Rodríguez, said that the official toll stood at 1,943 people killed and 10,571 injured as of Tuesday, urging the public to share only government information.

But his numbers left thousands of Venezuelans unaccounted for. He said the government estimated there were around 30,000 people in the hardest-hit parts of La Guaira state at the time of the earthquake, and that around 20,000 of them managed to escape the area or were later rescued.

NASA estimates that nearly 59,000 buildings have been damaged or destroyed by the earthquakes, which would put the number of people affected by the quakes in the hundreds of thousands. The U.N. children's agency, UNICEF, on Tuesday said 680,000 children are in need of humanitarian assistance nationwide.

Republican Tom Kean Jr. reveals depression diagnosis after his four-month absence from Congress

By MIKE CATALINI and JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — New Jersey Republican Rep. Tom Kean Jr. disclosed Tuesday that he was being treated for depression during his unexplained four-month absence from the House, suggesting in a brief floor speech that he remained silent about his condition until now because he is a "private person by nature."

Depression, Kean said, "is physical, it is emotional, and until you experience it yourself, it is difficult to fully understand how powerful this illness can be."

Kean's reappearance came weeks after his victory in an uncontested primary on June 2 and months after he last cast his vote in the House. His speech ended the silence on his condition, yet left questions unanswered. Kean said he first entered the hospital due to health concerns and underwent testing, but offered no further details.

After the speech, Kean left the Capitol quickly without answering questions from reporters.

Kean last voted in the House on March 5. His absence had complicated matters for House Republican leaders, who have been struggling to pass bills with their threadbare majority.

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Kean said he was diagnosed for depression and that doctors recommended he remain in the hospital. Addressing his earlier statement that he expected to return to work in a matter of weeks, Kean said he believed that at the time and it was his doctors' best estimate then.

"But as the over 48 million of my fellow Americans being treated for this illness have come to discover there is no timeline for healing," Kean said.

"Today I stand before you healthier, stronger and excited to return to the work that I love."

A second-term lawmaker and scion of a New Jersey political family, Kean represents a battleground district that includes President Donald Trump's Bedminster golf club.

What the House speaker says about Kean's return

Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., said he would leave it to Kean to decide whether his remarks Tuesday provided sufficient transparency.

"He spoke to it," Johnson said. "It's his personal issue, and, you know, I thought the speech on the floor was, well, I thought he explained it."

Johnson said he had "encouraged him all along to be as transparent as possible" and was "glad he finally has" been.

The mystery over Kean's absence had potential political implications, given the competitive district he represents and the Republican Party's narrow control of the House. His office has said he is still running for reelection and is set to face Democratic nominee Rebecca Bennett, a former Navy helicopter pilot, in New Jersey's most high-profile contest in November.

Democrats have targeted the district as a prime pickup opportunity, given that the seat has changed hands in the last two midterm elections. Kean won in 2022 by defeating Democrat Tom Malinowski, who had defeated Republican Leonard Lance in 2018.

Johnson added Tuesday he is confident Kean would be "easily" reelected in November. Trump has endorsed Kean's reelection, without mentioning his absence.

Kean comes from a long line of public servants, stretching 250 years to the country's founding when one of his ancestors became New Jersey's first leader since independence.

Kean's great-grandfather was a senator, his grandfather was a congressman and his father is the former two-term governor, Tom Kean Sr.

Absent from public view

Lawmakers vary in how transparent they are about extended absences.

Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell, the longest-serving Senate leader in history, was hospitalized more than two weeks ago, and his office has released few details about his condition since.

Pennsylvania Sen. John Fetterman, a Democrat, checked himself into Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for treatment for clinical depression weeks after being sworn into office in 2023. Fetterman, who has dealt with the effects of a stroke he suffered in May 2022, disclosed the hospitalization the day after he was admitted.

Fetterman has talked openly about his struggle with depression and urged people to get help.

"There are people who are suffering with depression in red counties and blue counties," Fetterman said in 2023 after a six-week inpatient treatment. "If you need help, please get help."

Kean and House Republican leaders kept the public in the dark about his condition for months. He missed more than 100 House votes this year and was not seen publicly in Washington or his district.

New York Rep. Ritchie Torres, a Democrat who has spoken openly about living with depression, wrote on social media after Kean's remarks that he has "deep sympathy for anyone struggling with mental illness."

"At the same time, public office carries a duty of transparency," Torres wrote. "When a public official is absent for an extended period, the public has a right to an honest explanation."

Haaland scores deciding goal as Norway wins its 1st World Cup knockout game, beating Ivory Coast 2-1

By STEPHEN HAWKINS AP Sports Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Erling Haaland savored the moment after Norway won a knockout game at the World Cup for the first time, a celebration that included a horned helmet atop his head and again sitting on the field with teammates to do the Viking Row in synch with their red-clad fans.

"This is unbelievable. This is history," Haaland said on the field after the game.

A slight tap from Haaland's left foot in the 86th minute was the difference as Norway beat Ivory Coast 2-1 on Tuesday, setting up another World Cup match against five-time champion Brazil — 28 years after a victory that many consider the greatest ever for the Norwegians.

For now, they prefer to enjoy their latest accomplishment.

"What we're going to think about now is to enjoy the win today. We're really happy and proud of ourselves," said Martin Odegaard, the team's captain who banged the drum to set the pace for the postgame row. "Hopefully we can keep dreaming and keep believing and keep performing like we did."

Antonio Nusa scored the opening goal in the first half with a curling kick for Norway, which in its fourth World Cup will next play in the round of 16 against Brazil on Sunday at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

"This is really a dream come true," Nusa said in translated remarks.

Norway is in its first World Cup since that 1998 appearance, when the team got to the knockout round only after scoring goals in the 83rd and 89th minutes for an incredible 2-1 comeback win over then-reigning World Cup champion Brazil in the group finale.

