

Groton Daily Independent

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Community Calendar

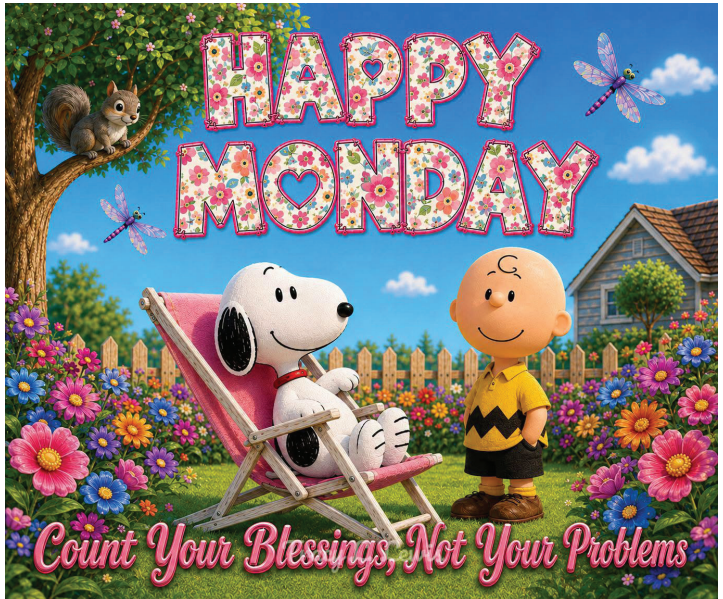
Monday, Aug. 3

Senior Menu: Salisbury Steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, fruit, whole wheat bread.
First day of soccer practice
Wrestling Camp, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., GHS Gym and Arena
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
State B Legion Tournament in Madison

Tuesday, Aug. 4

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.
Wrestling Camp, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., GHS Gym and Arena
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.
State B Legion Tournament in Madison

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



Wednesday, Aug. 5

Senior Menu: Swedish meatballs, mashed potatoes with gravy, winter blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.
Wrestling Camp, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., GHS Gym and Arena
Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.
Groton Chamber meeting, noon, City Hall

Thursday, Aug. 6

Senior Menu: Tuna noodle casserole, peas, fruit, whole wheat bread.
First day of football practice
Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.
Family Fun Fest, 5:30-7:30 p.m., downtown Groton
Summer Smash, 7:30 p.m., GHS Parking Lot

Friday, Aug. 7

Senior Menu: Taco bake with ground beef, Mexican rice with beans, Catalina blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.
Storybook Land Theatre Presentation, 10 a.m., GHS Gym
State Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament at Redfield

Saturday, Aug. 8

State Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament at Redfield

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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.

'Nudification' Ban

The nation's first ban on tools allowing users to generate nonconsensual "nudified" content from images or video of fully clothed people went into effect in Minnesota Saturday, after a judge denied a last-minute suspension request from Elon Musk. A hearing is set for Aug. 19 to decide whether to pause the ban while legal challenges proceed.

Since becoming widely available in 2022, the use of generative AI to produce content involving real people (or "deepfakes") has skyrocketed—an estimated 96% to 98% of which is explicit, and nearly all of it involves women. Largely done without the person's knowledge, such tools have been used by high schoolers to make explicit images of female students, leading to a viral undressing trend on the Musk-owned Grok chatbot earlier this year. The first successful prosecution for sharing explicit deepfakes (including some of children) occurred in April under the federal Take It Down Act.

Lyme Test Launch

The first batch of at-home test kits for Lyme disease ships this month. LymeAlert, launched by an MIT researcher, will release 5,000 test kits that claim to identify Lyme-infested ticks within 15 minutes, much like a COVID-19 or pregnancy test.

The test device includes a grinder that opens a tick's exterior, and an assay that can detect *Borrelia burgdorferi*—the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. An estimated 31 million Americans get tick bites each year. Of those, about 476,000 people are treated for Lyme disease annually, many concentrated in the Northeast, Midwest, and Mid-Atlantic, where black-legged ticks are prevalent. For Lyme to be transmitted, an infected tick must be attached for at least 24 hours. Early treatment with antibiotics can help reduce the likelihood of chronic Lyme disease, which may involve fatigue, pain, and cognitive impairment.

Iran Hostilities Pause

President Donald Trump announced a pause in US strikes against Iran Saturday, citing "rapid" progress toward a deal to end the monthslong war.

The parameters of a deal would reportedly include Iran reopening the Strait of Hormuz and halting attacks on neighboring countries, including via Iranian proxy militias, in exchange for the US ending its naval blockade. During the ceasefire, the two countries would work toward an agreement on long-term issues, including nuclear concerns. Unlike the previous ceasefire deal, Israel has reportedly agreed to participate in this latest iteration.

The announcement came after Trump spoke with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. MBS reportedly pressed Trump to reconsider large-scale military strikes over concerns Iran would retaliate against oil facilities in the Gulf. A New York Times report Saturday found Iran had coordinated with proxy groups during the last ceasefire on plans to expand the war if US strikes resumed.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Actor Vincent Pastore, who played Salvatore "Big Pussy" Bonpensiero in "The Sopranos," dies at age 80. "Spider-Man: Brand New Day" earns \$355M at the domestic box office, second-best opening in history. Arizona law enforcement releases ransom notes from Nancy Guthrie kidnapping; the mother of "Today" cohost Savannah Guthrie has been missing since Feb. 1.

FIFA reverses plans to sell a stake in its commercial and event operations to private investors after widespread opposition, which included 55 European nations agreeing to boycott the World Cup.

Science & Technology

OpenAI's Astra model advances 10 outstanding math problems that haven't seen progress in at least a decade.

Scientists identify the first ancient smallpox genome discovered in the Americas, confirm virus arrived via Europeans; strains recovered from Chilean remains dating to the 15th to 17th centuries.

Astronomers make first measurement of the full size of the largest known galaxy; IC 1101 is roughly 1.7 million light-years across, contains mass equal to roughly 3.4 trillion suns.

Business & Markets

US stock markets rise Friday (S&P 500 +0.7%, Dow +0.5%, Nasdaq +1.0%); Amazon shares rise almost 16% as cloud service sales jump by more than 37% year-over-year.

US Treasury buys Japanese Yen to help reverse the currency's devaluation; photo taken over Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's notepad shows "to-do list" with \$5B-\$10B purchase (More, w/photo)

Chinese AI firm DeepSeek releases new coding model that costs a fraction of leading frontier systems; 1 million output tokens cost 28 cents, 99% cheaper than Claude's Opus 4.8.

Politics & World Affairs

Female bomber detonates a homemade explosive device at a Moscow restaurant, killing three people and wounding at least 21 others; a motive was not publicly identified as of this writing.

Most migrants leave Spanish territory of Ceuta after an estimated 60,000 reportedly entered from Morocco last week. Italy closes air and sea borders with Spain over the incident.

Gunman attacks In-N-Out Burger location in Twin Falls, Idaho, killing at least three people and wounding seven others.



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Pennington County Fatal Crash

What: Single-vehicle fatal crash

Where: South Rochford Road and Seven Hills Road, 5 miles west of Rochford, South Dakota

When: 11:03 a.m., Saturday, August 1, 2026

Driver 1: 72-year-old male from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, serious non-life-threatening injuries

Vehicle 1: 2025 Canam Spyder RT

Helmet Used: Yes

Passenger 1: 67-year-old female from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, fatal injuries

Helmet Used: Yes

Pennington County, S.D.- A Sioux Falls woman died Saturday in a single-vehicle crash near Rochford, South Dakota.

Names of the those involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2025 Canam Spyder RT was traveling on South Rochford Road near Seven Hills Road when he failed to negotiate a curve. The Spyder left the road and rolled. The passenger died from her injuries. The driver was taken to a Rapid City hospital with serious non-life-threatening injuries.

The investigation is ongoing. All information released is preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

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Schedules set for state football, cross-country championships

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. NewsMedia Association

PIERRE — At its July meeting, the board of directors of the South Dakota High School Activities Association set the schedules for the state football championships and the state cross-country meet.

The football championships will take place Nov. 12-14 at the DakotaDome at the University of South Dakota. According to SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos, the schedule is designed to accommodate fans as well as the USD football team that has a home game that weekend.

On Thursday, Nov. 12, the 9B game will be at 10 a.m., the 9A game at 1 p.m. and the 9AA game will be at 7:30 p.m. The schedule was designed to give the USD football team time to practice between the afternoon and evening games.

On Friday, Nov. 13, the 11B game will be at 10 a.m., the 11A game will be at 1 p.m. and the 11AA game will be at 7:30 p.m.

On Saturday, Nov. 14, the 11AAA game will be at 7:30 p.m. The USD football game is at 1 p.m. on Saturday.

The schedule for the state cross-country meet was changed due to road construction and the duration of the awards ceremony. In the past, having the awards ceremony at the end of the meet meant that some participants had to wait hours to get their awards.

The updated event schedule includes the races for each class, immediately followed by the awards ceremony for that class. SDHSAA Assistant Executive Director Randy Soma said the change would help with traffic flow and parking.

"They can stay if they want or they can depart before the next group comes in," Soma said.

The state cross-country meet will be held on Oct. 24 at Hart Ranch Camping Resort in Rapid City.

Class B will have its girls' race at 10 a.m., its boys' race at 10:45 a.m. and its awards ceremony at 11:15 a.m.

In Class AA, the girls' race will be at 12:15 p.m., the boys' race at 1 p.m. and the awards ceremony at 1:30 p.m.

In Class A, the girls' race will be at 2:30 p.m., the boys' race at 3:15 p.m. and the awards ceremony at 3:45 p.m.

"It's a little bit longer day," Soma said, "but not for the contestants or the spectators."

Adult ticket prices going up for state track meet, musical events

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. NewsMedia Association

PIERRE — The board of directors of the South Dakota High School Activities Association raised adult ticket prices for some events when it met for its July meeting.

The cost of an adult tournament pass at the state track meet went from \$35 to \$40. According to SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos, the association's other three-day events like the state wrestling tournament and state basketball tournaments, charge adults \$50 and students \$30 for tournament passes. The price for an adult tournament pass will continue to go up until the state track meet's ticket prices are in line with the other events.

The cost of a student state track meet tournament pass stayed at \$25.

All-State Chorus and Orchestra reserved seat tickets rose from \$20 to \$25. Adult general tickets rose from \$15 to \$20. Student general tickets stayed at \$10. The last ticket price change for that event was \$1 in 2019.

All-State Band adult tickets went from \$15 to \$20. Student ticket prices stayed at \$10. The last ticket price change was in 2012-2013.

All-State Band/Show Choir adult tickets went from \$15 to \$20. Student ticket prices stayed at \$10. The last ticket price increase was in 2016.

Swartos noted for the board that in the 2025-2026 school year the association absorbed credit card fees of \$48,327 at state events. At some venues there are also box office fees that the association pays.

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Every NFL offseason brings optimism. Every fanbase convinces itself the rookies will hit, the free agents will work out, and this is finally the year everything comes together. But before the season starts and hope takes over, it's worth taking a hard look at the roster as it actually exists today.

Over the next ten weeks, we'll break down every position group on the Vikings' roster and rank them from the group I have the most confidence in to the one I trust the least entering the 2026 season. We'll look at the projected starters, depth pieces, offseason additions, and biggest questions each group faces.

Coming in at number 2: inside linebacker

Confidence level: 35%

Current projected starters: Blake Cashman, Eric Wilson

Current depth: Ivan Pace Jr., Jake Golday, Jamal Adams

Competing for a roster or practice squad spot: Bangally Kamara, Keli Lawson, Jacob Roberts, Josh Ross

Why I'm confident: The two starting inside linebackers, Cashman and Wilson, have both proven they're more than capable of playing LB in the Brian Flores system. Cashman just turned 30 years old in May and has been a key piece of the defense since signing with the Vikings in 2024. Wilson is a little older, turning 32 in September, but played well last season. Originally brought back for depth, he ended up starting 16 games and was re-signed this offseason to see if he can replicate his results. Behind the two veterans are two young and athletic players, Ivan Pace Jr. and rookie Jake Golday.

Cause for concern: Since taking Anthony Barr in the first round of the 2014 draft and Eric Kendricks in the second round of the 2015 draft, the Vikings have had zero luck finding solid players at the LB position. From 2016-2025, the Vikings have drafted Kentrell Brothers, Ben Gedeon, Elijah Lee, Devante Downs, Cameron Smith, Troy Dye, Chazz Surratt, Brian Asamoah, and Kobe King. Nine players in 10 drafts, which produced one decent depth piece. Ivan Pace Jr. was an undrafted player who looked like he might be a diamond in the rough but has severely fallen off and will need to fight for a roster spot in training camp.

While I have faith in Brian Flores, I don't have faith in the Vikings' ability to draft linebackers. Will rookie Jake Golday be the solution at linebacker? Will Blake Cashman be able to stay healthy, a feat he's been unable to achieve during his seven-year career? Will Eric Wilson prove last year wasn't just a flash in the pan?

Another cause for concern is the fact that rookie Jake Golday has repeatedly been compared to Andrew Van Ginkel. Don't get me wrong; AVG is a heck of a player, and if the comparison turns out to be true, that's good news for Golday. The issue here is that Van Ginkel plays outside linebacker. If Golday was drafted to be more of a pass rusher than an inside LB, that means the only real backup would be Ivan Pace Jr., which is less than ideal.

The Vikings did recently sign former Pro Bowler Jamal Adams, the former Seahawks safety who has evolved into more of an inside linebacker. However, since 2021, Adams has fallen far, and the Vikings will be his fourth team in two years, so there's no guarantee he even makes the roster.

Potential upgrades: Luckily for the Vikings, there are a ton of starting-caliber players available at the linebacker position. Bobby Okereke, Logan Wilson, Kenneth Murray, and Devin Bush are just a few of the available free agents the Vikings could call on if they feel like they need to bring in another linebacker.

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"Connection is the answer"

The human race has never been more connected to one another. We can reach family, friends and strangers across the world in mere seconds. Despite this alleged connectedness, loneliness is everywhere. The U.S. Surgeon General referred to loneliness as an epidemic that is literally killing us, stating that lacking social connection can increase the risk for premature death as much as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day. We all know smoking is dangerous, so why do we ignore the danger of loneliness? Ignoring it won't make it go away.



Leah Hendrickson CSW-PIP, QMHP

Human connection is crucial to our survival, and it isn't something technology can manufacture for us. Connection allows us to feel seen, heard, and valued. Most importantly, it allows us to feel like we belong. Belonging is a foundational, biological need. We are social creatures who need one another to survive. For early humans, being in a group increased the odds of survival. Rejection meant isolation which, at that time, meant death. No wonder it physically hurts to be rejected or lonely! Our brain is desperately alerting us that we are in danger. We need to start paying attention and stop trying to override the signal.

As a health professional, I have yet to come across a single person who doesn't feel lonely. Many of us do nothing about it due to fear of rejection, fear of judgment, and a lack of confidence in how to connect with others. So what do we do? First, we need to remind ourselves that we all deserve to belong and to love and be loved. We all have value and no one can take that from us.

To connect and feel we belong, we need to put ourselves out there. Yes, it's scary and we won't always be successful but you try anyway. And you try again. Finding common ground and being willing to listen is vital. Listening doesn't mean being in agreement; it means recognizing and respecting another person's human experience, allowing them to feel seen and heard.

To feel seen and heard yourself, you'll need to be a little vulnerable. This is often where people stop. Vulnerability feels like risk, and it is. But it's a necessary one. Sharing about yourself appropriately helps build trust, and trust is the foundation of any relationship. Start small. You don't need to bare your soul to a stranger. Tell someone what you're actually enjoying lately, admit when you're having a hard week, or simply say "I miss you." These small acts of openness signal to another person that you're real, approachable, and wanting to connect. More often than not, they'll reciprocate.

We also need to be present. This is tough when the world is full of stimuli competing for our attention. We must sit with the temporary discomfort of presence in order to rid ourselves of the chronic discomfort of loneliness. Set aside your device, ask someone about their day, and be curious. Share a meal, go for a walk, play cards, or simply sit with another human being. Take the risk of connection. We already know where loneliness leads.

Leah Hendrickson CSW-PIP, QMHP currently works as an outpatient mental health therapist in Brookings, SD. Leah Hendrickson is passionate about helping others live healthier, happier, and more resilient lives. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Tik Tok. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB, YouTube and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB, Sundays at 6am and 1pm).