Amad Diallo, who had prevented Norway from taking a two-goal lead earlier in the second half, evened the match for Ivory Coast with a left-footed kick in the 74th minute.

Even after Haaland's go-ahead goal, his Norway-record 60th in 53 matches, Ivory Coast kept pressing and had a chance to equalize with a direct free kick by Diallo in the sixth minute of stoppage time. Orjan Nyland made a leaping stop, the last of his four saves, when he deflected the ball away as he extended his left hand across his body.

"After their equalizer, it was easy to panic. But we got our players in the right position and managed to play our game again," Norway coach Ståle Solbakken said.

Haaland's 27 touches were the fewest of any Norway player who played the full match, but he was open after three defenders converged when Patrick Berg moved into the penalty area with the ball before making a quick pass. It was a slow roll over the line after coming off the foot of Haaland, who lunged forward as if he might have to kick it again.

It was his Haaland's fifth goal in three games at this year's tournament. That is one behind Lionel Messi, who has six for Argentina and scored three of those in two group games at the home of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys.

Haaland, who won the Golden Boot in the Premier League last season with 27 goals for Manchester City, has scored in 13 straight competitive international games — a total of 25 goals in that span.

The youthful Elephants, ranked 31st by FIFA, had never before won twice in the same World Cup. This was the fourth World Cup appearance for the West African nation, the same as Norway.

"We are proud for what we achieved," Diallo said. "But a big disappointment because we knew we have quality in the team, we have players that can make a difference anytime."

Nusa scored his first World Cup goal in the 39th minute when he took a few strides past the left corner of the penalty area and sent a right-footed kick between two defenders toward the far post.

Ivory Coast goalkeeper Yahia Fofana made a diving attempt at the ball that was just beyond his extended reach, and he was still in air when he turned his head back to see the ball curl into the net. It was Nusa's ninth international goal in 28 games for Norway.

Diallo evened the score at 1-1 after a give-and-go with Nicolas Pepe, who had scored both Ivory Coast goals in its previous game and was stopped by Nyland in the 55th minute. Diallo found space for his

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left-footed blast.

That came only about eight minutes after Torbjorn Heggen had a shot for Norway that was deflected away by Diallo, who was right next to his keeper.

Nusa's yellow card in stoppage time before the half set up a free kick by Pepe, but the ensuing header went left of the post.

Forecasters cite 'dangerous' conditions as heat scorches Midwest while on its way to the East

By ED WHITE Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Nature's oven was on high Tuesday for millions of people in the Midwest and Great Lakes states as intense heat and humidity baked the regions with no immediate relief before the misery shifts to the eastern U.S.

The National Weather Service was blunt: Conditions were "dangerous" as the heat index, a combination of air temperature and humidity, exceeded 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees Celsius) in some areas. It warned about a risk for heat-related illnesses, especially among people without air conditioning.

Detroit's air temperature was in the high 90s, the Weather Service said, and could even reach 100 at some point through Thursday. The city said a dozen recreation centers were open, some until 11 p.m., for people to cool off. Big chunks of Michigan, as well as Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky and much of Iowa, were under an extreme heat warning.

The Northeast, including New York City and Boston, will next feel major heat through the Fourth of July holiday. Norristown, Pennsylvania, 20 miles (32 kilometers) from Philadelphia, canceled a Saturday parade because of the weather.

Philadelphia declared a heat emergency, Wednesday through Saturday, and said 50 cooling centers will operate with extended hours. The city said visitors will find misting tents, water refill stations and medical stations at the free World Cup fan festival at East Fairmount Park.

When the heat's on, people adjust

The Chicago History Museum offered free admission to state residents who wanted a cool space Tuesday. Roads in a few places in Illinois buckled under the heat. When the surface has no room to expand in the heat, it can rise and crack.

At 9:15 a.m., window washer Stephen Mason, 72, was wiping mayflies off glass at a Detroit convenience store. He got an early start to avoid the worst conditions of the day, but it was already 85 (29.4 C).

"It's the only way to beat it. But it's already starting to cook out here," Mason said.

Adam Schubatis, 36, a runner who was shirtless in Detroit's Indian Village neighborhood, said he was cutting his route to 6 miles (9.6 kilometers).

"I know where all the drinking fountains are," he said. "My wife thought I was crazy. She offered to pick me up if I got tired or if there was anything I was doing that wasn't safe."

A dog's day can be 'miserable'

In Milwaukee, more than 100 firefighters spent hours controlling a fire at a school in the extreme heat. Fire Chief Aaron Lipski said crews were rotating and shedding their thick coats while they rehydrated.

Overnight low temperatures were in the 70s (21-26.7 C) in many places, which doesn't give the body a chance to cool down naturally, said Dr. Kisha Davis, health officer for Montgomery County, Maryland.

"The heat stress will compound day after day," said Davis, who added that alcohol and soda, popular holiday drinks, are dehydrating.

In Jackson, Mississippi, where the afternoon heat index exceeded 100 F (37.7 C), massive fans tried to keep about 100 dogs cool at an old mattress warehouse that serves as a shelter for Community Animal Rescue and Adoption.

"It's miserable. ... We try to keep everybody hydrated back there. Dogs and people," said kennel manager Raquel Burney.

Cooling it forward

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George Liller, 64, was a hero in Grosse Pointe Park, a Detroit suburb. He added air conditioning to his home, so he offered a window unit for free on Facebook — extension cord and remote control included.

"It was probably on my porch maybe 15 minutes," Liller said. "That air conditioner was given to me. I thought, 'Somebody needs it.' I know how it feels to be in an old house when it's this hot."

US stocks rise and trim their losses for June

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks rose Tuesday and trimmed their losses in what had been a rocky June. The S&P 500 gained 0.8%, though it still fell to its first losing month following two fabulous ones. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 136 points, or 0.3%, to its record, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 1.5%.