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2026 South Dakota American Legion State Class "B" Sr. Baseball Tournament

Friday - July 31, 2026

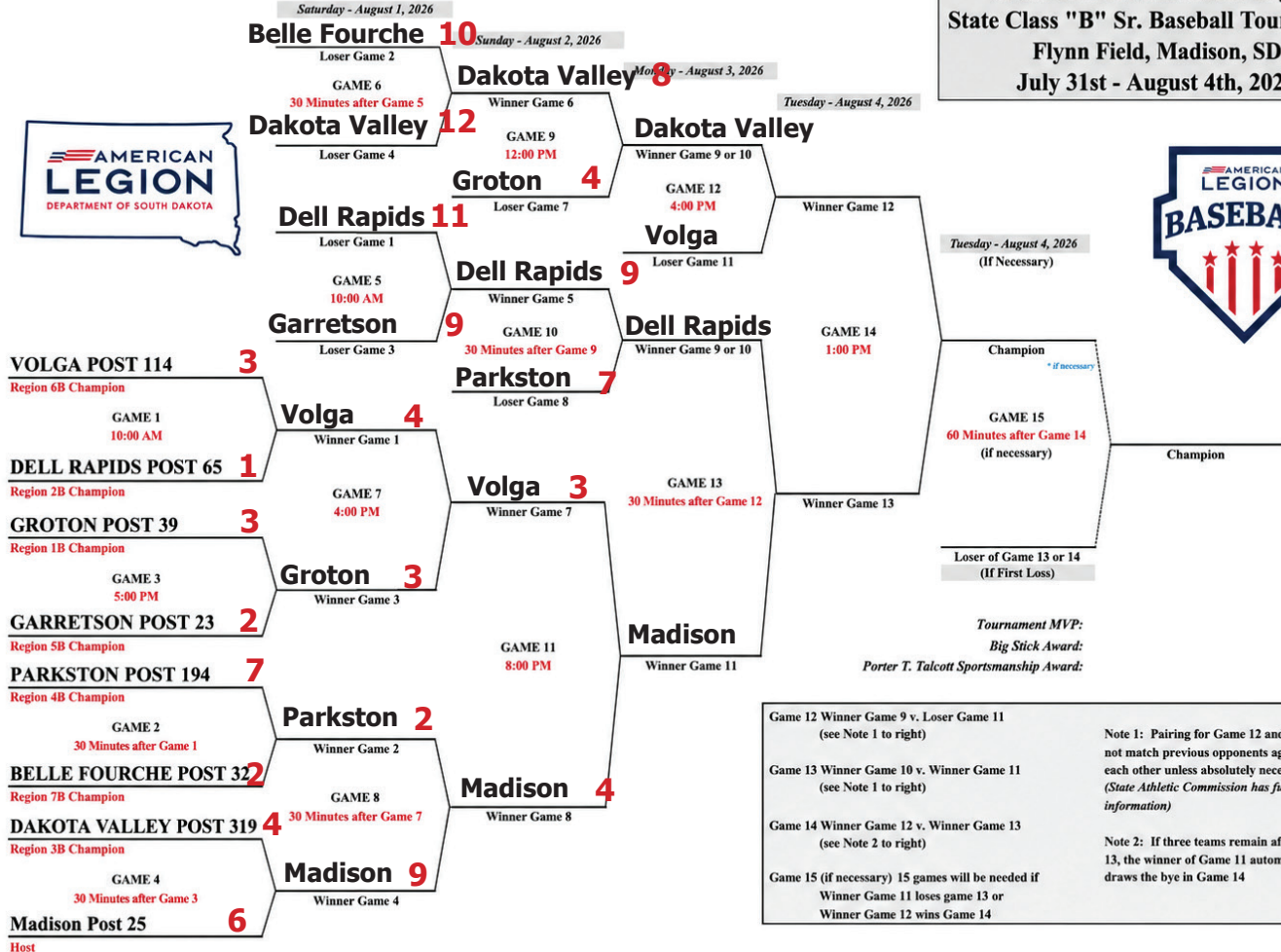
Saturday - August 1, 2026

Sunday - August 2, 2026

Monday - August 3, 2026

Tuesday - August 4, 2026

South Dakota American Legion
State Class "B" Sr. Baseball Tournament
Flynn Field, Madison, SD
July 31st - August 4th, 2026






Walking Taco and a drink

Free Will Donation

Proceeds go to Groton's Angel Tree

15 N Main, St. #103

Groton Daily Independent

Suggested Donation: \$5

Family Fun Fest -Thursday, Aug. 6 ~ 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

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Groton's season ends with loss to Dakota Valley

MADISON — Groton Post 39's run at the State B American Legion Senior Legion Tournament came to an end Sunday with an 8-4 loss to Dakota Valley.

The defeat was Groton's second of the double-elimination tournament, ending the team's season.

Dakota Valley took control early, scoring three runs in the bottom of the first inning. Grady Ramos opened the scoring with a solo home run to right field before bases-loaded walks to Jack Jones and Will Schnabel pushed the lead to 3-0.

Groton got one run back in the third inning. Alex Abeln singled, Carter Simon followed with a base hit and Gavin Englund delivered an RBI single to center field.

Dakota Valley answered with three runs in the bottom half of the inning. Jones drew another bases-loaded walk before Jackson Shoulders doubled to center field, driving in two runs and extending the Panthers' advantage to 6-1.

Groton scored in the fourth when Braeden Fliehs reached on an error and later crossed the plate on a balk, cutting the deficit to 6-2.

TC Schuster kept Groton within striking distance after entering in relief during the third inning. Schuster allowed four hits and two runs, one earned, over four innings. He struck out four and did not issue a walk.

Dakota Valley added two insurance runs in the sixth. Jake Pick reached on an error, Ramos was hit by a pitch and Noah Graham doubled to center field to bring both runners home.

Groton continued battling in the seventh. Abeln reached on an error and Jordan Schwan followed with a two-run home run to center field, trimming Dakota Valley's lead to 8-4.

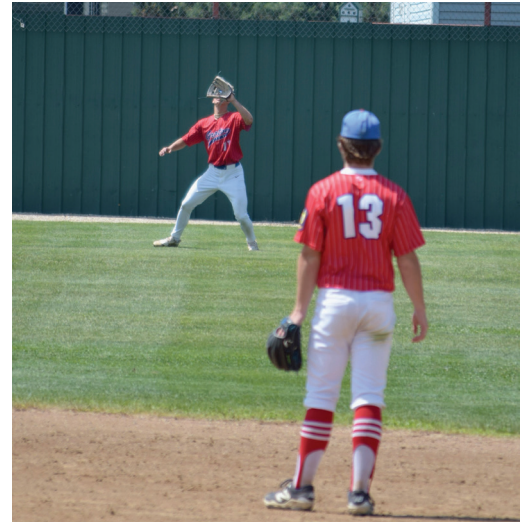
Simon was then hit by a pitch, but Dakota Valley reliever Vincent Hoffman retired the next two batters to close out the victory.

Schwan led Groton at the plate, going 2-for-4 with a double, home run and two RBIs. Abeln scored twice, while Englund collected Groton's other RBI. Karsten Fliehs added a double.

Gavin Englund started on the mound and was charged with the loss. He allowed six runs on eight hits over two innings while striking out three and walking four.

Dakota Valley finished with 12 hits. Sterling Schauff went 3-for-4, while Graham, Shoulders and Jones each drove in two runs. Graham earned the victory after allowing four runs, two earned, on seven hits over 6 1/3 innings. He struck out six and walked one.

Groton finished with seven hits and committed one error. Dakota Valley committed two errors.



Groton Jordan Schwan, center fielder, makes the catch while 1st baseman, Nick Groeblichhoff, looks on. (Photo courtesy Katie Kesterson)



Groton pitcher, Gavin Englund, on the mound. (Photo courtesy Katie Kesterson)

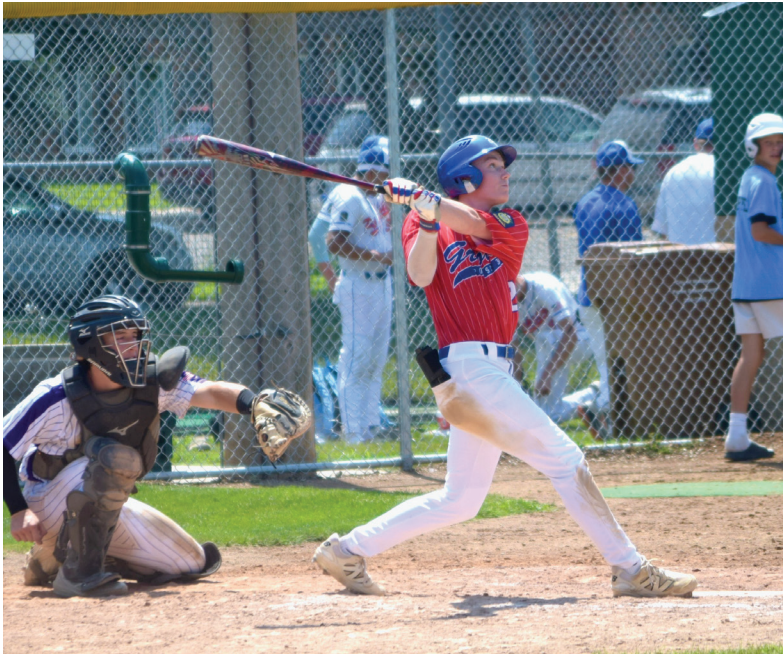
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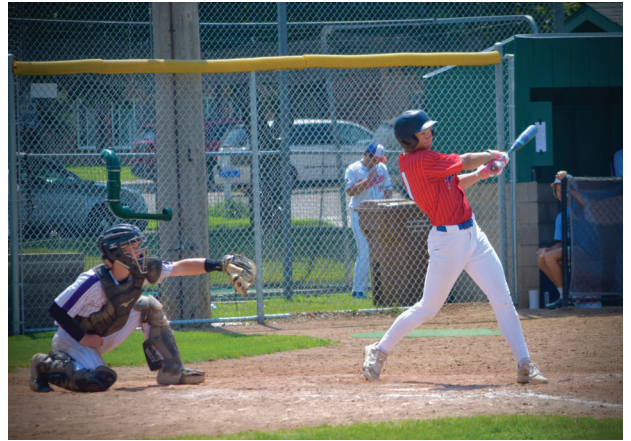
Nick Groebelinghoff for the tag while Alex Abeln, short stop, and Jordan Schwan, Left field, look on.

(Photo courtesy Katie Kesterson)



Groton Lincoln Krause makes contact for a hit!

(Photo courtesy Katie Kesterson)



Groton Jordan Schwann's home run slug! (Photo courtesy Katie Kesterson)



Groton Gavin Englund, First Base, and Nick Groebelinghoff, 2nd base, close in on a pop fly. (Photo courtesy Katie Kesterson)

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Groton Legion
Post 39

4

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
GRTN	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	4	7	1
DKTV	3	0	3	0	0	2	X	8	12	2

8

Dakota Valley
Panthers Legion



Groton Legion Post 39

LINEUP	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
Alex Abeln #5 (3B, SS)	4	2	1	0	0	0
Jordan Schwan #11 (LF)	4	1	2	2	0	1
Carter Simon #4 (1B, 3B)	2	0	1	0	0	0
Gavin Englund #18 (P, 1B)	4	0	1	1	0	2
TC Schuster #3 (SS, P)	4	0	1	0	0	0
Nick Groeblichhoff #13 (2B)	3	0	0	0	0	2
Karsten Fliehs #10 (C)	3	0	1	0	0	2
Braeden Fliehs #19 (RF)	3	1	0	0	0	0
Lincoln Krause #2 (CF)	2	0	0	0	1	0
TEAM	29	4	7	3	1	7

2B: Jordan Schwan, Karsten Fliehs
HR: Jordan Schwan
TB: Jordan Schwan 6, Karsten Fliehs 2, Alex Abeln 1, Carter Simon 1, Gavin Englund 1, TC Schuster 1
HBP: Carter Simon 2
E: Alex Abeln

PITCHING	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Gavin Englund #18 (L)	2.0	8	6	6	4	3
TC Schuster #3	4.0	4	2	1	0	4
TEAM	6.0	12	8	7	4	7

WP: Gavin Englund
HBP: TC Schuster
Pitches-Strikes: Gavin Englund 73-35, TC Schuster 65-41
Batters Faced: TC Schuster 18, Gavin Englund 16

Dakota Valley Panthers Legion

LINEUP	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
Jake Pick #6 (SS)	4	1	1	0	0	2
Grady Ramos #22 (CF)	3	2	2	1	0	1
Noah Graham #16 (P, 3B)	4	0	2	2	0	0
Jack Wiese #84 (C)	4	0	2	0	0	0
Sterling Schauff #8 (1B)	4	1	3	0	0	0
Vincent Hoffman #42 (3B, P)	3	1	0	0	1	2
Jack Jones #4 (2B)	2	0	1	2	2	0
Will Schnabel #36 (RF)	2	0	0	1	1	1
Jackson Shoulders #3 (LF)	3	0	1	2	0	1
TEAM	29	8	12	8	4	7

2B: Jack Jones, Jack Wiese, Jackson Shoulders, Noah Graham
HR: Grady Ramos
TB: Grady Ramos 5, Jack Wiese 3, Noah Graham 3, Sterling Schauff 3, Jack Jones 2, Jackson Shoulders 2, Jake Pick 1
HBP: Grady Ramos
CS: Jake Pick
E: Jake Pick 2

PITCHING	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Noah Graham #16 (W)	6.1	7	4	2	1	6
Vincent Hoffman #42	0.2	0	0	0	0	1
TEAM	7.0	7	4	2	1	7

WP: Noah Graham
HBP: Noah Graham, Vincent Hoffman
Pitches-Strikes: Noah Graham 105-74, Vincent Hoffman 5-4
Batters Faced: Noah Graham 29, Vincent Hoffman 3

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EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: What are some innovative ways researchers are removing microplastics from drinking water?

-- Bill J., Chicago, IL

As concern over microplastics grows, so do efforts to avoid consuming them. Drinking water is a primary entry point for microplastic accumulation in our bodies. While we trust municipal waste water treatment plants to remove countless other contaminants, their ability to remove these plastics varies. A study by Ohio State University, led by Dr. John Lenhart and Megan Jamison, found that two-thirds of microplastics in raw and treated samples were smaller than one micrometer.

Jamison noted, "We're seeing a much higher concentration of plastics in terms of particle count because we're seeing a lot of those nanoplastics that have been unreported in other studies."



Given the uncertainties around current waste water treatment's efficacy for microplastics, scientists are developing novel removal methods. Credit:

Pexels.com.

Given the uncertainties around current waste water treatment's efficacy for microplastics, scientists are developing novel removal methods. One approach uses polymers originating from okra pods and fenugreek seeds, which stick to microplastics, clumping them together for easier removal. This also presents a safer, biodegradable alternative to the current use of synthetic wastewater treatment polymers.

Researchers at the University of Missouri have engineered a strain of algae that produces limonene, the oil best known for giving oranges their scent. It alters the algae's surface, making it water repellent. When introduced to contaminated water, microplastics, which are also water repellent, adhere to the algae and can be removed. The creator of this algae, Susie Dai, aims to use this method to not only clean water, but also recycle the microplastics collected into safer, bioplastic materials. Elsewhere, Princeton Engineering has discovered a way to use egg protein to create an aerogel capable of removing microplastics with 99 percent efficiency. While scaling this aerogel is a challenge, Sehmus Ozden, a postdoctoral research associate, emphasizes the product's potential. "Activated carbon is one of the cheapest materials used for water purification," she says. "We compared our results with activated carbon, and it's much better."

While awaiting these innovations, there are ways to reduce microplastic consumption. Boiling water before filtering it creates limescale, which traps microplastics that at-home filters can easily remove. This works best with hard water, but even with soft tap water, boiling can remove about 25 percent of microplastics. Also, avoiding bottled water is an easy way to reduce your microplastic intake, as it is linked to higher microplastic concentrations than tap water. Finally, addressing the source of pollution is essential to the success of the global fight against microplastics. Microfibers from polyester clothing are a significant contributor to water contamination. Switching to natural fabric alternatives can reduce the microplastics entering our waterways in tandem with efforts to filter them from our drinking supply.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

'I have no reason to quit': South Dakota EMTs still lending a hand in their 80s

Ambulance providers appreciate longtime volunteers while struggling to find young recruits

BY MEGHAN O'BRIEN

When he first earned his emergency medical technician certification almost three decades ago, Gerald Frame didn't expect to still be a volunteer EMT at age 83.

He's also still running an auto mechanic shop.

"Who knew?" he said. "That's my life. My world is pretty small — it's the ambulance and it's the customers that I do repairs for."

South Dakota's emergency medical services workforce is aging, according to data gathered by the state Department of Health. The average age of an EMS provider in the state is 51 years old. More than 30 providers are in their 70s, and two of the oldest are 83: Frame and Jim Wallace, who both volunteer in western South Dakota.

Frame volunteers in the small town of Whitewood, where his mechanic shop is located and where the ambulance service is affiliated with the one in Spearfish.

Frame's journey in emergency medical services started in the 1990s when he heard about an EMT class in Whitewood.

"And I thought, 'what the heck?'" he said.

More than a decade ago, Frame had a heart attack. It was the executive director of the Spearfish Ambulance Service, Brian Hambek, who recognized the symptoms.

"So, for this last 11 years or so, I'm paying it back," Frame said. "I got some help when I needed it, I like to help people, so in a way, it's kind of paying back for my heart, him catching my heart attack."

Hambek is glad to have him.

"Gerald is 83, but he's spry as a billy goat, and I love him to death," Hambek said. "He'll do anything for his community in Whitewood. He just will."

These days, Frame mostly drives the ambulance, stocks it with supplies and does what he can to make patients feel safe and heard in an emergency, said Andy Binder, operations director for the Spearfish Ambulance Service.

"He's found ways to continue doing what he can do," Binder said. "Maybe he doesn't get to go carry the patient out of the ditch, but that doesn't mean that he can't drive the truck perfectly safe. It doesn't mean he can't do a good assessment and do vitals."

Frame has no plans to stop.

"I have no reason to quit," he said. "If I can continue to do it, I'll continue to do this."

Staying involved as a trainer

An hour southeast of Spearfish, 83-year-old Jim Wallace teaches scuba diving classes at his shop in Rapid City. He also teaches EMT courses in Spearfish and volunteers for the Spearfish Ambulance Service when he can.

"I'm in it just to keep my certifications up and better my knowledge, because everything changes constantly," Wallace said. "I'm constantly learning, and that's what I love."

Wallace first earned an EMT certification in the 1970s as a member of the U.S. Coast Guard. He served

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as a volunteer EMT in Clark, near Watertown in northeast South Dakota, after he retired. He and his wife moved to Rapid City 12 years ago.

After taking a refresher course with Hambek, Wallace started volunteering with Spearfish while he and his wife worked on moving west. He'd travel across the state — nearly 350 miles — to Spearfish on a Monday and stay all week before returning home to Clark, with a few weeks off in between.

"That's how much I like being a paramedic," Wallace said. "I'll keep on doing it until I'm pushing daisies up."

While running a dive shop, Wallace sometimes struggles to find time for volunteering in the field. But he makes sure his presence is there in the classroom, teaching new EMTs and seasoned veterans.

"He does all of my EMT education through here. That's a way of him being a paramedic," Hambek said. "He can help out and help train new people in this profession."

Navigating challenges in rural areas

Black Hills State University is in Spearfish, and some college students take Wallace's classes, whether it's because they're merely interested in getting their certification or because they need it for ski patrol or Forest Service jobs in the Black Hills, Hambek said.

"They'll stick around for two, three years, until they graduate college, and then they're gone," Hambek said. "But at least I have them for a couple years."

The flight of younger residents from rural areas is part of the reason for South Dakota's aging emergency medical services workforce. The remaining people in rural areas might not have enough time to commit to coursework.

Some services pay their staff, but for some people, the pay is not worth the demanding aspects of the job.

If rural services don't recruit more young providers, Hambek said, they're at risk of closing their doors once providers retire or physically cannot provide care any longer. That means longer wait times for people to get help in an emergency situation.

"So it's a never-ending circle downward, which is sad," Hambek said.

Hambek's Spearfish ambulance crew listens in to Whitewood's radio, and sends backup if the crew needs it. The Spearfish service responds to calls in a 600-square-mile area, sometimes lending a hand to neighboring communities like St. Onge and Belle Fouché, along with Whitewood.

"If you're a small town with only a handful of patients, you can't pay a bunch of staff, but if you have enough calls that people can't volunteer, then how do you cover that?" Binder said. "You end up with the guys that have been around forever, that stay around and keep going because they want to help their neighbors out."

Paramedics usually leave that position after less than a decade, Hambek said, usually to move on to different healthcare professions.

Less than 25% of the state's ambulance services rely solely on volunteers, according to the state Department of Health. Others pay for part-time help. In Whitewood, for example, part-time EMTs get paid about \$20 per hour, just for the time that it takes to respond to a call. In Spearfish, where call volumes are much higher, EMTs get paid for the entire time they're on call, at about \$15 per hour.

Wages vary across the state, Hambek said, depending on call volumes and staffing levels.

To get the money for wages and salaries, services say they need higher reimbursement rates from insurance companies and Medicaid. In smaller communities, providers might only respond to about 100 calls a year — less than half of what Spearfish does in a month, Hambek said.

"That means there's income coming into the service, that I can afford to pay people to do the job," he said of the Spearfish service. "But these smaller communities, they just don't have the resources, both manpower and financial. And they're tied. They're linked together."

Lawmakers seeking solutions

An 11-member legislative task force is spending time this summer learning more about how to support and fund local emergency medical services.

At its first meeting in June, healthcare leaders in the state told lawmakers they're looking at regionaliza-

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tion as a possible solution to the shrinking EMS workforce, creating “workforce pools” so EMS leaders can rely on other services from neighboring areas when needed.

Bridget Hathaway, of the Jones County Ambulance, compared the approach to travel nursing. It could help services like Jones County “who are on the smaller side and might just need somebody for a couple days once in a while,” like during the summertime, she said, when communities often have more outdoor activities and celebrations.

In smaller communities with older providers, state EMS Director Marty Link said, a solution might require “having the tough conversation to say, is it sustainable?”

“That might mean that ambulance service does dissolve,” Link said. “And that might mean they can still provide service to their community, but maybe more as a first response unit.”

That would involve coordination with bigger communities to step in if a patient needs transportation to a hospital.

Lawmakers on the task force have until November to provide proposals that could be introduced as bills in next year’s legislative session, which begins in January. The task force’s second meeting is scheduled for Aug. 24.

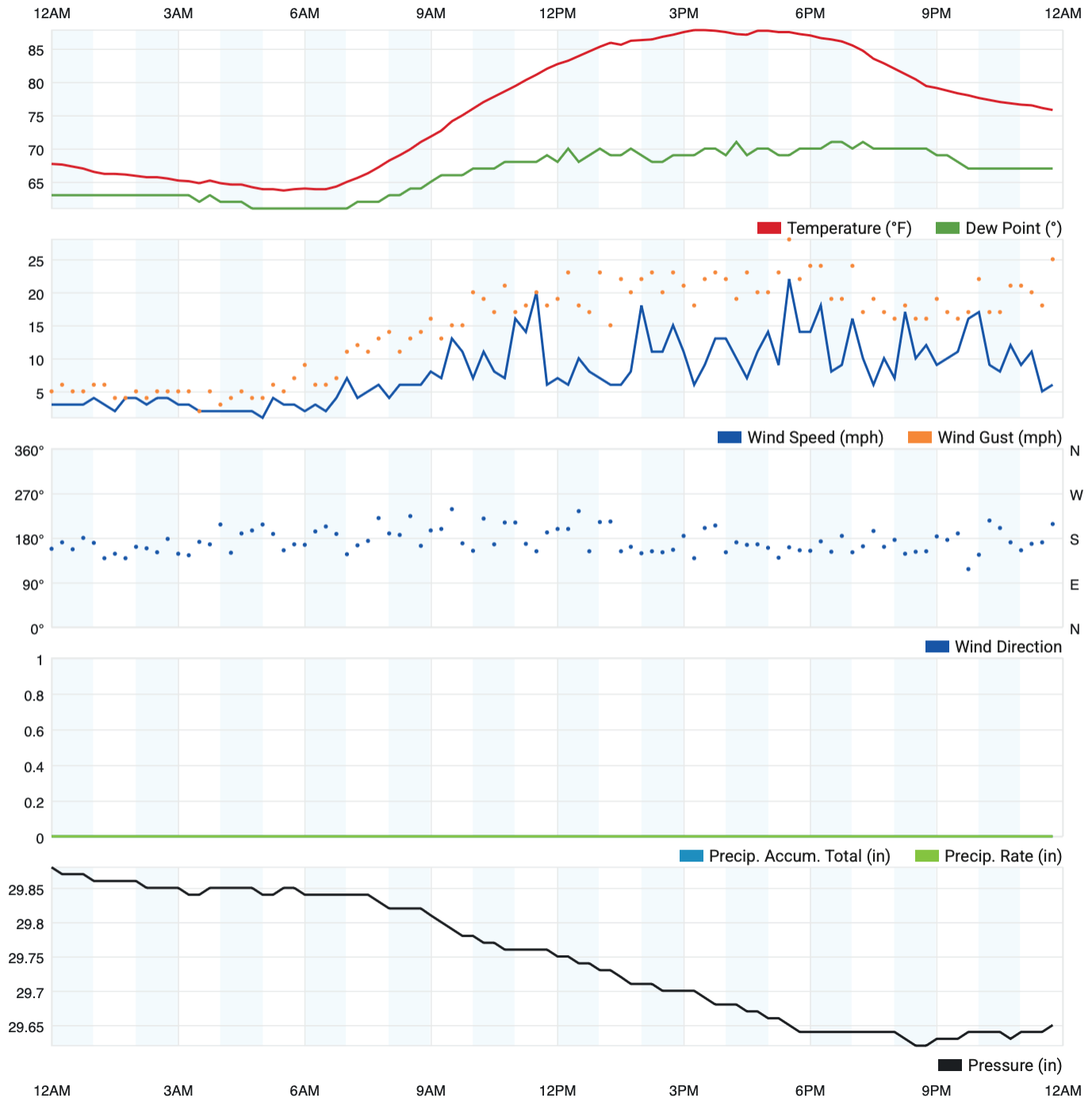
Meghan O’Brien is the audio reporter for South Dakota Searchlight where she covers the state government and its impact on South Dakotans. She’s previously reported in Nebraska with a focus on health care and rural communities across the state.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 2, 2026



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Monday

Monday Night

Tuesday

Tuesday Night

Wednesday



High: 89 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms then
Partly Sunny



Low: 55 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms and
Breezy then
Patchy Smoke



High: 77 °F

Sunny



Low: 51 °F

Mostly Clear



High: 82 °F

Mostly Sunny



Severe Weather Risk Overview

August 3, 2026
2:55 AM

Marginal to Slight Risk

Timing/Location

- The greatest severe threat will mainly be over portions of northeast SD and west central MN late this afternoon into the evening hours.

Primary Threats

 for the **YELLOW** areas

Tornado Potential

Very Low Low Medium High

Max Hail Size

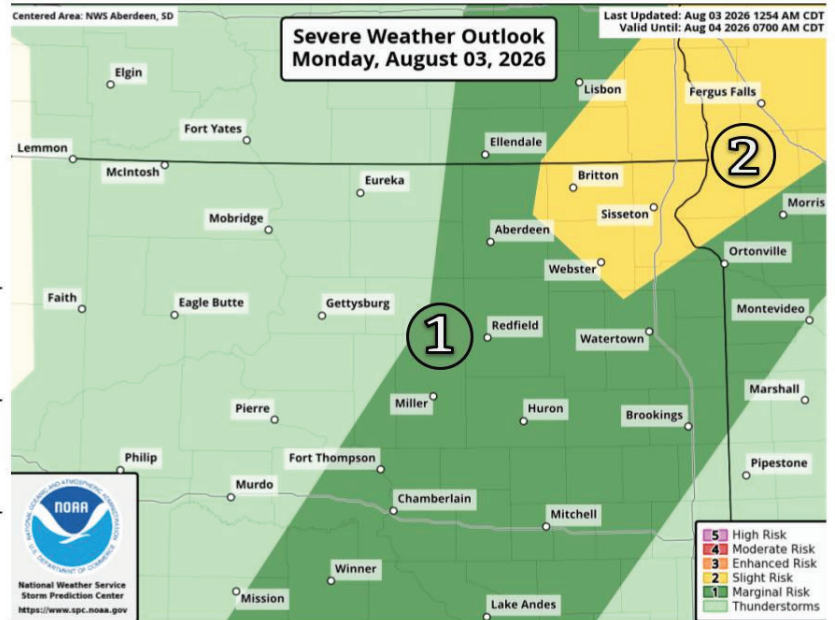
Dimes Quarters Golfball Baseball

Max Wind Speed

< 60 mph 60-70 mph 70-80 mph > 80mph

Heavy Rain/Flooding Potential

Very Low Low Medium High



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A cold front moving through the area today will bring a chance for showers and thunderstorms to eastern portions of the region later this afternoon into the evening hours. A Marginal to Slight risk for severe storms exists over northeastern SD into west central MN. The main threats would be hail up to around quarter size and wind gusts from 60 to 70 mph.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 88 °F at 3:24 PM

Low Temp: 64 °F at 5:32 AM

Wind: 28 mph at 5:30 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 107 in 1947

Record Low: 39 in 1971

Average High: 85

Average Low: 59

Average Precip in Aug.: 0.22

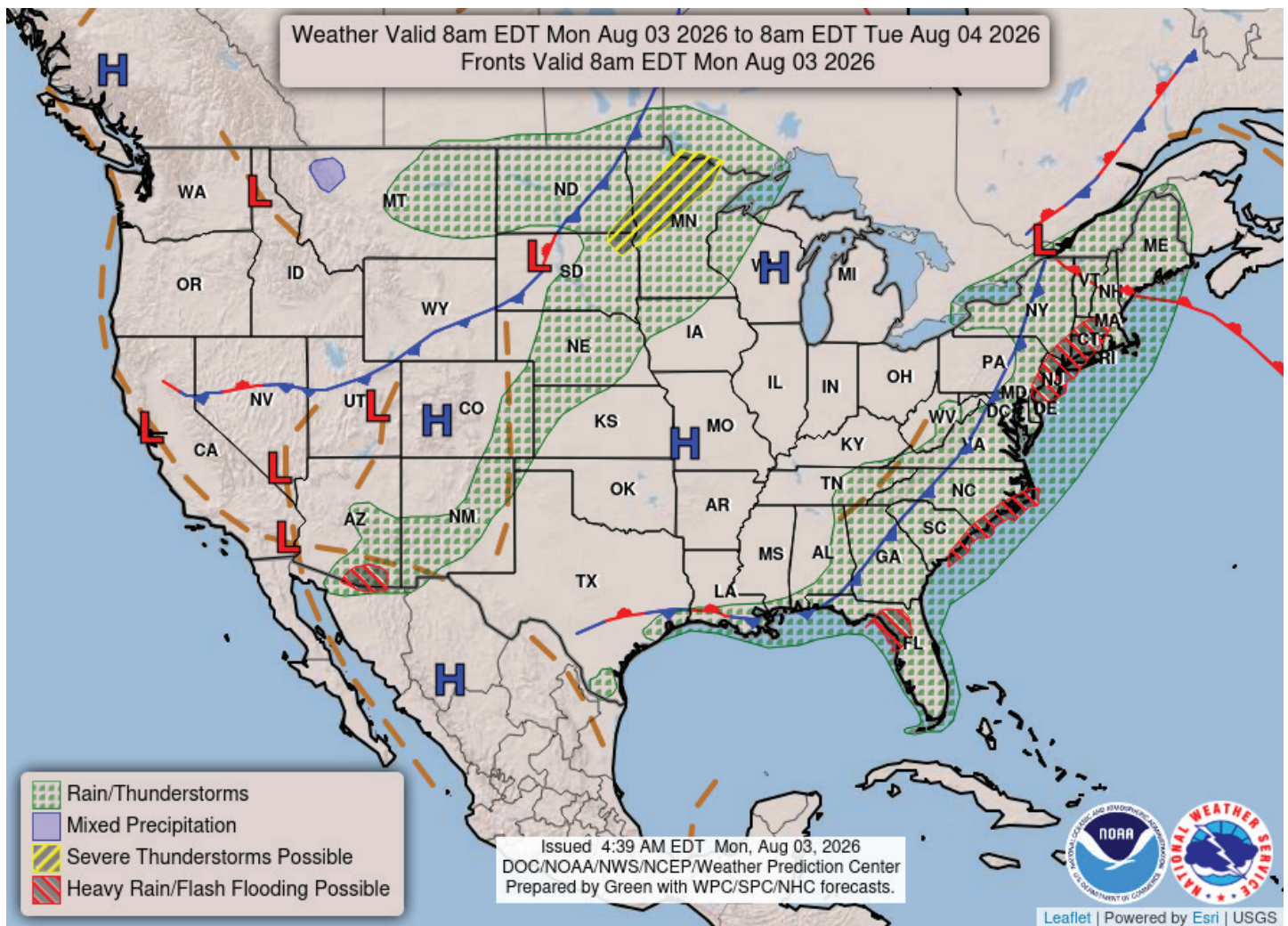
Precip to date in Aug.: 9.79

Average Precip to date: 14.32

Precip Year to Date: 19.26

Sunset Tonight: 8:58 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:19 am



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Today in Weather History

August 3, 1984: During the morning hours, estimated four to six inches of rain fell from west of Garden City in Clark County to north of Henry in Codington County. Low lying areas were flooded, and a potato field west of Garden City was washed out.

August 3, 1989: Strong thunderstorm winds gusted to 70 mph, driving golf ball size hail through most the windows on the west side of buildings in Amherst, Marshall County. Corn crops were stripped off their leaves with an estimated 1800 acres being severely damaged.

August 3, 1996: High winds up to 90 mph uprooted and damaged many trees in Mobridge. The roofs of two buildings were blown off while other roofs received some damage. Windows were broken out in eight vehicles at the South Dakota Winds up to 90 mph also caused damage in Herreid where doors on a concrete elevator were blown out.

August 3, 2008: Severe thunderstorms moved across north-central South Dakota during the early morning hours bringing large hail and damaging thunderstorm winds to the area. Isabel, Timber Lake, and Selby were among the hardest hit locations. Isabel in Dewey County saw eighty mph winds which damaged or downed several trees, damaged carnival equipment, destroyed some sheds, and rolled some large hay bales. High winds up to 80 mph severely damaged a barn, downed some power poles along with many trees and branches in and around Timber Lake. Also, several vehicles and many acres of crops were damaged by the hail and high winds. The Little Moreau Elk Lodge roof was destroyed, and some windows were broken. One-hundred mph winds downed six power poles and caused considerable damage to sunflowers, corn, wheat, and beans in and around Selby in Walworth County. Also, an empty grain bin was blown over and damaged. Numerous trees were snapped off. The coop seed building in Selby sustained considerable damage with many trees uprooted or damaged throughout town.

August 3, 2009: A cold front moving southeast across the area brought many severe thunderstorms to parts of central and northeast South Dakota. Large hail up to golf ball size along with wind gusts nearing 80 mph occurred across the area. Brown, Hyde, Lyman, and Gregory Counties were among the hardest hit locations. Hail and sixty mph winds significantly damaged many acres of soybeans and corn near Putney in Brown County. Seventy to 80 mph winds brought down several large trees along with many large tree branches in and around Highmore in Hyde County. The high winds also tipped over a semi, a gravity wagon, and a grain auger along with damaging several fences. There were also power outages in Highmore. Golf ball size hail combined with strong winds broke many windows in the house and dented several vehicles south of Kennebec in Lyman County. The house pet was also injured. Large hail, up to two inches in diameter, fell in a swath a few miles wide from northwestern to south-central Gregory County. The hail broke numerous windows, severely damaged siding and roofs of homes and other buildings, and severely damaged vehicles, while covering the ground in several places. Property damage has been particularly severe in the town of Gregory. Crop damage was also severe along the swath, with corn crops in some areas destroyed to the point of only small stubble left.

1885 — A tornado hit Philadelphia and Camden along its eight mile path. (David Ludlum)

1970: Hurricane Celia was the costliest tropical cyclone in Texas history until Hurricane Alicia in 1983. Hurricane Celia made landfall near Port Aransas as a major Hurricane, Category 3 on the Saffir-Simpson scale with sustained winds of 130 mph.

1987 — A severe thunderstorm moved across Cheyenne, WY, during the mid afternoon. The thunderstorm produced hailstones up to two inches in diameter causing more than 37 million dollars damage. The eastern U.S. sweltered in the heat. A dozen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Paducah KY with a reading of 102 degrees. Beckley WV established an all-time record with an afternoon high of 93 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Thunderstorms developing ahead of a slow moving cold front produced severe weather from the Central High Plains to the Upper Great Lakes Region. Thunderstorms around Fort Collins, CO, produced wind gusts to 74 mph along with marble size hail. Sixteen persons were injured in the storm, most of whom were accidentally locked out of their office building, having evacuated it when the fire alarm went off, apparently triggered by lightning. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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Daily Devotion

Rely on the Source

Every need we have is an invitation to trust God's faithful provision.

- 1 Kings 17:8-16: 8 Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying,
9 "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you."
10 So he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, "Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink."
11 As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand."
12 But she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die."
13 Then Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it first and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son."
14 "For thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain on the face of the earth.'"
15 So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for many days.
16 The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through Elijah.

Yesterday, we saw that God can use ordinary means or remarkable methods to supply our needs. Through the Lord's unusual ways, Elijah had learned to live by faith—for example, the time he'd been fed by ravens. Now God was sending him to Zarephath, to a starving widow with no resources to feed him.

Every financial need is an opportunity to learn to walk by faith, recognizing the Lord as our source. Prosperity can lead to a sense of independence that blinds us to how inadequate we actually are to provide for ourselves. We're totally dependent upon the Father—whether we recognize it or not.

Believing God would provide, Elijah witnessed His miraculous intervention. We may not see the Lord perform a supernatural work in our situation. However, we can be sure that just as God fulfilled His promise to Elijah, He'll likewise be faithful to His Word in our circumstance, supplying "all [our] needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Are you focusing on the Source of your provision or the vehicle by which He provides? The means God uses may change, but His faithfulness endures forever. The Lord is inviting you to trust Him and live in both the adventure and security of a life of faith.