The main reason for the past month's weakness was a fall to Earth for stocks in the artificial-intelligence industry. After soaring to tremendous heights in the frenzy around AI, such stocks came under pressure because of worries that they shot too high. That's a big deal for all investors because AI stocks have grown into some of Wall Street's largest and most influential, pulling indexes behind them.

AI stocks were firmer Tuesday, and Nvidia was the strongest force lifting the S&P 500 after rising 2.6% and trimming its loss for the month. That was even though the majority of stocks within the index fell Tuesday.

Microsoft, which is investing heavily in AI, rose 1.2% to cut its loss for the month to 17.2%. Oracle, though, slipped 0.8% to widen its drop for June to 35.1%. It's another company contending with concerns that AI may not yield enough productivity and profits to make all the big spending worth it.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 58.93 points to 7,499.36. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 136.46 to 52,319.20, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 393.58 to 26,213.72.

Outside of AI, the economy seems to be rumbling along, even though U.S. households are still feeling sour about it. A report released in the morning said that U.S. employers were advertising many more job openings at the end of May than economists expected, the latest signal that the job market remains resilient.

But a second report said that confidence among U.S. consumers improved by less than economists expected. More Americans are saying it's hard to get a job, according to a survey by the Conference Board, even with data suggesting continued hiring.

Tuesday's relatively quiet trading came as companies closed their books for the quarter running from April through June. Investors want to see strong growth in profits to justify the big gains stocks made early in the quarter. Despite June's drop, the S&P 500 still recorded its best quarter since six years ago, when stocks rocketed out of the crash caused by the COVID pandemic.

Concentrix tumbled 11.2% after the technology company reported profit and revenue for the latest quarter that were just shy of analysts' expectations.

In the oil market, prices eased after two U.S. envoys arrived in Qatar for talks with mediators about the implementation of an initial deal to end the war in Iran. The Americans will not be having direct negotiations with Iranian diplomats while in Doha.

The price for a barrel of Brent crude oil, the international standard, erased an early, modest rise and fell 1.3% to \$72.95. The hope is that an end to the war will restore full access to the Strait of Hormuz, allowing oil tankers to move more crude and lower its price.

Expensive oil has already sent inflation jumping around the world, which in turn has raised worries that the Federal Reserve and other central banks may have to raise interest rates. Higher rates would keep a lid on inflation, but they would also slow economic growth and hurt prices for investments.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.44% from 4.38% late Monday.

In stock markets abroad, indexes rose across much of Europe and Asia.

Germany's DAX returned 1.5%, and South Korea's Kospi climbed 1% for two of the world's bigger gains.

Japan's Nikkei 225 rose 0.9% as the value of the Japanese yen dropped near its lowest level against the U.S. dollar in 40 years.

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U.S. government bonds are paying much higher yields than their Japanese counterparts, and the possibility of rate hikes by the Fed is putting more pressure on the yen. Speculation is rising that Japan's government may try to prop up the yen's value, but Japan's finance minister said only that the government was ready to "respond appropriately whenever necessary."

Takeaways from Supreme Court term: Trump's power is enhanced, but he lost some high-profile cases

By MARK SHERMAN and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump didn't get what he wanted in some of the biggest Supreme Court cases this year: tariffs, birthright citizenship and the attempted firing of Federal Reserve governor Lisa Cook.

But he also emerged from the term with even greater power.

His immigration crackdown was largely upheld, his call to redistrict for partisan advantage marched ahead and his ability to control federal regulatory agencies expanded dramatically when the court overturned a 90-year-old precedent. The court's conservative majority also seemed willing to look past Trump's invocation of racial tropes and boundary-pushing moves as it handed down decisions in line with its own conception of a powerful presidency.

The conservative majority seems fully behind the unitary executive theory

The court's ruling Monday gave the president effective control over independent regulatory agencies by allowing him to fire their leaders at will.

Several federal laws, some more than 100 years old, sought to protect agency independence by requiring the president to identify a cause, like negligence, before firing the leaders. The court struck down those provisions as unconstitutional limits on presidential power.

The decision could give the president the ability to reshape agencies Congress created to operate independently of the executive branch. It also could be a threat to the federal workforce, well below top executives, that has been covered by the civil service system, if future decisions allow the president to fire lower-level workers.

One agency that still appears beyond Trump's reach is the Federal Reserve. Though many experts have said there is no principled distinction, the court ruled Monday that the Fed's leadership can't be fired at will. It said Cook can remain in her job while she challenges efforts to oust her over allegations of mortgage fraud, which she denies.

The Voting Rights Act has been hollowed out

It was the crown jewel of the Civil Rights Movement: the 1965 federal law that finally opened the ballot box to Black Americans and other minorities and eventually led to the election of thousands of Black officeholders across the country.

But since 2013, the court has systematically and severely cut back on the ability of minority voters to invoke the law's protections to challenge election changes, saying the need for those protections had largely passed.

In April, the court made it much harder for minority voters to challenge electoral districts that result in reduced opportunity to elect candidates of their choosing, unless they can effectively prove intentional racial discrimination.

The decision meshed with Trump's call for Republicans to redraw as many districts as possible to try to hold on to their slim majority in the House.

Alabama, Louisiana and Tennessee eliminated largely Black districts in response to the decision, including an Alabama district that was created in response to a Supreme Court ruling three years ago.

The immigration crackdown has been at the center of Trump's agenda

The Trump administration notched a series of wins on immigration this term: The justices allowed the Department of Homeland Security to end deportation protections for hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans and Haitians and to employ a restrictive policy limiting the number of people seeking asylum each

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day at the southern border.

They also allowed border officers wider latitude in cases of green-card holders accused of crimes, in a case that started during the Obama administration.

In the birthright citizenship case, Trump pushed for limits no president had sought before, and certainly not through an executive order that would bypass Congress. In the end, six justices ruled he had gone too far.

But four justices adopted the administration's reading of the 14th Amendment that it would permit denying citizenship to children born to parents who are in the country illegally or temporarily.

Trump's crude racial and religious stereotypes get a pass from the court

Conservative justices have repeatedly discounted or taken the best possible view of Trump's words and actions. Critics call it sanewashing.

In last week's decision stripping protections from Haitian migrants, Justices Samuel Alito and Elena Kagan sparred over the role of race in Trump's statements depicting Haitians as "poisoning our blood" and amplifying false rumors of them eating people's pets in Springfield, Ohio, among other graphic comments.

"None of the cited statements by either the President or the Secretary was overtly racial," Alito wrote, contending they could have neutral explanations.

Kagan countered: "The statements fairly shout, in their racial undertones and overtones alike, that race entered into the President's resolve to remove Haitians from this country."

The findings echo the 2018 travel ban case where Chief Justice John Roberts said Trump's comments about Muslims were beside the point in the court's review of a "Presidential directive, neutral on its face, addressing a matter within the core of executive responsibility."

Justice Sonia Sotomayor saw things differently. "The full record paints a far more harrowing picture, from which a reasonable observer would readily conclude that the Proclamation was motivated by hostility and animus toward the Muslim faith," she wrote.

The court also looked past the allegations against Trump when it ruled for him in the 2024 case that helped him avoid prosecution. Two of Trump's appointees, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, had little interest in discussing Trump's effort to undo the 2020 election results and the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the Capitol that followed. "We're writing a rule for the ages," Gorsuch said. Kavanaugh added later: "I'm not focused on the here and now of this case. I'm very concerned about the future."

The court rejected Trump's global tariffs

A six-justice majority of three liberal and three conservative justices ruled in February that an emergency powers law doesn't let Trump bypass Congress. No president had ever tried the tactic before.

Trump responded to the loss by sharply criticizing the justices who ruled against him, referring to those he nominated as an "embarrassment to their families."

Meanwhile, he has continued threatening tariffs under other authorities. And new tariffs he imposed in response to the high-court ruling remain in effect even as they, too, have been challenged.

Gun rights get a modest boost

The justices backed Second Amendment rights in a pair of rulings. One found that people can't be barred from owning firearms just because they regularly use marijuana. While the federal ban wasn't often enforced in broad terms, the court's decision recognized that cannabis is now used by millions of people and said it can't automatically be considered dangerous.

Another decision struck down a Hawaii law that had required people to get permission to carry guns into stores and hotels. A handful of other states have similar laws, some of which have already been blocked in court.

They're the latest in a line of gun cases to reach the court since the justices expanded Second Amendment rights in a landmark 2022 decision.

And a major new case on gun rights is looming. The court also announced Tuesday it will decide whether state and local bans on semiautomatic rifles commonly known as assault weapons violate the Second Amendment.

Supreme Court will consider whether laws known as assault weapons bans violate the Second Amendment

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Supreme Court that has expanded gun rights will consider whether bans on semiautomatic rifles, often called assault weapons, violate the Second Amendment.

The justices said Tuesday they will hear appeals challenging bans on the AR-15 and similar semiautomatic firearms in Connecticut and the Chicago area.

Similar laws are in place in about a dozen states, covering major cities like New York, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. Congress allowed a national assault weapons ban to expire in 2004, but Democrats have supported renewing it in response to a series of mass shootings. States have also continued to pass their own laws, including recent measures in Virginia and Rhode Island.

It is the latest high-profile dispute over guns to reach the court since its conservative majority handed down a landmark ruling in 2022 that expanded Second Amendment rights and spawned challenges to firearm laws around the country.

Arguments are expected to be heard in the fall.

The Connecticut law was passed after a mass shooter used an AR-15 to kill 20 children and six educators at Sandy Hook Elementary in 2012. The state says the guns are a preferred weapon of mass shooters, and they can be banned because they are similar to military-grade weapons.

"These laws are critical public safety measures, and they are consistent with the Second Amendment," said Janet Carter, managing director of Second Amendment litigation at the gun-control group Everytown Law.

Gun rights groups, on the other hand, argue it's unconstitutional to ban semiautomatic rifles, which are legally owned by millions of Americans.

"The Second Amendment protects arms in common use for lawful purposes, and it's hard to argue that a type of rifle that potentially outnumbered Ford F-150 trucks in America doesn't meet that standard," said Adam Kraut, executive director of the Second Amendment Foundation.

Four conservative justices on the nine-member court, enough to grant review of a case, had signaled that it was only a matter of time before the court took up the issue.

The ban in Cook County, Illinois, was first passed in 1993. Lower courts have upheld both laws.

"If the Second Amendment does not protect the most popular rifles in the country, it is hard to see how it protects any firearms at all," aside from handguns kept in the home, the challengers wrote.

Attorneys for Cook County, on the other hand, say the measure does pass constitutional muster. "The trauma that assault weapon massacres have inflicted on the public at large has been staggering," they wrote.

The Supreme Court backed Second Amendment rights in two cases this term, striking down gun carry restrictions in Hawaii and a broad federal ban on gun ownership by marijuana users. They've previously upheld some restrictions, though, including a law barring people under domestic-violence restraining orders from having guns.

Also Tuesday, the court rebuffed a series of cases over restrictions on guns for young adults under age 21, declining to hear an issue that's sharply divided lower courts in recent years.

Supreme Court strikes down limits on party spending in federal elections, backing Republican appeal

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Tuesday erased limits on how much political parties can spend in coordination with candidates for Congress and president, striking down a federal election law

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that is more than 50 years old.

Prodded by a Republican-led lawsuit that includes Vice President JD Vance, the court's six conservative justices were again in the majority of the latest decision that upended congressionally enacted limits on raising and spending money to influence elections. The court's 2010 Citizens United decision opened the door to unlimited independent spending in federal elections.

The limits on party spending stem from a desire to prevent large donors from skirting caps on individual contributions to a candidate by directing unlimited sums to the party, with the understanding that the money will be spent on behalf of the candidate.