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:
08.02.26

4 28 44 55 56 4

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 1 Mins 21 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.31.26

4 18 26 43 51 4

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$60,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 46 Mins 21 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.01.26

14 17 27 33 36 10

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,300,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 1 Mins 22 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.01.26

6 16 20 30 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 16 Mins 22 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.01.26

10 32 33 54 64 1

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 45 Mins 22 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.01.26

6 17 27 48 50 5

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$748,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 45 Mins 22 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

'Spider-Man: Brand New Day' nets second best North American opening ever with \$355 million

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

"Spider-Man: Brand New Day" made box office history in its first weekend in theaters. The Sony-released superhero movie became the second-biggest North American opening ever with an astonishing \$355 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday. It was just a few million shy of "Avengers: Endgame," which debuted to \$357 million in 2019.

The film also made \$572 million from over 73,500 screens internationally, with China contributing \$121 million alone, adding up to a \$927 million worldwide debut that is second only to "Endgame" (\$1.2 billion).

Tom Holland's run as the comic book webslinger has been a mighty one. "No Way Home," his third stand-alone Spider-Man movie, made over \$1.9 billion worldwide to become the eighth-highest earning movie of all time, not accounting for inflation. It was also the first movie since the beginning of the pandemic to cross the \$1 billion mark.

But the triumph of "Brand New Day" also comes on the heels of another major movie featuring Holland and Zendaya: Christopher Nolan's "The Odyssey," which slid to second place in its third weekend in theaters with \$51 million. Their combined might helped propel the biggest weekend of all time for North American movie theaters, with an estimated \$430 million in total ticket sales, according to Rentrak.

"Spider-Man: Brand New Day" started strong, with a record \$168 million opening day from 4,487 theaters in the U.S. and Canada, besting "Avenger: Endgame's" \$157 million Friday. The studio predicted it would lead to a \$325 million opening weekend, which would still have beaten the second-place record. It takes the place of "Spider-Man: No Way Home" which opened to \$260 million in December 2021. In the realm of best opening weekends in North America, they're followed by "Avengers: Infinity War" (\$257 million in 2018) and "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" (\$247 million in 2015).

Expectations were always high for "Brand New Day," which was directed by Destin Daniel Cretton and cost a reported \$225 million to produce, not including marketing expenses. But there were worries it wouldn't attract the same level of mass audience enthusiasm as its predecessor which integrated past Peter Parker actors Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield into the mix. In reality, interest was higher than ever. "Brand New Day" also received strong reviews from critics and audiences. It currently has a 90% on Rotten Tomatoes; Audiences gave it an "A" CinemaScore and a five-star rating on PostTrak.

Ticket buyers were predominately male (about 61%) and many were on the younger side, with slightly more than half the audience under the age of 25, according to PostTrak exit polls. The biggest group was between the ages of 18 and 24, which made up 36% of the audience; 27% were between the ages of 25 and 34. The box office analytics company EntTelligence estimates that about 24.1 million people attended "Spider-Man: Brand New Day" this weekend.

It's also the biggest ever opening for Sony Pictures.

Tom Rothman, the Chairman and CEO of Sony Pictures Motion Picture Group, praised "the incomparable Tom Holland" in a statement. Rothman famously pushed back the production of the movie to allow Holland to act in "The Odyssey" as well.

Cries about the death of the superhero movie have been looming since "Endgame" with more than a few high-profile flops in the years since, including several from the once-impenetrable Marvel Studios. Still, when they work, they really work, most notably with "No Way Home" and "Deadpool & Wolverine," which made over \$1.3 billion.

Marvel Studios president and 'Spider-Man' producer Kevin Feige said in a statement, "This debut reflects the enduring power of Marvel's characters, and the connection they continue to have with fans around the world — and, as audiences saw, it sets up exciting things to come."

Producer Amy Pascal added that it "reinforces that moviegoers are hungry for stories that are both

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spectacular and deeply human.”

This year has also seen a resurgence of moviegoing from younger audiences, who have made hits out of movies like “Obsession,” “Backrooms” and “The Drama,” which also starred Zendaya.

They’re also helping blockbusters soar, and in a business that is partly propelled by momentum, “Spider-Man” had the benefit of coming after “The Odyssey,” which fell only 43% in its third weekend. “The Odyssey” has now earned \$395.5 million domestically, bringing its global total to \$911.4 million. The film will soon open in South Korea (Aug. 5), China (Aug. 14) and Japan (Sept. 11). Its studio, Universal, also became the first this year to surpass \$4 billion globally thanks in part to “Michael,” which it distributed internationally, and “The Super Mario Galaxy Movie.”

A slew of animated PG-rated holdovers rounded out the top five: “Toy Story 5” was in third place with \$6.3 million, followed by “Minions & Monsters” in fourth and “Moana,” in fifth. And there were bright spots further down the chart as well. In sixth place with \$2 million, “Hadestown: The Musical” surpassed “Hamilton” to become the highest grossing live theater capture release ever with a running total of \$18.2 million.

Paul Dergarabedian, the head of marketplace trends for Rentrak, said the “Spider-Man” effect could help the summer movie season surpass the \$4 billion mark for the first time since the Barbenheimer summer of 2023, and the third-ever billion dollar August.

“This is perhaps the most important summer moviegoing season in the history of the business,” Dergarabedian said. August, he added, “could set up a home stretch of the box office year like no other and one that could push us over that \$10 billion mark.”

Top 10 movies by domestic box office

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak:

1. “Spider-Man: Brand New Day,” \$355 million.
2. “The Odyssey,” \$51 million.
3. “Toy Story 5,” \$6.3 million.
4. “Minions & Monsters,” \$5.8 million.
5. “Moana,” \$5.3 million.
6. “Hadestown: The Musical,” \$2 million.
7. “The Invite,” \$1.2 million.
8. “I Want Your Sex,” \$600,000.
9. “Young Washington,” \$477,727.
10. “Obsession,” \$470,000.

Russian planes fire a salvo of glide bombs at a southern Ukraine city, killing 1 and wounding dozens

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian planes dropped eight powerful glide bombs in a span of 90 minutes on residential districts of the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia, killing one person and wounding dozens of others, regional chief Ivan Fedorov said Monday.

Russia has used glide bombs to smash Ukrainian towns and cities since it invaded its neighbor more than four years ago. The weapons are Soviet-era bombs retrofitted with guidance systems and can carry up to 3,000 kilograms (6,600 pounds) of explosives, leaving huge craters. Ukraine has no effective countermeasures against them.

The Sunday evening onslaught on Zaporizhzhia killed a 71-year-old woman and wounded 31 people, including a 16-year-old girl, as the bombs damaged 22 apartment buildings in four districts of the city, Fedorov said.

Other large-scale damage of civilian areas of Ukraine has resulted from Russian ballistic missiles, and late Sunday President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made yet another urgent plea to other countries to send Ukraine more U.S.-made Patriot air defense systems.

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Only Patriot interceptors can reliably stop ballistic missiles, but they are in short supply due to the Iran war. "The world has Patriot missiles. What matters now is for our partners to make the political decision to provide the necessary packages," Zelenskyy said on social media. "The United States knows what we need. Europe knows what we need. Anti-ballistic missiles must protect people — not sit in stockpiles."

U.S. President Donald Trump last week appeared to back off from his earlier commitment to give Ukraine a license to make Patriots itself. He said Friday that the licensing matter is still under discussion and said he hasn't made a final decision.

Zelenskyy has suggested an alternative to Trump whereby Elon Musk allows Ukraine to use Starlink satellites to target ballistic missile launch sites inside Russia. Officials haven't publicly said whether that is being considered.

Russia attacked Ukraine with 181 long-range strike drones overnight from Sunday to Monday, according to the Ukrainian air force. It said air defenses jammed and intercepted 163 drones, but 14 caused damage at 13 locations.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its forces struck four bulk carriers carrying cargo for the Ukrainian armed forces, including three in waters of the Black Sea and one in the port of Mykolaiv, but provided no further information.

Meanwhile, three people were killed and two were wounded in Kyiv's overnight attack on Ukraine's illegally annexed Crimea, the peninsula's Russian-installed head Sergei Aksyonov said. He gave no further details.

Ukrainian also drones struck another major warehouse belonging to Wildberries, Russia's biggest online shopping company, as part of a campaign that has hit more than a dozen of the retailer's distribution hubs and caused severe disruption to its business.

A Wildberries warehouse in the Vladimir region east of Moscow caught fire in the latest attack, the company said Monday.

Three people were injured, Vladimir Gov. Alexander Avdeyev said.

The Russian Defense Ministry on Monday reported that its air defenses overnight intercepted 131 Ukrainian drones over a number of Russian regions, as well as annexed Crimea and the Black Sea.

Prime minister visits quake-hit southern Japan as cleanup begins in intense heat

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Residents in Japan's quake-hit southwestern prefecture of Kumamoto put out heaps of debris for collection and the prime minister visited as the region baked under intense heat.

The heat and a lack of water supplies have added to the challenges in the severely damaged areas where Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi briefly visited for the first time since a magnitude 7.1 quake hit Kumamoto Prefecture on Japan's southern main island of Kyushu last Tuesday.

Thirty-eight people died during the quake, including one who died of apparent heat stroke while taking shelter in a car in hot weather and one other whose cause of death is still being investigated, prefectural officials said Monday.

Residents put out heaps of debris, broken furniture and damaged appliances for collection, while in the towns of Uki and Hikawa, construction of temporary housing began.

More than 46,000 households remained without water and many also faced fuel shortages as the region suffers sweltering heat, stoking fears of heat-related illness. Japan Meteorological Agency predicted that temperatures would rise close to 40 C (104 F) Monday.

More than 8,500 people remain at crowded emergency shelters, such as converted community centers, school gyms and classrooms, many of which lack air-conditioning. Others are sleeping in cars at town hall parking lots and parks, or outside of their homes.

Experts have long warned that inadequate shelter provision leads to crowded conditions and a lack of sanitation and privacy for people forced to leave their homes following disasters.

Takaichi on Monday visited one of the area's best-equipped shelters, with cardboard beds, partitions and

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air-conditioning, triggering criticisms on social media that her visit distorted reality.

Meanwhile, a company that owned a general store in a collapsed shopping mall acknowledged that it had instructed two employees who were killed in a later explosion to return to the building to put sales proceeds into a safe.

Two executives of Habita, a local general store operator that had a shop inside the collapsed Aeon Mall in the town of Kashima, attended the wake Sunday of one of the two victims, 22-year-old Kurumi Otake, and apologized to her parents for the death.

Company sales manager Goji Yuse acknowledged that the company instructed the two to put sales proceeds into the safe if it was possible.

"I wish someone had stopped her," Otake's tearful mother told them. "My daughter is not coming back."

The mall's operator said it believes the explosion was due to a gas leak and occurred after about 3,000 shoppers had been evacuated to a parking lot following the quake, but some employees remained inside. Rescuers recovered five people and the bodies of seven others from the mall.

The earthquake has left 114 people injured across Kumamoto, authorities said.

Some 700 homes were destroyed, and more than 11,300 buildings were damaged, according to Kumamoto prefecture.

Water-dropping aircraft take off to tackle major Greek wildfire, after 2 killed in crash

By ELENA BECATOROS and THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Five water-dropping planes and another five helicopters took off at first light Monday to help hundreds of firefighters battling a major wildfire west of Athens, Greece, a day after a midair collision between two firefighting helicopters killed two crew members.

The collision laid bare the danger at the most volatile front of Europe's wildfire emergency. Flames bore down deeper into the region of the Greek capital, forcing fresh evacuations in the early hours of Monday. In France, firefighters guarded a still-burning scar four times the size of Paris.

The two crew members — one Greek and one Danish national — died when their helicopter collided with another near the seaside area of Psatha while tackling the fire that started Friday morning. The blaze raged through pine forests and scrubland through the weekend, whipped by gale force winds that often prevented water-dropping planes from operating.

The crew of the second helicopter — a Greek and a British national — were taken to a hospital, where their injuries were reported to be light. Foreign firefighting and helicopter crews are often deployed in Greece to help tackle wildfires during the country's hot, dry summers.

Easing winds raise hopes of halting the advance of the flames

Strong winds were dying down Monday, raising hopes that the nearly 500 firefighters battling the blaze could manage to halt its advance. But authorities warned the broader Athens region of Attica remained at a high risk for wildfires due to a forecast increase in temperatures.

More than 1,000 people have been evacuated from the region, including more than 250 rescued by boats from beaches in the area. Evacuation orders were issued in the early hours of Monday for three more areas, while crews worked to create firebreaks in a forest to help halt the advance of the blaze.

Greece's firefighting department said Sunday the fire apparently began from sparks emitted by a faulty power line transporting electricity from a private wind generator facility to the main electricity network.

Two people were arrested — an electrical engineer responsible for designing and overseeing the power project, and a contractor involved in constructing the electricity transmission network. Both face felony arson charges, while authorities had also issued an arrest warrant for the owner of the wind generator company.

Greece has devastating wildfires every summer, with hot, dry conditions and frequently strong winds making it easy for small sparks to trigger major blazes. Measures to limit fire risks, such as bans on barbecues and certain outdoor work such as welding and use of electrical power saws are often ignored. The

vast majority of the hundreds of wildfires the country has each year are caused by negligence.

But some fires are deliberately set. On Sunday, authorities said one man was arrested on Kefalonia on suspicion of having started a fire that spread quickly in the southeastern part of the island, triggering the evacuation of nearby villages.

Major blaze in France contained, but hotspots remain

Farther west, France's largest wildfire remained held within its perimeter on Sunday night after forcing 224,000 people to flee in what may have been the country's largest civilian evacuation outside wartime.

Hot spots still burned within a 420-square-kilometer (162-square-mile) scar, thousands remained unable to return home, and nearly 3,000 firefighters were deployed against the Gironde megafire and a second blaze in Provence.

Together, fires in France and Spain have driven roughly a third of a million people from homes and vacation sites, emptied communities at the height of the European summer and stretched emergency services across simultaneous disasters.

Myanmar's detained former leader Aung San Suu Kyi has rare meeting with International Red Cross

BANGKOK (AP) — Myanmar's detained former leader Aung San Suu Kyi met with the International Committee of the Red Cross' representative in the capital on Monday, the military-backed government said, a rare moment of contact with the outside world for the Nobel laureate who has been held out of public view since the military seized power in 2021.

Two photographs published with the announcement showed Suu Kyi shaking hands with Arnaud de Baecque, the ICRC's representative to Myanmar, and meeting with him in a wood-paneled room.

The Presidential Press and Information Bureau, which released the photographs, said the meeting was held Monday morning but did not disclose the location of the meeting or provide details about what was discussed.

The ICRC confirmed in a statement on Monday that one of its delegates visited Suu Kyi under its standards and procedures for visiting people deprived of liberty, and spoke with her in private, but it did not disclose details of the discussion.

The organization said it continues to engage with all relevant actors to maintain and expand its access to places of detention in Myanmar.

Two other photographs showed Suu Kyi cutting a pink birthday cake bearing the inscription, "Happy Birthday Aunty Suu," suggesting they may have been taken during a celebration for her 81st birthday in June.

In the photos, Suu Kyi appeared relaxed and was smiling. She did not show any obvious signs of ill health, although her physical condition could not be independently assessed from the images.

The release came as calls are growing from other countries, including Myanmar's fellow members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, for access to or engagement with Suu Kyi as part of efforts to resolve the country's political crisis.

Kim Aris, her younger son living in London, and Myanmar democracy activists has been waging an online campaign named to demand evidence his mother is alive and well.

In a statement sent to the AP, Aris welcomed the reported ICRC visit, saying it could mark the first positive development concerning his mother in more than five years.

"This may be a first step, but it must not be the last," Aris said.

He thanked governments, the international community and supporters for standing with his family and backing his campaign to seek proof of his mother's well-being, while stressing that he had not yet received independent confirmation of her condition.

He said he hoped the visit would lead to direct family contact and her eventual release together with all political prisoners.

Suu Kyi was detained Feb. 1, 2021, when the army seized power from her elected government. She has

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not been seen publicly since then, and the last official photo of her released was in April, when she was moved from prison to house arrest and her sentence was reduced as part of a prisoner amnesty for a Buddhist holiday.

The country's military leaders, who have faced sanctions and widespread international isolation since seizing power in 2021, have sought to project a return to normalcy by holding a 2025 election and increased engagement with regional neighbors.

However, critics say the transition to a nominally elected government largely composed of former generals and holdovers from the previous military-led government has done little to change the military's grip on power.

Nay Phone Latt, a spokesperson for the opposition National Unity Government, said the ICRC's meeting with Suu Kyi shouldn't be taken as a real move to address human rights or democracy issues.

"Since, from the outset, a country's leader was wrongfully arrested and imprisoned by finding faults where there were none, she must be released without any conditions," he said.

World stocks are mixed as yen jumps against the dollar, while oil prices slip

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — World shares were mixed Monday after the U.S. and Japan confirmed they had acted to prop up the value of the Japanese yen against the U.S. dollar.

Oil prices fell sharply, meanwhile, after U.S. President Donald Trump said he would order U.S. forces to refrain from attacks against Iran, claiming a deal to end the fighting in the Middle East was close. Just a day earlier, the president had said he was "losing faith" in the negotiations with Iran, warning that the U.S. military "will be hitting them very hard."

The dollar dipped to near 155.20 yen after Trump and Japanese officials confirmed they had intervened last week to curb the U.S. currency's rise to 40-year highs against the yen. Last week it was trading near 164 yen.

By late Monday in Tokyo, a dollar bought 156.68 yen.

A weak yen helps to boost the profits of Japanese companies with big operations overseas, increasing their value in yen terms. It also has drawn millions of foreign tourists who have enjoyed their strong purchasing power in Japan.

But a cheap currency also weakens Japan's purchasing power overall, pushing up costs for the imports of oil and other essential goods.

The dollar's value has surged as it serves as a safe haven for investors in times of uncertainty, such as during war. Trump lauded the dollar's strength in comments to reporters, but a weaker dollar can help make U.S. exports more competitive.

The U.S. Treasury bought yen through the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, analysts said, to help boost its value.

It's a strong signal, said Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management.

"Washington is no longer merely giving Tokyo permission to defend the yen. It is prepared to stand on the same side of the trade," he said in a commentary.

The euro fell to \$1.1527 from \$1.1549.

In European markets, Germany's DAX gained 1.3% to 25,963.51, while the CAC 40 in Paris climbed 1% to 8,596.56. Britain's FTSE 100 was nearly unchanged, at 10,861.95.

The future for the S&P 500 was up 0.5% and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 0.6%.

In Asian trading, Japan's Nikkei 225 index lost 0.9% to 63,754.90, while the Kospi in South Korea dropped 5.1% to 6,257.45.

The Kospi soared 17.9% on Friday for its best day in history after losing even more of its value earlier in the week. The index is dominated by two tech giants, Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix, both of whose shares gained more than 25% on Friday. Shares in both companies fell 8.8% on Monday.

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Hong Kong's Hang Seng index picked up 0.5% to 26,009.40 and the Shanghai Composite index lost 0.6% to 3,809.66.

In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 gained 0.2% to 8,996.90.

Taiwan's Taiex gained 0.6%, while the Sensex in India advanced 0.8%.

The lull in fighting in the Middle East helped pull Brent crude, the international standard, 4.7% lower to \$83.92 per barrel. U.S. benchmark crude lost 5.6% to \$79.89 per barrel.

On Friday, U.S. stocks rose to finish a wild July for Wall Street.

The S&P 500 climbed 0.7% and the Dow industrials added 0.5%. The Nasdaq composite rallied 1%.

Markets have lurched up and down as oil prices shot higher because of the war with Iran. Growing worries over whether Big Tech's massive investments in artificial-intelligence technology will translate into profits and whether chipmaker stocks have soared too high in the euphoria around AI have also buffeted share prices.

Friday's gains sent the S&P 500 to its first winning week in three.

Amazon led the market with a leap of 15.3% after reporting much stronger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected. Its profit more than tripled from a year earlier, thanks in part to an acceleration of growth in its cloud computing business.

Fires near Spokane, Washington, have burned 600 structures and forced 60,000 evacuations

By JOHN HANNA Associated Press

Wildfires in eastern Washington state forced the evacuation of 60,000 people in the Spokane area while destroying at least 600 homes, businesses and other structures, authorities said Sunday.

The fires in and around Spokane, the state's second largest city, burned about 8.2 square miles (about 21 square kilometers) over the weekend and were among dozens of wildfires across the Western U.S. that stretched the ability of federal, state and local agencies to fight them.

A total of about 390 square miles (1,000 square kilometers) has burned across the state, and some of the fires, including those in the Spokane area, have not been contained.

No one hurt or unaccounted for — so far

Fire and law enforcement officials said there had been no reports of injuries or people unaccounted for — but they stressed it was early in the response effort.

Officials also said that the evacuees in Spokane included patients at its U.S. Veterans Affairs hospital.

Video from the Spokane area showed buildings on fire, black smoke billowing up near neighborhoods, and the smoking ruins of homes, with only chimneys still standing. Several officials expressed concern that the area does not appear likely to get a break in coming days from the weather, which is expected to remain dry.

"We are not out of danger," U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell said during a news conference with federal, state and local officials in Spokane. "The next couple of days will be challenging."

Investigators had yet to determine how the blazes started.

Grassland in flames in parts of Idaho, Oregon and Utah

Spokane was hardly the only place struggling to contain fires.

Crews using bulldozers and helicopters continued for a 10th day to fight a fire that has burned nearly 525 square miles (about 1,360 square kilometers) of grassland in western Idaho and eastern Oregon. The area is home to cattle ranches, and authorities said the fire is threatening more than 600 homes and 800 other structures.

The weather in the area was expected to remain sunny — and dry — well into the week, with temperatures rising to more than 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius) on Wednesday. Officials say the fire was caused by lightning.

In central Utah, a massive blaze more than doubled in size over the weekend, jumping from 16 square miles (about 41 square kilometers) to about 56 square miles (145 square kilometers) by Sunday morning.

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More than 100 cattle have been killed, according to local law enforcement.

Officials called the fire "catastrophic" as heavy winds helped flames jump containment lines overnight. The fire is moving north toward Fillmore, a town of about 2,600 people and the seat of Millard County. Mandatory evacuations were ordered Sunday evening for the southern portion of Fillmore.

The National Weather Service issued warnings about the air quality across the northwest. It issued red flag fire warnings for parts of Utah and Montana and western Nebraska, and extreme heat warnings for the southern parts of Arizona, California and Nevada and northern Montana.

High winds make it hard to fight fires in Spokane area

While temperatures Sunday in Spokane were forecast to remain below 80 F (27 C), wind gusts from 35 mph (56 kph) to 45 mph (72 kph) had been expected by the afternoon, said Benjamin Cossel, public information officer for the federal response team from California called in Saturday night to deal with the fires.

"We have weather working against us, and we have terrain working against us," Cossel said.

There were three fires in the Spokane area: the Old Trails Fire, the Fairview Fire and the Meadowview Fire. Washington Gov. Bob Ferguson declared a state of emergency Saturday, and the National Weather Service issued a "particularly dangerous situation" red flag alert for eastern Washington.

Cossel said that as it gets warmer during the day, cool air that's closer to the ground and keeping winds at bay will rise, allowing those winds to move through the area. The Spokane River cuts through the city of about 229,000 people, and there are steep canyons on both sides that channel the wind.

"They push the fire through the canyons, up, up the slopes, and then outside the slopes and around," he said. "It's very, very hilly, very, very steep slopes, a lot of canyons that create really turbulent, really challenging sort of wind scenarios."

Spokane sets up shelter for impacted residents

Authorities in Spokane set up a shelter at the city's main convention center. About 400 people were staying there, officials said Sunday.

Spokane County Commissioner Chris Jordan said relatives of his were in an area affected by the fires and that they don't know if their home is still standing. He said he spoke with them as they were leaving the home.

"They're in their car and all they can see is smoke everywhere, and it was incredibly scary for so many people," he said during the news conference.

Heather Rosenstrater, president and CEO of Avista Corp., the area's electric and natural gas utility, said about 10,000 people were without power Sunday, down from a peak of 30,000. Avista needs to repair two transmission lines, she said, so it's possible that demand for electricity over the next few days could cause outages.

Meanwhile, several larger fires continued to burn in less populated areas northwest of Spokane, including one about 80 miles (129 kilometers) from the city that has burned about 210 square miles (544 square kilometers). Another fire in eastern Oregon, about 70 miles (113 kilometers) to the northwest in the Stinkingwater Mountains, has burned about 336 square miles (870 square kilometers).

"The whole northwest is heavily impacted right now," said Keila Vizcarra, the spokesperson for the federal team from California handling what's been named the Big Grass Fire in western Idaho and eastern Oregon.

El-Sayed and Stevens make final Democratic Senate primary push in Michigan churches, union halls

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Abdul El-Sayed sat quietly alongside his wife and Black political leaders in a packed Detroit church Sunday morning, clapping as the congregation sang and the pastor preached. Then he stood before the room and asked for their votes.

Less than 10 miles away, U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens was making her own appeal at another Black church, where one of the city's most prominent pastors made the case for her.

There were fewer than 48 hours left in Michigan's fiercely contested Democratic Senate primary. And

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after more than a year spent preaching starkly different visions for their party — with tens of millions of dollars poured into the race and national attention focused on it — both candidates had come to some of the same places looking for the votes to win it.

First, Black churches. Later, union halls. Then rallies surrounded by their core supporters.

Stevens, who has been through several competitive Democratic primaries, has a name for the frenzy of the closing days: “the last word phenomenon.”

“Everyone’s trying to get in their last points,” Stevens said.

Where the candidates chose to make those final points reflected the simple contest underneath all the money and ideological warfare: which one can assemble enough of Michigan’s Democratic coalition to win Tuesday.

The primary has become one of the clearest tests yet of where Democratic voters want their party to go. El-Sayed, a progressive backed by Sen. Bernie Sanders and other leaders on the party’s left, has run against much of the Democratic establishment. Stevens, a four-term congresswoman backed by Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer and many of Michigan’s top Democrats, has made electability and experience central to her case.

The stakes extend well beyond the primary. The nominee will need to bring a fractured Democratic coalition back together to defeat Republican Mike Rogers in November and hold an open seat that is critical to the party’s hopes of taking control of the Senate next year.

Both hopefuls focused on the Detroit area, where Democratic primaries are often decided

Democratic primaries in Michigan have long run through Detroit, where support from the city’s Black voters is often crucial.

El-Sayed’s pitch to those voters Sunday — during stops at three churches — centered on a vision of economic opportunity and equal treatment.

“I believe in the kind of America where no matter where you grow up, the color of your skin, how you pray, you deserve equal rights in this country,” El-Sayed told the congregation at Kingdom Covenant Church.

“You deserve to go to a good school, you deserve to get healthcare, you deserve to graduate and get a good job,” he added.

El-Sayed was joined by Democratic Reps. Summer Lee of Pennsylvania and Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts, as well as Yusef Jackson, the son of the late Rev. Jesse Jackson who is president of Rainbow PUSH Coalition.

Pastor David A. Johnson II said welcoming a political candidate was not something he typically did, but “this particular season, it’s time for us to do something different.”

For Robin Robertson, a 59-year-old Detroit resident, El-Sayed’s visit came just in time. Robertson said she had gone back and forth over whom to support, waiting until the campaign’s final days to decide.

She ultimately settled on El-Sayed, saying Stevens “had a good run.”

“His agenda seems to match more for me the things that we need right now,” Robertson said. “And then, he’s here in my little church. That was confirmation that I’m going to vote for him.”

Stevens, meanwhile, emphasized her longstanding connections to Detroit-area churches.

At a church in Pontiac on Sunday afternoon, Stevens stayed after the service to speak individually with congregants, greeting many like familiar faces.

“I come here year-round. This isn’t just a campaign thing,” Stevens said. “Our churches are places of community refuge, community connection.”

Stevens and her allies have also made a direct appeal to Black voters through advertisements highlighting her ties to former President Barack Obama and her work as chief of staff for his administration’s auto rescue effort from 2009 to 2011.

Her campaign acknowledges that a strong showing among Detroit voters will likely be necessary for her to win Tuesday.

Reggie Williams, a longtime constituent who was supporting Stevens at an Oakland County event Sunday evening, said he continues to back her because she “has always been there for the people.”

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"She is out and about in the community, always has boots on the ground," Williams said.

Stevens, El-Sayed will focus on different parts of Michigan on final day of campaigning

After spending much of Sunday pursuing some of the same Democratic constituencies, El-Sayed and Stevens will take different paths across Michigan for the final full day of the primary.

El-Sayed plans to remain in Detroit, joining canvass launches and trying to turn enthusiasm in the state's largest city into votes.

"This has been the heart of my public service," El-Sayed said about his decision to end the campaign in Detroit. "We wanted to come back here and demonstrate what this movement is and what it could mean."

Stevens will head west, making stops across West Michigan as she tries to maximize support in a region with Democratic strongholds in cities such as Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo.

The divergent schedules reflect the final calculation facing both campaigns after more than a year of campaigning: There are few voters left to persuade, and increasingly the task is making sure the ones already won over actually cast a ballot.

For El-Sayed, that means leaning into a volunteer operation his campaign says has grown to 12,000 people statewide and trying to drive turnout in places such as Detroit. Stevens is relying on the broader institutional support she has accumulated across the state, including endorsements from many of Michigan's most prominent Democratic officials, such as Sen. Gary Peters and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

By Monday night, there will be no more churches to visit, union halls to address or rallies to hold. The television ads that have blanketed Michigan will have run their course, too.

Then comes what Stevens described as the inevitable other side of the "last word phenomenon."

"The votes will be counted," she said. "The election will be had."

Blanche rescinds fund for Trump allies after GOP senators threaten to block his attorney general bid

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche issued a formal order late Sunday terminating President Donald Trump's \$1.8 billion "anti-weaponization fund" to compensate his political allies, a move that follows weeks of negotiations with two Republican senators who were blocking his nomination to become attorney general.

A spokeswoman for Texas Sen. John Cornyn, one of the senators holding up Blanche's nomination, confirmed the deal, which comes ahead of a Tuesday confirmation vote for Blanche's nomination in the Senate Judiciary Committee. The other GOP senator, North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis, did not have immediate comment.

Blanche said at a June hearing that the Justice Department would not move forward with the fund to compensate those who believe they were unfairly prosecuted, as he faced bipartisan outrage over the possibility that violent rioters who attacked police at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, could be considered for payments. But Cornyn and Tillis, both members of the Judiciary panel, have said they wanted to see the promise in writing before they endorsed Blanche's nomination — especially as Trump continued to express support for the idea.

In a statement, Blanche said the order came after "good faith discussions."

"My team and I have met with committee members and Senators over the past several weeks and addressed any concerns or outstanding questions," Blanche said.

DOJ order says 'beyond any doubt' that fund is dead

In a statement accompanying the order, the Justice Department said that "although the Acting Attorney General has repeatedly advised Congress through testimony, including under oath, as well as in written responses, that the Fund is not moving forward, and the Department has repeatedly represented to district courts that the Fund is not moving forward, today's Order officially rescinds the May 18, 2026 Order."

Since the settlement of the president's lawsuit against the IRS was announced, "No Members were appointed; no funds were transferred; no process for receiving claims was established; no claims were paid,"

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the order says. "This order establishes, beyond any doubt, that there is no Fund."

The document released by Blanche on Sunday night also limits the scope of another provision of the settlement that provided broad immunity for Trump and members of his family from tax audits.

The deal clarifies that the tax audit immunity agreement "applies by its terms only retroactively" to claims open at the time of the settlement and does not protect the president from examination of future tax filings.

Cornyn, Tillis echo GOP colleagues' concerns as they block Blanche nomination

Cornyn, who lost reelection this year after Trump endorsed his primary opponent, and Tillis, who is retiring when his term ends in January, have blocked Blanche's nomination as many of their GOP colleagues have criticized the fund.

The Judiciary Committee postponed a vote on Blanche's nomination that had been scheduled for Thursday morning after Tillis and Cornyn said they needed more from the administration before they could provide the necessary votes.

The two senators have repeatedly said the Justice Department seemed interested in reaching an agreement, but the White House wouldn't budge even to aid the confirmation of Trump's loyal former personal attorney, who has aggressively pursued the administration's priorities as acting attorney general.

"I think as far as Blanche and the Department of Justice, we were pretty much on the same page," Cornyn said Thursday. "But then when the president got wind of it, he wasn't willing to go along with it."

Blanche, who served as Trump's defense lawyer in his criminal cases, entered the Justice Department last year as deputy attorney general. He was elevated to the top post after Pam Bondi was fired in April by Trump, who was frustrated by her failure to successfully prosecute his political enemies.

Though Blanche insisted he wasn't auditioning for the permanent job, he has moved aggressively to pursue the Trump administration's agenda and accelerate investigations into the president's perceived foes.

Trump continues to express support for his settlement

The two sides have been negotiating for weeks, but Trump has said repeatedly during the talks that he thinks the fund should go forward and threatened to move forward with it if Blanche was not confirmed.

After the Thursday vote was delayed, Trump said in a social media post that he might pull Blanche's nomination and resubmit it after Cornyn and Tillis leave office next year.

On Sunday evening, Trump said that people who had faced charges from the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol and could have benefitted from the fund had "their lives destroyed."

"This would be a reimbursement for the pain that they suffered," Trump said. "A lot of people like it."

On Friday, Trump's attorneys notified a court they would appeal a judge's scathing ruling that characterized the settlement of the president's lawsuit against the IRS as an improper exercise in self-dealing. The judge in her order last month referred one of Trump's attorneys for potential disciplinary action and criticized Blanche's involvement in the settlement, given his prior representation of Trump.

Blanche has said he disagrees "with the judge's insinuations" about him. Justice Department lawyers had previously written in court papers that the fund was not moving forward but they refused a judge's request to have Blanche and other administration officials file a declaration under penalty of perjury that the administration would not take any further action to create the fund.

The Justice Department said the court's demands were "unnecessary."

Israel says it has serious concerns with Hamas disarmament deal

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel has shared "serious security concerns" with the White House regarding the proposed disarmament deal with Hamas, an Israeli official said as Israeli strikes overnight and into Sunday evening killed at least 17 people, including children, in Gaza.

The remarks by Doron Spielman, spokesperson for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office, were some of the first public comments since U.S. President Donald Trump announced the agreement.

Spielman told The Associated Press that Israel's intelligence assessment is that Hamas remains committed to rebuilding its military rather than genuinely demilitarizing. He said the Israeli military would not

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withdraw from Gaza — where it controls more than 60% of the territory — before Hamas disarms.

"Our assessment is that if we redeploy before Hamas is truly disarmed, it will quickly expand its presence throughout Gaza, rebuild its terrorist infrastructure, once again threaten Israeli communities, and seek to carry out another Oct. 7-style attack," he said, referring to the Hamas militant attack on Israel in 2023 that triggered the war in the Gaza Strip.

"Disarming means physically giving up the weapons. Nothing less," Spielman said.

His comments come days after Hamas said that it would begin disarming as part of the U.S.-brokered ceasefire signed nine months ago to end the nearly three-year-long conflict. It marks a potential breakthrough in ending the conflict, but many hurdles, conditions and long timelines remain.

Hamas says it's agreed to disarm but the process has obstacles

Trump's 20-point ceasefire plan calls on the militant group to surrender its weapons and destroy its vast network of tunnels. It also envisions Israeli forces withdrawing from Gaza, the arrival of a new technocratic Palestinian government, deployment of an international security force and the rebuilding of the battered Palestinian enclave.

Hamas disarming has been a sticking point and has deadlocked negotiations for months. In announcing the deal on social media on Thursday, Trump said it would be carried out in "carefully structured phases."

A copy of the agreement obtained and verified by the AP said that all weapons held by the Hamas-run police will be transferred to the U.S.-backed Palestinian technocratic committee, known as the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, upon its arrival in the enclave. It's not clear when that would happen since it is contingent on other steps.

A process to decommission and store heavy weapons and to dismantle military production sites and tunnels will begin after the arrival of the Palestinian committee and the deployment of international forces. The process will be linked to a phased Israeli withdrawal, according to the agreement.

The areas Israel controls in Gaza have been mostly destroyed and depopulated. Most of the territory's 2 million Palestinians are in the other part, where hundreds of thousands live in squalid tent camps and destroyed neighborhoods.

Israel appears unlikely to pull back significant forces or make other concessions ahead of its October elections. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces a tough reelection battle, with his far-right coalition partners urging him to keep up the pressure on Hamas and leave forces in Gaza, and opponents accusing him of failing to prevent the Oct. 7, 2023, attack.