The Supreme Court had previously upheld the limits, in 2001.

But Justice Brett Kavanaugh, writing for the court, said that decision was wrong and should be overruled. "In short, constitutional text, history and precedent establish that the political-party coordinated-expense limits violate the First Amendment," Kavanaugh wrote.

Justice Elena Kagan's dissent for the three liberal justices said the court "ushers in untold harm" by enabling parties to funnel large contributions to individual candidates, far in excess of what donors can give those candidates directly.

National parties now will be able to make direct contributions to candidates' campaigns,

The decision is likely to give Republicans at least a short-term boost because they maintain a sizable cash advantage over Democrats.

The Republican National Committee and its Senate and House campaign fundraising arms have dwarfed Democrats' in the months before congressional elections where the GOP is defending narrow majorities in both houses.

At the end of May, the RNC reported having more than \$125 million to spend, its highest-ever cash on hand total, according to its most recent Federal Election Commission filing in May. Meanwhile, the National Republican Senatorial Committee had more than \$48 million on hand in its most recent report and the National Republican Congressional Committee had more than \$81 million.

In the same period, the Democratic National Committee had \$14.4 million on hand, while the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee had roughly \$37 million and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, roughly \$73 million.

The Republican committees for House and Senate candidates filed the lawsuit in Ohio in 2022, joined by Vance, then a senator from Ohio, and then-Rep. Steve Chabot.

After President Donald Trump took office for his second term, the Federal Election Commission dropped its defense of the law and joined with Republicans in urging that it be overturned.

Democrats had called on the court to uphold the law, even though there is wide agreement that the spending limits have hurt political parties in an era of unlimited spending by other organizations.

Last year, the coordinated party spending for Senate races ranged from \$127,200 in several states with small populations to nearly \$4 million in California, the most populous state. For House races, the limits were \$127,200 in states with only one representative and \$63,600 everywhere else.

Entrenched divisions between liberal and conservative justices over campaign finance restrictions were on display when the court heard arguments in December.

"Every time we interfere with the congressional design, we make matters worse," said Justice Sonia Sotomayor, a dissenter in Citizens United and the court's other campaign money cases.

By contrast, Justice Samuel Alito, a member of the Citizens United majority, described the decision as "much maligned, I think unfairly maligned." The effect of the decision was to "level the playing field," Alito said, by expanding the right to spend freely that had previously belonged only to media companies.

Why most Black Americans say they never fly the American flag, according to a new AP-NORC poll

By COREY WILLIAMS, LINLEY SANDERS and SIMRAN PARWANI Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Jerry Esters proudly displays the American flag each day on his Detroit home. A few miles away, Yvonne Pistochini says there is no scenario under which she would allow the Stars and Stripes to cast its shadow where she lives.

Both are Black.

For Esters, the flag represents the opportunities that allowed the great-great-grandson of slaves to find success and flourish. Pistochini, 79, simply says the America identified by the flag is not the same country she saw growing up.

Americans' views of "Old Glory" are divided by politics, age and race, according to a new survey conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research ahead of the nation's 250th birthday celebration.

Republicans and older, white adults are especially likely to say they fly the American flag, while younger Democrats and Black adults are more likely to say they don't fly it. Views of the flag — and whether it's a unifying or divisive symbol — track with other deep divisions among Americans, who see their country's history and accomplishments very differently.

"A lot of Black Americans see the flag as a symbol of both inclusion and exclusion," said Matthew Delmont, professor of American history at Dartmouth College. "Black Americans, more so than white Americans, also understand the flag can be used to justify a version of patriotism that is rooted in exclusion, with the flag being used to say 'you don't belong here.'"

The survey of 2,596 adults was conducted April 16-20. It suggests that older white Americans, especially Republicans, are more likely to see the flag as unifying.

About half of U.S. adults said they display the flag at home throughout most of the year, or during holidays. About 7 in 10 Republicans and about 6 in 10 Americans ages 60 and older fly the flag at least during holidays.

About 6 in 10 Democrats and independents, on the other hand, say they "never" fly the U.S. flag. That includes the vast majority, 75%, of Democrats under 45.

Opportunities worth fighting for

Esters, a 64-year-old retired clay sculptor for a Detroit automaker, flies three American flags at his Sherwood Forest home on the city's west side.

"When these homes were built, Black men like me, my mother and my family ... we couldn't even buy these homes," he said. "To me, that's one reason I fly the flag. We went through a lot to be able to own nice homes, and this is what we fought for."

The other reason is Moriah Martin, Esters' great-great-grandmother, who was born into slavery.

"I'm kind of living out her dreams — what I did for a living, having a business, having a nice home," he said. "I think that's the American way, but we got to fight for it and we, as Blacks, fought for it."

He's in the minority among Black adults, according to the survey, which found that only about 3 in 10 Black adults say they ever display the American flag, compared with about half of white and Hispanic adults.

Pistochini says current divisions over political leanings and perspectives, and inequality of opportunities for the poor and people of color are not what she believes the flag should stand for. People confuse flying it with being patriotic, she added.

"Just because you fly a flag doesn't make you a patriot," Pistochini said. "If there was patriotism, we would not have all this. We can't look at (what's going on) and say this is America."

For country and freedom

Ben Gaskins, chair of political science at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, says the flag is an important symbol of patriotism for many Americans.

"It is those who are older people, who are white and people who are more conservative," Gaskins said. "They take it as more central to their identity."

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Nancy Hansen, a 73-year-old retired Customs and Border Protection clerk in Culvertson, Montana, believes "you have to be for the country, no matter what" and that the flag means "freedom."

"Freedom to live where we want to live, travel where we want to travel, raise our kids where we want to raise our kids," said Hansen, who is white and identifies as Republican.

Each year around July 4, the American Legion posts flags outside businesses and homes in Culvertson, including Hansen's home.

Linda and Greg Cunningham also equate the flag with freedom.

The white, conservative Pontiac, Michigan, couple are going all out this summer. The exterior of their home northwest of Detroit is awash in red, white and blue. The flag sits atop a flagpole just feet from their door.

"It's no political thing, at all," said Linda Cunningham, 63. "It's our freedom. I love the American flag. I love the whole concept of it. I love America. I know there's so much going on in the world, right now, and I know everyone has their own views, and I'm just sad that politics have to be brought into the flag."

Flag as a 'painful reminder'

Of those who took the survey, 47% see the flag as a "more unifying" symbol. About 16% call it a "more divisive" icon, while 36% say it's neither divisive nor unifying.

Only 22% of Black adults see the flag as a unifying symbol, compared with 55% of white adults and 42% of Hispanic adults.

"It's a painful symbol. It's a reminder of what we could be and how it's failed to live up to that for Black people, for Indigenous people and people of color," said Allison Wiltz, a Black author and founder of Writers and Editors of Color.

Paul Walthour, 71, occasionally flies the flag outside his Minneapolis-area home on special occasions and some holidays. Walthour says that when he's away from home and at his cabin, the flag goes up each morning and is taken down at the end of the day.

"This is antiquated, perhaps," said Walthour, who is white and a retired advertising agency creative director. "I feel it's a symbol that you're proud to be an American."

"Unfortunately, I kind of think it's kind of a symbol of dividing more than uniting," added Walthour, who identifies as a Democrat. "The people who fly it on the far right have one kind of feeling about it, and the people who fly it on the left have a different kind of feeling about it."

Supreme Court upholds state laws banning transgender girls and women from school athletic teams

By MARK SHERMAN and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Tuesday upheld state laws barring transgender girls and women from playing on school athletic teams, in another setback for transgender people.

The court's six-justice conservative majority, which has repeatedly ruled against transgender Americans in the past year, ruled that state bans in Idaho and West Virginia don't violate the Constitution. The court unanimously agreed that barring transgender girls and women also doesn't run afoul of the federal law known as Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in education.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote for the court that, "states may maintain women's and girls' sports for biological females" to address safety and competitive fairness concerns. "The Constitution and Title IX do not require an overhaul of women's and girls' sports throughout America."

More than two dozen other Republican-led states have adopted bans on female transgender athletes, and the decision seems certain to extend to them as well.

Left unresolved by the outcome are lawsuits challenging state laws and regulations in Connecticut, California and elsewhere that permit transgender athletes to compete consistent with their gender identity.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor dissented, saying from the bench that the majority opinion was wrong to reject an equal-protection claim from 16-year-old Becky Pepper-Jackson.

With the science still evolving, transgender students shouldn't automatically be shut out of team sports, she said. "We just simply do not know scientifically that transgender students pose dangers," she said,

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reading from a dissent joined by her liberal colleagues.

Pepper-Jackson, a high school sophomore in Bridgeport, West Virginia, has been taking puberty-blocking medication, has publicly identified as a girl since age 8 and has been issued a West Virginia birth certificate recognizing her as female. She is the only transgender person who has sought to compete in girls sports in West Virginia.

Pepper-Jackson has progressed from a back-of-the-pack cross-country runner in middle school to statewide champion in the shot put. She beat the second-place finisher by two feet in last month's West Virginia championship meet.

In the Idaho case, Lindsay Hecox sued over the state's first-in-the-nation ban for the chance to try out for the women's track and cross-country teams at Boise State University in Idaho. She didn't make either squad because "she was too slow," her lawyer, Kathleen Hartnett, told the court during arguments in January, but she competed in club-level soccer and running.

Prominent women in sports have weighed in on both sides. Tennis champion Martina Navratilova, swimmers Summer Sanders and Donna de Varona and beach volleyball player Kerri Walsh Jennings are supporting the state bans. Soccer stars Megan Rapinoe and Becky Sauerbrunn and basketball players Sue Bird and Breanna Stewart back the transgender athletes.

Kavanaugh, who has coached girls' basketball, underlined the importance of women's sports and athletes' dedication. "No student-athlete on either side of the issue, whether a biological female or transgender, deserves to be ostracized or vilified," he wrote.

In 2020, the Supreme Court ruled LGBTQ people are protected by a landmark federal civil rights law that prohibits sex discrimination in the workplace, finding that "sex plays an unmistakable role" in employers' decisions to punish transgender people for traits and behavior they otherwise tolerate.

But last year, the six conservative justices on the nine-member court declined to apply the same sort of analysis when they upheld state bans on gender-affirming care for transgender minors.

The states supporting the prohibitions on transgender athletes argued there is no reason to extend the ruling barring workplace discrimination to Title IX.

Idaho's law, state Solicitor General Alan Hurst said, is "necessary for fair competition because, where sports are concerned, men and women are obviously not the same."

Republican President Donald Trump applauded Tuesday's decision, calling it a "BIG WIN" in a social-media post.

Lawyers for Pepper-Jackson argued that such distinctions generally make sense but that their client has none of those advantages because of the unique circumstances of her early transition. In Hecox's case, her lawyers wanted the court to dismiss the case because she had forsworn trying to play on women's teams.

NCAA president Charlie Baker told Congress in 2024 that he was aware of only 10 transgender athletes out of more than half a million students on college teams. But despite the small numbers, the issue has taken on outsized importance.

Baker's NCAA and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committees banned transgender women from women's sports after President Donald Trump, a Republican, signed an executive order aimed at barring their participation.

The public generally is supportive of the limits. An Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll conducted in October 2025 found that about 6 in 10 U.S. adults "strongly" or "somewhat" favored requiring transgender children and teenagers to compete only on sports teams that match the sex they were assigned at birth, not the gender they identify with, while about 2 in 10 were "strongly" or "somewhat" opposed and about one-quarter did not have an opinion.