Hamas-led militants attacked Israeli communities then, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking 251 others hostage. Israel responded with a punishing military offensive that has killed more than 73,000 people, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

The ministry, which was part of the recently dissolved Hamas-run government, maintains detailed records viewed as generally reliable by U.N. agencies and international organizations. It does not distinguish between civilians and militants but says women and children make up around half of all fatalities.

Israel warns that Hamas is rearming

While Spielman said Israel greatly appreciates Trump's commitment to its security and to finding a durable resolution, the government's position on disarmament is based on detailed intelligence saying that Hamas continues to rearm, recruit fighters, and rebuild its military capabilities.

The White House did not provide additional comments on Sunday, when asked specifically about Israel's assessment that Hamas remains committed to rebuilding its military.

U.S. officials, who briefed reporters on the disarmament agreement last week, said that Israel had been consulted at every step of the negotiations and was not being asked to do anything more than what it had committed to as part of the ceasefire and hostage release agreement signed last October.

It's unclear what exactly Israel conveyed to the White House. Two people with knowledge of the deal told the AP that Israel had communicated its issues with it to former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who's part of the Trump-led Board of Peace. One of them said that among the points Israel wanted was freedom to conduct military operations in Gaza. They spoke anonymously because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

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According to another person familiar with the deal, the Israelis raised two other issues: that Qatar and Turkey not be involved in verifying the stages of the agreement, and that Hamas' weapons be destroyed after confiscation. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Israel continues to strike Gaza

Since the ceasefire was signed last October, Israel has continued striking Gaza, saying it's targeting Hamas and its infrastructure.

Local Gaza hospitals said at least 17 were killed in the latest Israeli strikes, including children. A strike on a residential apartment in southern Gaza killed three family members, including their 4-year-old child, according to Nasser hospital, where the bodies arrived.

The Israeli military said the strikes had targeted militant operatives.

Iran déjà vu: Trump once again threatens massive escalation against Tehran only to walk back

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has played this hand before during the 5-month-old Iran war.

It starts with a grim warning to Tehran that he's on the cusp of ordering U.S. forces to "obliterate" its power plants or seize key parts of its oil industry if its leaders don't quickly agree to U.S. terms to end the war. It ends with him edging away with a last-minute declaration, sometimes at the behest of Gulf allies, that he's going to give diplomacy more time.

The hardball strategy — one that Trump honed during his years competing in New York's real estate scene and has employed in politics — aims to create movement in negotiation through pressure and chaos. But the tactic is facing a challenge with an Iranian theocracy that believes it holds a higher threshold for strategic pain than Washington.

While Trump has reveled in the U.S. military decimating layers of Tehran's leadership and devastating its air force and navy, Iran is betting it can outlast Trump as he faces diminished stockpiles of munitions and the difficulty of executing a war that is unpopular with the American electorate ahead of November's midterm election.

The latest episode began on Friday when Trump, surrounded by his Cabinet, grimly declared that he was "losing faith" in negotiations with Iran and warned that the U.S. military "will be hitting them very hard."

Hours later, the White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt heightened speculation in Washington — and around the globe — with an ominous statement asserting "Iran will continue to pay until they come to the table in, what President Trump deems, a meaningful way."

But by late Saturday night, Trump declared on social media that there were signs of progress on reaching an agreement and he was calling off a plan to carry out new, massive strikes for the time being.

The next day Trump emphasized that requests to give diplomacy more time from unnamed Iranian officials as well as leaders from Gulf allies — Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates — were key to his about-face.

"It would have been disastrous for them. And they didn't want us to do it," Trump said of Iran as he spoke to reporters on his way back to Washington from a weekend at his New Jersey golf club. "And frankly, Saudi Arabia didn't want it either. They thought that a deal is imminent."

Critics see Trump reaching for a reset button in this pattern

Trump may still come to the conclusion that a massive escalation in the conflict with Iran is necessary.

But critics say his hesitation also might reflect an unspoken understanding inside the administration that U.S. military might alone may not be enough to compel Iran to back down and bring an end to a now months-long war that Trump had earlier downplayed as a weeks-long excursion.

"I think what we're seeing here is a president who has an approach that's just rather erratic," said Sen.

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Mark Kelly, an Arizona Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, on CBS News' "Face the Nation." "At this point, he's trying to get us back to February. And I think if he could — if he had a big reset button he could hit — he would certainly take that option."

There have been several moments over the course of the conflict when Trump has demonstrated his proclivity for the bellicose only to back off at the last minute, while declaring his threats spurred progress:

— In early April, the United States and Iran agreed to a two-week ceasefire in an announcement that came less than two hours before a deadline Trump had set for Tehran to capitulate or face attacks on bridges and power plants — strikes he said would mean "a whole civilization will die."

— After days of dire threats against Iran, Trump announced on May 18 he was holding off on a major planned military strike because "serious negotiations" were underway, crediting Gulf allies for persuading him to show restraint.

— Then in June, Trump threatened to hit Iran "VERY HARD" and seize Iran's energy base on Kharg Island to "assume total control of their Oil and Gas Markets," he wrote on social media, only to call off the strikes in a later post after claiming that peace negotiations had progressed with high-level Iranian leaders.

Left unsaid by the president was that such an endeavor would require U.S. boots on the ground in Iran — a risky proposition politically for a president who campaigned on avoiding foreign entanglements and criticized past administrations for getting bogged down in endless wars.

Call with Saudi crown prince affected Trump's decision

With this latest episode, Trump suggested that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman played a particularly important role in him turning away from escalating the fight.

The U.S. president spoke by phone with the de facto leader of the kingdom on Saturday before announcing he was halting strikes that he later boasted would have one of the biggest U.S. operations since World War II.

The crown prince conveyed that an escalation in fighting could have a severe impact on the global economy if Tehran responded to a new U.S. bombardment by targeting some of the United States' Gulf allies, according to a person briefed on the call who was not authorized to comment publicly and requested anonymity.

Saudi officials, the person added, have underscored in their engagements with the Trump administration that the kingdom is in a good position to defend itself against further potential Iranian strikes — as are fellow energy titans Qatar and the United Arab Emirates — but that Kuwait could be more vulnerable to attacks by Iranian-backed militias in Iraq.

As Trump threatens escalation, Republicans face tough polling

Trump has insisted that November's midterm elections aren't shaping his approach to the conflict that's spurred unease across the global economy.

But it's certainly on the minds of his fellow Republicans.

About two-thirds of U.S. adults say the war with Iran, which began Feb. 28, has not been worthwhile, according to polling from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research published last week. That includes the vast majority of Democrats and independents, as well as about 37% of Republicans.

One of Trump's most outspoken allies on Capitol Hill suggested on Sunday the administration needs to modulate its approach on Iran.

Louisiana Sen. John Kennedy said on NBC's "Meet the Press" that the debate in Washington has lost perspective on the devastation the U.S. military has inflicted on Iran since the start of the war.

Still, the Republican lawmaker acknowledged that further escalating the conflict could lead to a further surge in already elevated energy prices and "a lot of inflation for the American people."

Kennedy made the case that tightening sanctions and targeting Iran's nuclear program — rather than escalating the conflict — might be the best bet for the moment.

"They're all hellish choices," Kennedy said. "But for the moment I'd maintain the status quo."

Ceuta grapples with aftermath of border surge after most migrants leave the Spanish territory

By SUMAN NAISHADHAM Associated Press

CEUTA, Spain (AP) — Ceuta over the weekend no longer looked like a city on edge, but residents were still rattled by the events of the week.

Most of the 60,000 migrants who swam, scrambled and later charged into the tiny Spanish exclave in North Africa this week had walked back to Morocco by Sunday, but some stayed on in the hills surrounding the city. Spanish authorities continued searching for bodies in the waters near the stretch of urban beach that tens of thousands of migrants had breached days earlier.

Shops in Ceuta reopened, and the usual blend of residents and tourists in the city of 84,000 were filling the open-air terraces, restaurants and cafes.

At least 72 migrants died, including some who drowned and others who were killed in a stampede to cross a breakwater barrier, Spanish authorities said Sunday. Morocco reported 11 deaths on its side of the border, but it wasn't immediately clear if these were in addition to those reported by Spain. The kingdom's authorities blamed misinformation and human traffickers for the breach, adding that they were investigating the events.

But the city that prides itself on being home to four cultures was still grappling with the aftermath of the border surge, with locals disagreeing on what caused it and who exactly is to blame.

"It's not the young men's fault," said Mohamad Abdelkader Driss, 44, a waiter at a fish restaurant in town. "If you open the border, of course everyone comes in, but the young men aren't to blame. The authorities are responsible."

Some migrants who returned to Morocco described a border that was effectively open and said authorities did little as they watched thousands of people cross.

The unauthorized arrivals on Thursday and Friday of 50,000 to 60,000, mostly young men, swelled Ceuta's population by more than half. Abdelkader lamented what happened, but said that those who breached the border behaved relatively well.

"It could have been much worse," he said.

Far-right politicians call for remaining migrants to be expelled

The humanitarian crisis caused by the sudden rush of people reignited a debate around immigration in Europe and beyond. Over the weekend, far-right, anti-immigrant Spanish politicians and well-known right-wing influencers descended on the city, sparking counterprotests that included members of the Spanish city's large Muslim population, many of whom are of Moroccan descent.

Alvise Pérez, a far-right Spanish politician and member of the European Parliament, called on Saturday evening for migrants to be expelled as he faced an angry crowd of rival protesters. Pérez eventually had to shelter in a bar as residents banged on the windows, until police escorted him away.

Among the counter-protesters on Saturday was 20-year-old Ceuta resident and student Noor Ahmed. She denounced the protest and presence of figures like Pérez in her city as opportunistic.

"They just want to take advantage of the humanitarian crisis Ceuta is currently experiencing," Ahmed said.

Santiago Abascal, the leader of the far-right Vox party, visited Ceuta on Sunday, slamming the Spanish government for the surge in migrant arrivals, which he called "an invasion."

"The frontiers of Ceuta and Melilla are the walls of our home and homeland, and they are not being protected by a corrupt and traitorous government," he said.

The Pope said he was alarmed

Pope Leo XIV on Sunday said he was "following with concern the alarming situation in Ceuta, asking God ... that solutions of peace, stability and justice may be found."

Migration has been one of Pope Leo's priorities, which he underlined during a recent visit to Spain's Canary Islands, one of Europe's main migrant entry ports.

Trump says Gulf leaders' input weighed heavily in decision to hold off on ordering new Iran strikes

By AAMER MADHANI and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump said Sunday he decided to hold off on ordering American forces to carry out new strikes against Iran at the urging of Gulf allies Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Trump added that a plan was in place for U.S. forces to carry out "the biggest attack since World War II" on Sunday. But he decided to scrap the plan and give diplomacy more time to play out after hearing from key Gulf leaders — including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman — as well as at the request of unnamed Iranian officials.

"I said to the crown prince, 'What would you rather do? Would you rather us do this or not?'" Trump told reporters on Air Force One as he flew back to Washington after spending the weekend at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey. "They said we would much prefer a deal as opposed to an attack, because you don't know where these attacks lead."

Trump and the crown prince spoke on Saturday before the U.S. president announced in a social media post that Mideast allies had reached the "perimeters" of a deal to end the 5-month-old war.

It was another turnabout for Trump, who a day earlier said he's "losing faith" in negotiations with Iran and offered the ominous warning that the U.S. military "will be hitting them very hard."

Trump on Sunday reiterated that the emerging deal would include a reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, the critical waterway where about a fifth of all traded oil and natural gas flowed before the start of the war, and would resolve U.S. concerns about Iran's nuclear program.

Iran has repeatedly attacked vessels attempting to transit through the Strait of Hormuz without its authorization as part of its conflict with the U.S.

And Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said on Sunday that the Strait of Hormuz "will in no way return to the status it was before February 28th," the day the war started.

On a call with Iranian state TV, he added that Iran is discussing shipping through the strait with Oman, on the other side of Hormuz, but that there's no current talk about reopening the crucial waterway.

Trump has announced halts to strikes on Iran on several occasions since the United States and Israel attacked Iran on Feb. 28, only for things to unravel and fighting to resume again.

Iran's defense minister said on X that the country was "neither surprised nor passive" following Trump's announcement and said the Islamic Republic remains alert in the face of concrete threats from the U.S.

While Iran's leaders appear united in a war strategy signaling strength and endurance, a struggle for control seems to be brewing within the theocracy's leadership between those who oppose all negotiations with the U.S. and others who count on military pressure to win at the negotiating table.

The latest proposal would bring sides back to negotiations

Trump on Sunday said he expected negotiations to resume "tomorrow afternoon" but did not detail who would be involved in such talks.

A regional official said the proposal announced by Trump over the weekend calls for the U.S. and Iran to return to negotiations and continue working out many of the issues that have stymied prior progress on the deal.

The official, who is involved in the mediation efforts, said the proposal calls for reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and halting attacks across the region, including by Iranian-backed militias in Iraq, on Arab Gulf countries and Jordan.

The U.S., in exchange, will end its naval blockade on Iran and allow Tehran to export its oil as stated in the tentative ceasefire deal, he said.

No deal has been reached yet but mediation efforts are underway, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to talk to the media.

Trump said that Israel is joining his commitment to end the war by implementing the ceasefire deal reached in June. Israel did not publicly comment on the announcement.

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Saudis are concerned about Iran's retaliation

Prince Mohammed, the kingdom's de facto leader, raised concerns about the U.S. potentially escalating the conflict when he spoke with Trump by phone on Saturday.

The call was "candid and constructive," according to a person briefed on the call who was not authorized to comment publicly and requested anonymity.

The crown prince conveyed that an escalation in fighting could have a severe impact on the global economy if Tehran responded to a new U.S. bombardment by targeting some of the United States' Gulf allies.

The call happened before Trump's social media announcement, the person said. The crown prince sought clarity from Trump on what potential new action he was weighing to take against Iran.

Saudi officials, the person added, have underscored in their engagements with the Trump administration that the kingdom — as well as fellow Persian Gulf energy titans the United Arab Emirates and Qatar — are in a good position to defend against further potential Iranian attacks, but that Kuwait could be more vulnerable to attacks by Iranian-backed militias in Iraq.

Trump suggested that his conversation with the Saudi crown prince weighed heavily in his decision to halt his plans to carry out strikes on Iran.

"It would have been disastrous for them. And they didn't want us to do it," Trump said. "And frankly, Saudi Arabia didn't want it either. They thought that a deal is imminent."

Suspect in shooting at Idaho fast-food restaurant died from self-inflicted gunshot wound, police say

TWIN FALLS, Idaho (AP) — The suspect in a fatal shooting at a fast-food restaurant in Idaho died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, police said Sunday, crediting an off-duty officer and a citizen with firing shots that diverted him.

Investigators are confident that the gunman, identified as 24-year-old Chad Williams, acted alone during the shooting Saturday at an In-N-Out location in Twin Falls, Police Chief Matthew Hicks said at a news conference.

In all, four people died, including Williams, and seven others were injured at the recently opened restaurant in the southern Idaho city of about 56,000 people. Authorities said Sunday that two of the injured were treated at a hospital and released, three were listed as stable, and two were in critical condition.

Hicks said an off-duty state trooper and an armed citizen — whose identities weren't immediately disclosed — both fired back and diverted the gunman from the restaurant.

"We believe their actions helped drive the suspect away from the scene, preventing further casualties," the chief said. "We want to take a moment and commend the actions of the off-duty officer and the citizen, and their heroic action to stop this incident."

Hicks said detectives are working to determine Williams' motives, and said the suspect's family was cooperating fully with law enforcement. Officials asked potential witnesses or anyone with information to contact police.

The chief also warned of misinformation spreading online identifying a different man as the shooter, saying that person had "no involvement in this incident whatsoever."

In-N-Out worker among the victims

One of those killed was an employee, the fast-food chain's owner said.

"My heart is broken, my chest is heavy, my eyes burn from the tears I've shed. We lost one of our beautiful Associates tonight," In-N-Out owner Lynsi Snyder said in a statement released early Sunday on social media. "In-N-Out will be mourning with the families and praying for them as they tread through a very painful season."

The FBI on Sunday encouraged the public to submit images and videos related to the shooting Saturday in Twin Falls that left seven other people wounded, some critically.

The In-N-Out had opened just about a week earlier, on July 24, as part of the California-based company's recent expansion to Idaho.

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Snyder did not identify the worker. Officials were still trying to notify relatives of victims and so were not yet releasing the names, ages or other details about the people hurt in the shooting, Twin Falls spokesperson Josh Palmer said Saturday.

Police who responded to the shooting found the body of the suspected gunman in an area near the restaurant, Palmer said.

Palmer said investigators were interviewing witnesses to the shooting. The restaurant is in a busy shopping plaza, and hundreds of people were in the area when it happened around 2 p.m.

Witnesses describe chaotic scene

Lane Koehn, 34, said he was at a stoplight near the In-N-Out when he saw a person with an AR-style rifle emerge from the drive-thru. A man with a pistol started firing at the shooter.

He then saw someone in an In-N-Out uniform drag a person, also wearing a uniform, bleeding from a gunshot wound to her chest across the parking lot. The employee, Koehn and the man with the pistol stayed until paramedics arrived for her.

"She was pretty bad off, but I don't know. I hope she made it," Koehn said.

He said the shooter fired at least three or four rounds and it was not clear whether or not anyone in particular was targeted.

Video taken by a driver from across the street captured a shooter, who appeared to be dressed in black, walking up to a white car carrying a long rifle, opening the driver-side door and popping the trunk. The person then walked to the trunk and reached inside. At that point the driver who shot the video left quickly, fearing that the man might be getting more weapons.

Twin Falls resident Haley Dodaro, 43, and her mother went to In-N-Out for lunch Saturday afternoon. While waiting in the drive-thru line, they saw people running across the road and workers bolting out of the restaurant. At first, Dodaro thought there might have been a fire, but then a man directing traffic in a reflective vest said there was a shooter.

"So that's when we knew there was a shooting. People were running out crying and screaming. It was very scary," Dodaro said in a text message to The Associated Press.

Employee told people to get down

Nayeli Rodriguez, 40, of Burley, was inside waiting for food with her daughters when she heard shots from the kitchen. An employee said it was a shooting and told people to get down. Rodriguez said an older man tried to protect her and her daughters, and they were among the last to run outside.

"We were trying to get as far as we could and some angels let us in their car," Rodriguez said, also via text message. "I left my car there in the parking lot."

Twin Falls is about 130 miles (205 kilometers) southeast of Boise and about 75 miles (120 kilometers) north of the Nevada border.

Senate leaders reach funding deal to avoid shutdown during campaign season

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Key senators unveiled a short-term spending bill on Sunday that would keep federal agencies funded past the midterm elections and into early December as they look to avoid a government shutdown during the middle of campaign season.

The Senate is likely to vote on the measure before leaving Washington at week's end for its traditional August recess, a period that many lawmakers want to spend shoring up their reelection prospects rather than working in the nation's capital.

The bill generally funds the federal government at current levels through Dec. 11. The House has passed a similar measure, but it did not include various exceptions sought by the White House. Senators have been spending recent days negotiating which of those exceptions to include.

One exception that did not make it into the bill, Democrats noted, was the administration's request to include \$1 billion to build "Trump-class" battleships.

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In another major difference with the House bill, Democrats say they also were able to include language that will ensure the administration cannot transfer funds from other programs to the Border Patrol.

The late-summer action on a funding fix is unusual. Normally, Congress waits until the final days or hours of a funding deadline to pass short-term funding extensions, but this time senators are acting two months before the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune said passing the measure was his top priority going into the August recess. He noted that the American people have already experienced two record-breaking government shutdowns in the past 10 months.

"We need to ensure that they do not face a third," Thune said.

Both parties want to avoid another shutdown

A short-term funding extension is needed because Congress has struggled to get the dozen annual appropriations bills negotiated and approved before the Sept. 30 deadline. By extending government funding now, lawmakers can use the ensuing months to work out their differences on full-year funding.

It won't be an easy lift as Republicans seek a dramatic increase in defense spending while cutting non-defense spending. Trump proposed a 10% cut in non-defense programs overall. Meanwhile, he called for boosting defense spending by some 44%.

A potential shutdown before voters go to the polls is a scenario that both parties are looking to avoid, as polling indicated that neither party evaded blame for last fall's record 43-day shutdown. Democrats sought to extend an expiring health insurance tax credit and refused to go along with a short-term spending bill that did not include that priority. But Republicans said that was a separate policy fight to be held at another time.

A second spending battle over funding for the Department of Homeland Security took 76 days to resolve when Democrats refused to fund U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Border Patrol without changes to those operations.

The bill delays a controversial policy on grants

Sen. Susan Collins, the Republican chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, along with Democratic senators, are seeking to block a proposed rule from President Donald Trump's administration related to grants. The rule would require a senior political appointee at each agency to review grant proposals through criteria that include "ensuring that discretionary awards advance the President's policy priorities."

Collins and Sen. Patty Murray, the top Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, said the rule would not take effect during the course of the stopgap spending bill. Collins said she advocated for significant changes to the rule, "citing its potential to politicize grants and harm small, rural communities, families, and biomedical research."

Democrats want to kill the administration's effort altogether. Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said it was a "disgraceful" effort that would "further politicize all federal grants."

"While Republicans rejected killing the proposed rule outright, I'm going to keep fighting to put a stop to it once and for all, and I will keep pressing my Republican colleagues to do exactly that," Murray said.

Democrats fear Trump would turn federal grants into a cudgel to punish perceived political foes and reward allies, while also undermining Congress's constitutional power of the purse. The White House Office of Management and Budget says its effort is about improving accountability to ensure taxpayer dollars aren't wasted or misused.

Sen. Bernie Moreno says former son-in-law Max Miller should not serve in the House

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Sen. Bernie Moreno said his former son-in-law, U.S. Rep. Max Miller, should not be serving in the House and should "seek professional help" as Miller defended himself against allegations of domestic abuse in a live video on X on Sunday.

Moreno, who has been publicly restrained in recent months as the bitter custody dispute has played out

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between Miller and his daughter Emily, said in a lengthy post: "If there are any basic standards of character required to hold elected office, Max Miller fails them. He should not serve in the House of Representatives."

Moreno wrote that Miller "needs serious psychological help. He is a danger to my daughter, and I hold my breath every minute he has custody of my granddaughter."

Miller, who has been endorsed by President Donald Trump, said Sunday that he will remain in his race for reelection before a Wednesday deadline to replace him. Democrats have seen a new opportunity in the northeast Ohio congressional seat as the Republican incumbent has faced mounting pressure over the domestic abuse allegations in a bitter and drawn-out custody battle with his ex-wife.

"I'm not dropping out of this race and I'll win in November," said Miller, who denied abusing his former wife and his daughter.

Asked on Sunday evening if Miller should resign, Trump said that "so far it's accusations."

"I'll be looking at it," Trump said.

Scrutiny of Miller has escalated in recent weeks

Accusations against Miller, who was a White House adviser during Trump's first term, have been public for years but have recently drawn increased scrutiny as back and forth in the case has escalated.

Emily Moreno has said that Miller scalded, hit and threatened her while they were married. Miller denied those allegations in the video, as he has in the past.

"It's incredibly upsetting," Miller said, as he went through a list of the allegations.

Miller also said he had nothing to do with a broken collarbone on their 2-year-old daughter that led Emily Moreno to contact authorities. The pair, who were married in 2022 and finalized their divorce last year, have presented different theories about how the injury occurred, according to court filings and police reports detailed in an article in July in the magazine Mother Jones that first revealed the child's injury.

Miller accompanied his announcement with the release of a voluminous cache of investigative and court documents, as well as audio and video clips, related to the custody dispute.

Spokesperson for Miller's ex-wife says video was 'shameful'

A spokesperson for Emily Moreno, Stefan Mychajliw, said Sunday that the video was "shameful."

"No loving parent would have ever used their daughter as a PR pawn to save their own political career," Mychajliw said. "Miller can lie and spin on X, but he cannot do so under oath in a court of law. We are confident that justice will prevail in court."

Sen. Bernie Moreno's statement on Sunday came after he had declined to comment on the specific allegations for months. Last week, a spokeswoman issued a statement saying the senator "will not litigate these matters in the media or respond to baseless public attacks."

"Senator Moreno's top priority is the safety and well-being of his daughter and granddaughter," said the spokeswoman, Reagan McCarthy.

Potential GOP candidates eye Miller's seat

The senator's statement was prompting some hand-wringing behind the scenes in his home state, where Trump-endorsed candidates like Miller typically win with ease.

Miller's Democratic opponent, Brian Poindexter, said no one facing such accusations "belongs in the halls of power."

State Rep. Mike Dovilla, a U.S. Navy veteran and former presidential appointee to the Office of Personnel Management, and Kevin Coughlin, a former state senator and representative who ran for the U.S. House in 2024 and 2026, were among Republicans whose names were being floated should Miller drop his fall House bid, according to a high-ranking Republican who discussed the sensitive subject on condition of anonymity.

Democrats have recently called on Miller to resign, requested a congressional ethics investigation and suggested more help could be directed in the fall toward Poindexter.

Miller won reelection two years ago with just over 51% of the vote.

Flight attendants at Canada's WestJet go on strike in dispute over pay

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ and JIM MORRIS Associated Press Writers

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Flight attendants with WestJet, Canada's second-largest airline, went on strike Sunday in a dispute over pay.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees, which represents the 4,400 cabin crew at the airline, announced the strike on its Facebook page. WestJet confirmed the strike and canceled 495 flights Sunday, according to FlightAware, snarling travel plans in Canada in the middle of a three-day weekend. The airline said Sunday that the strike led to travel being canceled for 250,000 travelers.

Key issue is how flight attendants are paid for work performed while still on the ground

A key issue in the dispute is how flight attendants should be paid for duties performed while still on the ground. The union said some of that work is unpaid, while the company said its staff was indeed compensated, citing pay through a "credit hour" system rather than an hourly rate.

"We presented a proposal that would have set a new standard for cabin crew in Canada, making WestJet the only airline to offer an hourly rate covering all time before and after flights, plus a double-digit wage increase in year one among other priorities the union raised," said Alexis von Hoensbroech, CEO of the WestJet Group. "Unfortunately, it wasn't accepted."

The airline's proposal included a 13% wage increase in October, increases of 2.5% each January for the next three years, retroactive wage payment to last January and additional pay for all hours worked, which is equivalent to another 12% of salary increase, according to WestJet. The proposal also boosted other benefits such as meal per diems, vacation allowance and maternity leave.

Alia Hussain, president of the union chapter that represents the cabin crew, said negotiators "tried until the very last minute to get a fair deal that recognizes the value of the work cabin crews do."

"WestJet's offer did not go far enough," Hussain said.

Both sides said they were willing to resume negotiations to reach an agreement.

Flight cancellations leave travelers stranded

Meanwhile, travelers whose flights were canceled struggled to find accommodations or alternate flights.

Keavin Ly, a systems administrator for an animation studio, was stuck in Squamish, British Columbia, with his girlfriend after the couple spent the week rock climbing. They were supposed to fly back to Los Angeles on Sunday morning. The airline offered to reschedule their flight for Aug. 4, but they're scrambling to figure out where to stay between now and then.

"Inconveniently, our Airbnb and car rentals are done, and everything's booked," said Ly, 29. They were entertaining the idea of sleeping in the back of a friend's rental car, he said.

Ly had planned to take time off from work to watch a friend compete in a national billiards competition, but now he fears he'll miss it. And his girlfriend will miss shifts as a nurse, he said.

"We're pretty much at the behest of the airline striking a deal, the cabin crew with WestJet, but all in all I hope they get what they're looking for and they deserve to get compensated more," Ly said.

The airline said it could not operate any of its scheduled flights on Boeing 737s or 787s, and travelers will be refunded or reaccommodated. WestJet said it would contact people who reserved with them directly via email, while those who booked through a travel agent or third-party platform should reach out to them.

WestJet Encore flights operated on a Q400, as well as code-share flights operated by airline partners, remain unaffected.

Airline and union under pressure to resume bargaining

Canada's Minister of Jobs and Families, Patty Hajdu, called the strike "a disappointing development."

"A strike or lockout does not mean an agreement can't be reached; the expectation is that parties can and should come to an agreement at the bargaining table," Hajdu said in a statement. "The federal government will always maintain that the strongest deals happen at the table. Canadians are counting on them to put their best efforts forward to reach a deal at the bargaining table."

Last August, when Air Canada flight attendants went on strike over a similar issue, stranding more than

100,000 travelers during peak travel season, Hajdu directed Canada's labor board to order them back on the job.

The union defied the order, forcing Air Canada back to the bargaining table where the parties hashed out a tentative deal. That work stoppage lasted three days before the sides came to an agreement.

WestJet caught the union off guard by publicly releasing its offer to the flight attendants, said John Gradek, a faculty lecturer on aviation management at McGill University in Montreal.

"This is a bargaining strategy on the part of WestJet to intimidate the union," said Gradek. "I don't think the union is happy this has gone public. Right now, the union is kind of trying to figure out what the next steps are going to be. The WestJet offer forces the union to come back to the table and get very specific."

Gradek estimates the dispute is costing WestJet between Canadian \$10 million and \$15 million (U.S. \$7.13 million and \$10.69 million) a day.

Gradek doubts the dispute will last a week. He expects the federal government will give the two sides another day or so before intervening but isn't sure the government will order the union back to work.

"They may try a different strategy," he said. "They may want to sit in on the negotiations themselves."

Ohio Rep. Kaptur treated for non-life threatening injuries after a car accident in Toledo

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ohio Rep. Marcy Kaptur is being treated for non-life threatening injuries after a car accident in Toledo on Sunday morning, her office said Sunday.

Kaptur, 80, was a passenger in a vehicle headed to a church service "when the car she was traveling in was struck," the statement from her office said. The statement said she is "active, alert" and "looks forward to returning to a full schedule soon."

The House is on its summer recess so she was not expected in Washington this week.

Kaptur, the longest-serving woman in House history, is in a rematch for her closely watched seat against former state Rep. Derek Merrin. In 2024, she won by just more than the 0.5% margin that would have triggered an automatic recount, with a libertarian candidate snagging about 4% of the vote.

Her office said first responders from the Toledo police and fire departments arrived promptly on the scene and had "medical professionals helping to take care of those involved in the crash." The statement said "we look forward to any additional information from Toledo Police as they investigate the accident."

The Toledo Police Department's traffic division did not immediately respond to an AP query.

In Ceuta, some migrants cling to hopes of someday reaching mainland Spain

By SUMAN NAISHADHAM Associated Press

CEUTA, Spain (AP) — Dikra, a 20-year-old migrant from Morocco, had spent five days in Ceuta by Sunday after swimming to the Spanish territory with her younger sister and cousin.

Since then, all her meals have come from local residents, and she isn't sure when her next one will come. Yet Dikra is certain she does not want to go back.

"I want to stay. I want to go to Spain," Dikra said, who asked that her last name be withheld for safety reasons.

By Sunday afternoon, Dikra was among the last remaining migrants in the city after tens of thousands of the 60,000 migrants that had breached the border with Morocco on Thursday and Friday walked back to that country. At least 72 people died in the crossing, and the humanitarian crisis the sudden rush of people caused reignited a debate around immigration in Europe and beyond.

In Tangier, Dikra said she worked as a cleaner, but decided to leave alongside her sister and cousin, in part to escape her alcoholic father. She hopes to make use of a hairdressing diploma in continental Spain — from which she remains separated by the Strait of Gibraltar and the European Union's complex

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asylum system.

Migrants wonder what will happen with holdouts

Abdel Karim, 35, also from Morocco, waited outside Ceuta's official migration reception center on Sunday, asking for updates about what officials were saying they would do with the holdouts still in the city.

Karim was unemployed in Morocco, and had lived in continental Spain years ago, before he was expelled from France where he was living on the streets.

"In Morocco, I'm seen as a deportee," Karim said. "Those who are deported know what it means — stress, depression, anguish."

Karim said he saw posts on social media about those making the crossing and took advantage of the chaos. He crossed with 10 euros in his pocket, he said, and pointed to his blistered feet. In Spain, Karim said he wants to do whatever work he can find, and remained unfazed about how he would get there.

Ceuta and its sister city Melilla are not part of the European Union's Schengen area, and those traveling to mainland Europe must go through border checks upon arrival.

At a beach in Ceuta, hundreds of migrants who had arrived days earlier gathered on Sunday evening. Some crowded around an army truck where Spanish soldiers distributed water.

Senegalese migrant Cesse Aliou, 25, rested with a group of sub-Saharan men and women outside the nearby shelter. In Morocco, Aliou said he earned 279 euros (\$322) a month at a call center, but the work wasn't stable.

So he boarded a train in Casablanca to Tangier and then to Fnideq, where he said he swam to Ceuta.

Across the street, on another wooded patch near the shelter, a group of migrants began fighting over water that local residents had brought to the area.

"We are very tired. To eat, to sleep, it's very difficult here," said Aliou, pointing to the scuffle. "You see how the situation is."

2 killed when firefighting helicopters collide near Athens as Europe's wildfire emergency rages

By ELENA BECATOROS and THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Two Greek firefighting helicopters collided in midair on Sunday as they were battling a wind-driven wildfire west of Athens, sending one aircraft crashing to the ground. Two crew members, a Greek and a Danish national, died in the crash.

The collision laid bare the danger at the most volatile front of Europe's wildfire emergency. Strong winds drove flames deeper into the region of the Greek capital and forced fresh evacuations, France guarded a still-burning scar four times the size of Paris, while Spain's major fires stopped advancing.

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis expressed "sorrow for the tragic accident" and extended condolences to the families of the firefighters killed in the crash.

"The loss of the Greek coordinator and the Danish pilot at the time they were attempting the major fire in Porto Gremeno fills us all with grief," Mitsotakis said in a statement.

The aircraft were Bell helicopters operating over the Psatha area west of Athens, each with a two-person crew. Foreign firefighting and helicopter crews are often deployed in Greece to help tackle wildfires during the country's hot, dry summers.

The two crew members who were recovered alive were a Greek and a British national.

The flames had spread rapidly, threatening communities and an industrial district as violent gusts prevented firefighting aircraft from collecting water from the sea. The blaze carried a grim resonance in a region where the 2018 Mati wildfire killed 104 people, Europe's deadliest blaze this century.

Farther west, containment brought no end to the emergency. France's largest wildfire remained held within its perimeter after forcing 224,000 people to flee in what may have been the country's largest civilian evacuation outside wartime.

Hot spots still burned within a 420-square-kilometer (162-square-mile) scar, thousands remained unable to return home, and nearly 3,000 firefighters were deployed against the Gironde megafire and a second,

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still-uncontained blaze in Provence.

Together, fires in France and Spain have driven roughly a third of a million people from homes and vacation sites, emptied communities at the height of the European summer and stretched emergency services across simultaneous disasters.

Record fire damage underscores Europe's growing wildfire threat

The mass evacuations in France and Spain are the latest measure of a wildfire threat growing across Europe.

The continent entered 2026 after its worst fire year on record, with more than 10,000 square kilometers (3,860 square miles) burned in 2025. Over the past four decades, wildfires have been linked to nearly 800 deaths across much of Europe, according to the European Environment Agency.

Europe is the world's fastest-warming continent. It has warmed more than twice the global average since the 1980s, according to the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service.

Human-caused climate change made the extreme fire-weather conditions behind this year's French blazes at least twice as likely, scientists at World Weather Attribution found in a rapid analysis conducted while the fires were still burning.

Gale-force winds cripple aerial assault near Athens

Nearly 500 firefighters and 23 aircraft were deployed, but gale-force winds drove flames through dry forest and crippled the response, preventing some aircraft from reaching the sea to collect water.

Authorities ordered the evacuation of Kandili, Agia Skepi and Toutouli as smoke rose over the mountains. Crews were particularly concerned about Porto Germeno, a seaside community on the Gulf of Corinth.

The fire began Friday near Agios Vasileios before sweeping toward Porto Germeno and into the forested mountains west of Athens. Firefighters evacuated 254 people by sea Friday and another 12 Saturday — often the last escape route when fire and smoke cut the few roads from coastal communities.

Wildfire meteorologist Theodore Giannaros estimated the blaze had affected 40 to 50 square kilometers (15 to 19 square miles), though authorities had issued no official figure.

Elsewhere in Greece, flames threatened homes on Kefalonia, forcing evacuations from inland communities as aircraft made water drops over the Ionian island. Firefighters battled another blaze near Nea Tenedos on the peninsula of Halkidiki.