About 2.1 million adults, or 0.8%, and 724,000 people ages 13 to 17, or 3.3%, identify as transgender in the U.S., according to the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law.

Supreme Court upholds birthright citizenship, rejecting Trump's proposed limits

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A divided Supreme Court on Tuesday upheld a broad conception of birthright citizenship, rejecting President Donald Trump's executive order declaring that children born to people who are in the United States illegally or temporarily are not American citizens.

By a 6-3 vote, the court struck down Trump's order. A bare majority of five justices, in an opinion written by Chief Justice John Roberts, held that the long-settled understanding of the 14th Amendment, adopted after the Civil War, makes a citizen of anyone born in the country, with very limited exceptions,

"Citizenship, then and now, was the right to have rights—to freely participate in our political community. The Framers of the Fourteenth Amendment extended that promise to 'every free-born person in this land,'" Chief Justice John Roberts wrote for the court, citing congressional debate over the amendment, "We keep that promise today."

A sixth justice, Brett Kavanaugh, disagreed about the constitutional ruling, but pointed to a federal law that he said broadly conveys birthright citizenship.

Justices Samuel Alito, Neil Gorsuch and Clarence Thomas would have upheld Trump's proposed restrictions.

"The Court today takes the extraordinary step of holding facially unconstitutional the President's Order excluding from citizenship the children of foreign temporary visitors and illegal aliens," Justice Clarence Thomas wrote in a 91-page dissent, more than three times as long as Roberts' opinion. "In doing so, the Court adds to the sad history of the Fourteenth Amendment, which was designed and understood to secure equal rights for the freed blacks but has instead been repurposed for political projects that the Reconstruction Congress did not support."

The Republican president's restrictions had been blocked by several lower courts and had not taken effect anywhere in the U.S.

Trump said the decision was "too bad for our Country" and wrongly suggested that Congress could "easily" address it with legislation. The majority decision rests on constitutional grounds. It would take an amendment to overcome the decision.

During arguments in April, both conservative and liberal justices questioned the order's legality in a momentous case that was magnified by Trump's unprecedented attendance in the courtroom.

The case framed another test of Trump's assertions of executive power that defy long-standing precedent for a court with a conservative majority and a robust view of presidential power that has largely ruled in his favor. In the notable exceptions when the court has not, Trump has responded with starkly personal criticisms of the justices.

The justices ruled on Trump's appeal of a lower-court ruling from New Hampshire that struck down the citizenship restrictions.

The birthright citizenship order, which Trump signed on the first day of his second term, is part of his administration's broad immigration crackdown.

Birthright citizenship was the first Trump immigration-related policy to reach the court for a final ruling. The justices previously struck down global tariffs Trump had imposed under an emergency powers law that had never been used that way.

Trump reacted furiously to the late February tariffs decision, saying he was ashamed of the justices who ruled against him and calling them unpatriotic.

He also seemed to recognize the court was likely to rule against him on birthright citizenship, too, using his Truth Social platform to criticize "dumb judges and justices" and wealthy pregnant women from China and elsewhere who come to the U.S. to give birth so their newborns will have American citizenship.

Trump's order would have upended widely held views that the 14th Amendment confers citizenship on everyone born in the U.S., excluding only the children of foreign diplomats and those born to a foreign occupying force.

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The amendment was intended to ensure that Black people, including former slaves, had citizenship, though the Citizenship Clause is written more broadly. "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside," it reads.

In a series of decisions, lower courts have struck down Trump's executive order as illegal. The decisions have invoked the high court's 1898 ruling in *Wong Kim Ark*, which held that the U.S.-born child of Chinese nationals was a citizen.

Roberts, joined by Justice Amy Coney Barrett and the three liberal justices, said the amendment's language, the historical context and the 1898 case make clear that children born to parents illegally or temporarily in the U.S. "are citizens at birth."

But there was only a bare majority of five justices on the constitutional question.

Kavanaugh sided with the majority because of a federal law that makes those children citizens. But he joined the dissenters in finding that Trump's order does not violate the Constitution. His view would enable a future Congress to change the law to restrict birthright citizenship.

The Trump administration had argued that the common view of citizenship is wrong, asserting that children of noncitizens are not "subject to the jurisdiction" of the United States and therefore are not entitled to citizenship.

More than one-quarter of a million babies born in the U.S. each year would have been affected by the executive order, according to research by the Migration Policy Institute and Pennsylvania State University's Population Research Institute.

While Trump has largely focused on illegal immigration in his rhetoric and actions, the birthright citizenship restrictions also would have applied to people who are legally in the United States, including students and applicants for green cards, or permanent resident status.

Consumer confidence ticks up as gas prices fall but Americans remain gloomy about the economy

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans' attitudes toward the economy improved slightly this month as gas prices declined, but their outlook is still mostly negative by historical standards.

The Conference Board said Tuesday that its consumer confidence index rose 0.6 point to 91.2 in June, a figure that is still below its year-ago reading of 95.2. Consumer attitudes worsened after the Iran war caused oil and gas prices to spike, accelerating inflation and causing Americans' inflation-adjusted incomes to decline. Before the pandemic, the index regularly topped 120.

The report suggests that consumer confidence is recovering only slowly from the hit caused by the Iran war. Even so, Americans have continued to spend despite their dour outlook, which has kept the economy growing even as inflation accelerated. Measures of consumer sentiment have been less predictive of how Americans actually shop since the pandemic.

"Consumer confidence inched up in June as falling oil prices in recent weeks provided some relief to consumer inflation fears," Dana Peterson, the Conference Board's chief economist said in a statement. "Consumer appraisals of current business conditions were slightly more positive compared to last month. However, perceptions of the current labor market softened measurably."

Earlier this month, a government report showed that consumers stepped up their spending in May despite higher gas prices. Analysts expect the steady consumer outlays kept the economy growing at about a 2.5% annual rate in the April-June quarter.

Falling gas prices may also help boost Americans' outlook in the coming months. On average nationwide, gas prices spiked above \$4.50 after the U.S.-Iran conflict began Feb. 28. They have since fallen back to \$3.85 a gallon, according to AAA.

The survey also found that consumers had a dimmer view of hiring and the job market this month. The proportion of Americans who said jobs are "hard to get" rose to 22.5% from 19.8% the previous month,

a noticeable increase.

But on Wednesday the government released a report showing that the number of open jobs remained at a solid 7.6 million in May, indicating that companies are showing more interest in recruiting workers.

The Labor Department will release its monthly jobs report for June on Thursday, and economists forecast it will show that employers added 100,000 jobs, a solid gain. The unemployment rate is expected to stay at a low 4.3%, according to data provider FactSet.

US envoys arrive in Qatar for meetings on Iran, with tensions high over Hormuz

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Two U.S. envoys arrived in Qatar on Tuesday for talks with mediators about the implementation of an initial deal to end the war in Iran, an official said.

The visit by Steve Witkoff, U.S. President Donald Trump's special Mideast envoy, and Jared Kushner, his son-in-law, comes after a weekend of crossfire in the Persian Gulf over efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz to shipping traffic.

The envoys won't be having direct negotiations with Iranian diplomats while in Qatar's capital, Doha, said Majed al-Ansari, a spokesman for Qatar's Foreign Ministry. Instead, mediators are working for the time being as go-betweens for the talks, which won't include any high-level officials, he added.

The U.S. and Iran have held indirect negotiations before. However, the two previous rounds collapsed and preceded the 12-day war Israel launched against Iran in 2025 and this year's war, launched jointly by the U.S. and Iran on Feb. 28.

Iran is also sending a delegation to Qatar this week. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said Tuesday that Iran has had no plans for a meeting with the American side at any level in the coming days.

"What will take place in Doha tomorrow is a discussion with the Qatari side about implementing parts of the memorandum of understanding, including the release of Iran's blocked assets," Baghaei told journalists at his own briefing.

It is possible the two sides could exchange messages through the Qatari mediators.

The U.S. and Iran agreed to an interim deal earlier this month that calls for Tehran to dilute its stockpile of enriched uranium. It also waives U.S.-backed oil sanctions on the country, calls for free traffic through the Strait of Hormuz and gives each side 60 days to hammer out broader agreements.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Monday that Qatar plans to release \$6 billion in frozen Iranian assets. A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive negotiations, confirmed the release amount, saying it would be used to buy U.S. food products for the Iranian people.

A fifth of the world's oil was shipped through the Strait of Hormuz before the war began. Iran's attacks and threats stopped cargo ships and tankers from moving through the strait, creating a global energy crisis.

The strait has long been considered an international waterway despite being in Iran and Oman's territorial waters.

Both sides traded strikes amid efforts last week to open Oman's territorial waters in the strait to both inbound and outbound ship traffic from the Persian Gulf. That raised concerns that negotiations to formally end the war could be disrupted.

Iran twice attacked vessels in the strait — including a tanker filled with Qatari crude — and drew retaliatory American airstrikes. Iran also launched drone and missile attacks targeting Bahrain and Kuwait on Sunday.

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Today in History: July 1, Dominion of Canada is formed

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, July 1, the 182 day of 2026. There are 183 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 1, 1867, Canada became a self-governing dominion of Great Britain as the British North America Act took effect. Called Dominion Day until 1982, the national holiday is now known as Canada Day.

Also on this date:

In 1863, the pivotal, three-day Civil War Battle of Gettysburg, resulting in a Union victory, began in Pennsylvania.

In 1903, the first Tour de France began. (It ended on July 19, won by Maurice Garin.)

In 1944, delegates from 44 countries began meeting at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, where they agreed to establish the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

In 1963, the U.S. Post Office inaugurated its five-digit ZIP codes.

In 1973, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration was established.

In 1984, the first movie rated PG-13 ("Red Dawn," starring Patrick Swayze) was released.

In 1991, President George H.W. Bush nominated federal appeals court judge Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, beginning an ultimately successful confirmation process marked by allegations of sexual harassment.

In 1997, Hong Kong reverted to Chinese rule after 156 years as a British colony.

In 2004, actor Marlon Brando died in Los Angeles at age 80.

In 2015, after more than a half-century of hostility, the United States and Cuba declared their intent to reopen embassies in each other's capitals, leading to a historic full restoration of diplomatic relations between the Cold War foes.

In 2018, LeBron James announced that he would be signing with the Los Angeles Lakers, leaving Cleveland for the second time in his career.

In 2019, 15-year-old Coco Gauff, the youngest player to qualify at Wimbledon in the professional era, defeated 39-year-old Venus Williams in the first round.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-dancer Leslie Caron is 94. Actor Jamie Farr (TV: "M(asterisk)A(asterisk)S(asterisk)H") is 92. Dancer-choreographer Twyla Tharp is 85. Actor Genevieve Bujold is 84. Rock singer Deborah Harry (Blondie) is 81. Actor Terrence Mann is 75. Rock singer Fred Schneider (The B-52s) is 75. Pop singer Victor Willis (Village People) is 75. Actor-comedian Dan Aykroyd is 74. Actor Alan Ruck is 70. Mystery novelist Louise Penny is 68. Singer Evelyn "Champagne" King is 66. Olympic track champion Carl Lewis is 65. Actor Pamela Anderson is 59. Actor Henry Simmons is 56. Hip-hop artist Missy Elliott is 55. Actor Julianne Nicholson is 55. Singer-songwriter Sufjan Stevens is 51. Actor Liv Tyler is 49. Hockey Hall of Famer Jarome Iginla is 49. Actor Hilarie Burton is 44. Actor Lea Seydoux (LEE'-uh say-DOO') is 41. Actor-singer Chloe Bailey is 28. Actor Storm Reid is 23.