Earlier this week, two firefighters died fighting a fire on Crete, while a third was killed on the Peloponnese.

"A pristine forest, a paradise, was surrendered to the hands of the fire," local farmer Minas Tzortzanis said Saturday. "There are no words to explain what has happened. Destruction. Total destruction."

France holds off renewed flames

In southwestern France, the Gironde megafire remained held within its perimeter Sunday but continued to burn after scorching 420 square kilometers (162 square miles) of forest in 10 days.

"The fire is now fixed, which does not mean that the fire is extinguished," the Gironde prefecture said, using the French firefighting term for a blaze whose advance has been stopped.

The region remained under France's highest red forest-fire alert. Dry conditions, soaring temperatures around Bordeaux and afternoon winds threatened to rekindle the flames.

In Le Porge, local officials said about 150 homes were destroyed. Mechanic Matthieu Plessis returned Saturday to the ruins of a house that had been in his family for seven generations.

"There are places I don't even recognize anymore," he said. "You don't even know what was here anymore, or who lived where."

Firefighters from Ukraine, Lithuania and French Polynesia were expected Sunday and Monday to reinforce the operation.

Provence fire stops advancing but remains uncontained

In southeastern France, nearly 1,500 firefighters battled a separate blaze in the Var department that tore through about 18 square kilometers (7 square miles) in little more than a day.

The Gros Bessillon fire was stabilized Sunday after its perimeter held overnight, but it remained uncontained. Some 2,500 people were evacuated as flames threatened nearby communities.

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It was the fourth major fire to strike central Var since July 19. A smaller blaze near Brignoles earlier in the week forced actor George Clooney and his family, along with about 700 other residents, to evacuate before it was brought under control.

Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu said France's fires were generally under control but warned that conditions remained volatile. He appointed a national coordinator to oversee reconstruction in fire-ravaged areas. More than 1,170 square kilometers (452 square miles) have burned across France this year.

Spain's deadly fire siege eases

Spain's major fires — which have killed at least 13 people, produced the country's largest recorded wildfire and prompted a national emergency — were no longer advancing on Sunday.

In Zamora province near the Portuguese border, more than 20 ground and aerial units guarded the perimeter of the Femoselle fire against flare-ups in the rugged Arribes del Duero landscape. Most evacuees had returned home, according to local media.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has called for a national pact to confront wildfires, warning that climate change is making them increasingly destructive.

Plane carrying European tourists crashes in Peru, killing 13 people on Nazca Lines viewing flight

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — A plane carrying European tourists to view the famed Nazca Lines crashed into a field Saturday outside the Peruvian city of Nazca, killing 13 people, local authorities said.

Nazca's municipal government said the plane departed from the nearby city of Ica and was operated by Peruvian company Aerodiana. On its website, the airline said that it has offered scenic flights over the Nazca lines for the past 14 years using Cessna Grand Caravan planes.

The Nazca Lines are a group of extensive geoglyphs scraped into the desert around Nazca hundreds of years ago by Peru's Indigenous inhabitants. The lines form images of animals that can only be fully appreciated from planes or viewing towers.

Among the dead were seven Italian citizens between the ages of 18 and 54, two 52-year-old Spaniards and two Germans of 77 and 78 years, Peru's Transportation Ministry said. The other two fatalities were the pilot Américo Salazar and copilot Irenka Guanilo del Carpio, it said in an official report.

President Keiko Fujimori expressed regret over the accident and said a "temporary suspension" of the airport was being considered, though the decision will be made once she receives reports from the relevant ministries.

Peruvian authorities said the accident is under investigation. Aerodiana was not immediately available for comment.

Why immigration remains strong for Trump among Republicans, according to a new AP-NORC poll

By AMELIA THOMSON-DEVEAUX, LINLEY SANDERS and MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Immigration remains a stronger issue for President Donald Trump than the economy or Iran, according to a new AP-NORC poll, even after three people were killed in encounters with Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the span of under a week in July.

Trump is not getting a glowing endorsement on his immigration approach from Americans overall, the new survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found. Only 39% of U.S. adults approve of his performance on immigration, a decline from 49% at the beginning of his second term.

Despite that, about 8 in 10 Republicans continue to approve of how Trump is handling immigration. That's a slight decline from the beginning of Trump's second term, when about 9 in 10 Republicans approved, but his support on the issue within his base has been mostly stable since last summer despite a chaotic year of immigration enforcement actions.

Republicans are also more likely to approve of how Trump is handling immigration than the economy

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or Iran. In just the past month, Republican approval of Trump's handling of Iran dropped slightly in AP-NORC polling

The poll found that about half of U.S. adults say Trump has "gone too far" on deporting immigrants living in the U.S. illegally. That number has also remained steady for over a year, despite multiple immigration crackdowns that deployed federal law enforcement to large cities and at least 10 deaths involving encounters with immigration officers since the mass deportation campaign began. Republicans, however, are much less likely to say Trump has overstepped in his immigration enforcement actions.

Overall, Trump's popularity has fallen since he took office last year, but the findings highlight the relatively muted impact of the past year's aggressive immigration enforcement on his public standing. That's a contrast with views of his handling of Iran, where he's seen more recent signs of slippage, even among his own supporters.

Immigration remains a strong issue for Trump with Republicans

Americans remain divided on whether Trump has overstepped on immigration.

About half of U.S. adults say Trump has "gone too far" when it comes to restricting legal immigration, in line with the last time the question was asked in February. Roughly half — 47% — say Trump has exceeded his authority when it comes to deporting immigrants living in the U.S. illegally. In each case, about 3 in 10 say Trump's actions have been "about right," and closer to 2 in 10 say he hasn't gone far enough.

Few Republicans — about 2 in 10 or fewer — say he's "gone too far" on deporting immigrants in the country illegally or restricting legal immigration.

Most Americans, however, say he's gone too far when it comes to using traffic stops to find and arrest immigrants living in the U.S. illegally — a practice that was at the center of two recent ICE shootings in Maine — and when it comes to sending federal immigration agents into U.S. cities. Republicans were also less likely to see these as oversteps.

James Leatherman, a 68-year-old Republican from San Antonio, is overall supportive of Trump's handling of the presidency and backs him on immigration in particular.

"You cannot come in here illegally — you're breaking the law," he said.

More Americans disapprove than approve of the way ICE is enforcing immigration laws. About half of Americans "strongly" or "somewhat" disapprove of the agency's approach, while roughly 3 in 10 "strongly" or "somewhat" approve. There's a wide partisan split, though: About 6 in 10 Republicans approve of ICE's approach, compared with about 2 in 10 independents and just 4% of Democrats.

Eric Coursen, 76, an independent from Chincoteague, Virginia, agrees with the president that there were issues with the immigration system. He said doesn't believe in open borders — but he's deeply opposed to how the administration has been enforcing immigration law.

"It's like taking some bread when you're hungry and you take it, you're going to shoot that person rather than just, you know, get them for theft?" he said. "It's just overkill."

Trump's approval on the economy remains low

About 3 in 10 U.S. adults, 32%, approve of how Trump is handling the economy. That's down from 40% at the start of his second term, and marks a shift from his first presidential term when the economy was a stronger issue for Trump.

During Trump's first term, his lowest approval on the economy was 40% in December 2017. Now, his rating is well below that.

Roughly 7 in 10 Republicans — 69% — approve of how Trump is handling the economy. That's roughly in line with the share who approve of how he's handling the presidency, but it's slightly below the 78% who approved early in Trump's second term.

Leatherman, despite his support for Trump, said he's feeling the pinch of higher prices in his budget. "I almost have to go to the bank to get a loan before I go grocery shopping," he said.

About 7 in 10 U.S. adults describe the nation's economy as "very" or "somewhat" poor, in line with April. Republicans are more optimistic, with about 6 in 10 saying that the U.S. economy is doing well, compared with about 2 in 10 independents and roughly 1 in 10 Democrats.

More Republicans approve of how Trump is handling healthcare

Healthcare has never been a strong issue for Trump. Unlike with immigration and the economy, a clear majority of U.S. adults has disapproved of Trump's performance on healthcare across both presidential terms. That hasn't changed in the new poll, which found that only about 3 in 10 Americans approve of how Trump is handling healthcare, in line with when the question was last asked in December.

He's seen a rebound on the issue among his own supporters since late last year, though. Roughly 71% of Republicans now approve, compared with 59% in the December poll.

That shift comes as Democrats kicked off 100 days until the midterm elections last week, with leaders saying they'll focus on healthcare cuts, in addition to the cost of living and the war in Iran. Democrats and independents continue to overwhelmingly disapprove of Trump's handling of healthcare.

Republicans want voters to elect Kansas Supreme Court justices and move court to the right

By JOHN HANNA AP Political Writer

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Kansas voters will decide Tuesday whether to elect state Supreme Court justices rather than have the governor appoint them, a push from conservatives who have chafed for years over court decisions they disagreed with on issues such as abortion, school funding and the death penalty.

If the constitutional amendment passes, supporters hope to elect at least four conservative, anti-abortion justices to the seven-member court by 2033.

Kansas is considering the change amid concerns that increasingly contentious and expensive judicial elections in other states are making their courts more partisan and less independent. Spending in a single state Supreme Court race in Wisconsin last year topped \$100 million.

Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly, a term-limited Democrat who opposes the measure, said gerrymandering and dark money have put the Legislature out of step with the state and, "to think you can make the judicial branch a part of that dysfunctional system is frightening."

Republicans have a long list of rulings they question

GOP lawmakers cite multiple rulings by Kansas courts over the past two decades as reasons for change.

Most recently, a district court judge earlier this month reinstated a three-day grace period for voters to return mail ballots after Election Day, which GOP lawmakers had eliminated. Kansas Senate President Ty Masterson, seeking the Republican nomination for governor, called the decision "outrageous" and urged people to vote yes on the ballot question.

The same judge — a finalist to fill the most recent Supreme Court vacancy — blocked enforcement of a 2025 law banning gender-affirming care for transgender minors. Masterson described him as "radical."

The list of rulings Republicans criticize also includes rulings on education funding back to 2004. Supreme Court decisions forced lawmakers to increase funding to comply with the state constitution.

"If we elect our Supreme Court, they won't force you to spend money on schools," Masterson said in remarks in November to a conservative group, the Marion County Patriots for Liberty, the Marion County Record reported.

Abortion remains a key issue on both sides

Electing state Supreme Court justices gained currency among Republicans after a 2022 public vote affirming the high court's landmark 2019 decision that Kansas' bill of rights guarantees bodily autonomy and access to abortion. Total spending by both sides has exceeded \$12 million.

Legislators who worked to overturn the Supreme Court's protections, including Masterson, helped write this year's proposal.

Seven weeks after that 2022 vote, Attorney General Kris Kobach, then a GOP candidate for the office, told a Republican club in Wichita that electing justices would "slowly and quietly" put anti-abortion justices on the high court.

The vote-yes campaign's biggest donor — providing \$1.7 million toward the campaign's \$3.7 million in spending — is a Nashville-based nonprofit that supports Republican candidates, groups and causes. Kansans for Life, the state's most influential anti-abortion group, has spent at least \$87,000 over the past 11

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days on mailers and texts.

"Kansans can bring an end to this reign of abortion by voting 'yes,'" Troy Newman, president of Operation Rescue, said in an editorial written by a staffer on the anti-abortion group's website.

Meanwhile, the national and state affiliates for abortion provider Planned Parenthood contributed another \$1.6 million toward the vote-no campaign's \$8 million-plus in spending.

Jamie Swan, an engineer and college teaching assistant who knocked on doors for abortion rights in 2022, is doing the same to try to halt the proposal.

"I really believe that this is just a power grab," she said.

Kansas legislators have no say in appointments

Backers of the Kansas proposal brush aside arguments that electing the justices will give wealthy donors control over the Supreme Court.

"Globally and over history, even in its imperfection, the best system is democracy," said Elizabeth Patton, state director of the low-tax, small-government group Americans for Prosperity, which has spent \$935,000 to promote the vote-yes campaign.

Twenty-two states elect their top court's judges, eight in partisan races. Governors in 26 states appoint them. In South Carolina and Virginia, legislators pick the justices.

Kansas elected justices for nearly 100 years before voters amended the state constitution in 1958. The governor now picks one of three finalists named by a nominating commission controlled by attorneys. Legislators have no role.

A review of every state's current and past constitutions shows that the last state to add an amendment like the one Kansas is contemplating was Mississippi in 1914. Since then, 18 states' amendments went the opposite way.

Voters weigh in every six years on whether a justice remains on the bench through a yes-or-no ballot question, but they've never booted a sitting justice. Conservatives say that means justices face no consequences for errant decisions.

Retirements and deaths allowed the term-limited Kelly to appoint four of the current justices. Recently, she picked a district court judge who blocked enforcement of longstanding abortion restrictions in 2023.

"We don't have a good way to fight back," said state Sen. Mike Thompson, a conservative Kansas City-area Republican, who backs the measure.

Ukrainian drones kill 5 in Russia and set fire to Wildberries warehouse

By The Associated Press undefined

Ukrainian drone strikes killed at least five people across Russia, also hitting industrial sites and a further warehouse belonging to Russia's e-commerce giant Wildberries, local officials said.

Wildberries, Russia's largest online marketplace, is sometimes described as the country's answer to Amazon. In under two weeks, Ukraine has struck over a dozen of the retailer's depots, part of Kyiv's aerial campaign aimed at undermining Moscow's war effort, hurting its economy and making people feel the consequences of the Kremlin's all-out invasion of Ukraine.

Russian air defenses overnight shot down 635 Ukrainian drones, including over occupied Crimea and the Black and Azov Seas, according to the Defense Ministry in Moscow. The ministry did not say how many were launched or struck targets.

Meanwhile, Russia attacked Ukraine with 133 drones during the night, 24 of which hit targets, according to the Ukrainian air force. Later on Sunday, separate Russian attacks on the Ukrainian cities of Zaporizhzhia and Kharkiv killed at least two people, according to local officials.

Ukraine's campaign against Wildberries

Ukrainian drones targeted a Wildberries warehouse in the Samara region, some 800 kilometers (500 miles) from the Russian-Ukrainian border, according to local Gov. Vyacheslav Fedorishchev. He said a fire had broken out but there were no casualties.

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Kyiv's campaign against Wildberries first hit the company's sites in Elektrostal, just east of Moscow, and in the Tambov region July 18. Strikes followed on facilities across western and southern Russia, as well as Russian-held Crimea. At least nine people have been killed and scores wounded.

Two people were killed as a Ukrainian drone struck a residential building in the Saratov region east of Samara, local Gov. Roman Busargin said.

He added that the strikes damaged civil infrastructure in Engels, where the deaths took place, and the regional capital, Saratov.

Both cities have been frequent targets for Ukrainian attacks in recent years. Engels hosts a military airbase, while Saratov is home to a large oil refinery.

In Russia's Bashkortostan region further north, local Gov. Radiy Khabirov said that air defence had repelled a large-scale drone strike on "industrial facilities" in the city of Ufa. He did not specify what exactly was struck, but said that a blaze was being put out.

In the Udmurt Republic further northwest, three civilians died and two more were wounded in a Ukrainian drone strike, according to acting regional head Olga Abramova.

Abramova said air defenses shot down two Ukrainian drones and "prevented an attempted attack" by Kyiv. She said a civilian car was damaged in the strike, without clarifying if drone debris was the cause.

In Ukraine, one person died on Sunday as a Russian guided bomb struck a residential building in the southern city of Zaporizhzhia, according to local administration head Ivan Fedorov. Another attack on Sunday killed one person and set fire to a postal terminal on the outskirts of Kharkiv, in the northwest, said regional administration head Oleh Syniehubov.

Clutch kicker gets his due as Adam Vinatieri heads into the Pro Football Hall of Fame

By KYLE HIGHTOWER AP Sports Writer

When Tom Brady thinks of clutch NFL players, the man considered by most to be the greatest quarterback to play the game begins his list with Adam Vinatieri.

"When you look up clutch in the dictionary, it should have your picture," the seven-time Super Bowl-winning quarterback wrote in a 2021 Instagram post wishing the 24-year veteran a happy retirement. "Honored to have played with the (greatest of all-time)."

Five years later, the kicker whose four Super Bowl rings rank as the most in league history at his position will take his place in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

"Just to say you did it a long time and you did a pretty good job and you got to put an exclamation on a couple of games was a wonderful experience for me," Vinatieri said.

Vinatieri got his call in his second year on the ballot and on Saturday will become just the third full-time placekicker to be inducted into the hall, joining Jan Stenerud and Morten Andersen.

But Vinatieri's career resume stands out above his peers.

He retired with all-time marks of 2,673 career points and 599 field goals. Only George Blanda (26 seasons) and Andersen (25) had longer NFL careers than Vinatieri.

The four-time Super Bowl champion stunned many when he left New England following the 2005 season — after winning three of his rings and becoming the franchise's career scoring leader after 10 seasons — and landed with rival Indianapolis.

Vinatieri was far from done with inking his name in the record books.

At age 34, he began what would be a 14-year run in Indy during which he'd break the Colts' career scoring mark as well as earn a fourth Super Bowl ring during his first season there in 2006.

By the time he finally walked away having played his final season in 2019 at age 47, Vinatieri also would own the NFL's top marks for field goal attempts (715), consecutive field goals made (44) and 100-plus point seasons (21).

His legacy, though, was built from what he did in some of his most pressure-filled moments on the field.

His 45-yard field goal for the Patriots in blizzard-like conditions during the 2002 AFC divisional round

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playoff game against the Oakland Raiders tied the score and sent the Patriots to overtime. His 23-yarder in the extra frame propelled New England to the conference championship game.

Two weeks later, Vinatieri did it again by making a 48-yarder in the closing seconds to give the Patriots their first Super Bowl title with a 20-17 victory over the Rams.

Two years after that kick, Vinatieri and the Patriots were at it again during a wild back-and-forth fourth quarter in their Super Bowl matchup with the Carolina Panthers that featured 37 points combined.

Ricky Proehl caught a tying TD pass to make it 29-29 with 1:08 left. But the kickoff went out of bounds and the Patriots started at their 40.

Brady led his team down the field and set up Vinatieri for a 41-yard try with 9 seconds left. Vinatieri nailed it to give New England a 32-29 win and its second Super Bowl title in three years.

"Those 10 years in New England, there was nothing like it," Vinatieri said. "I know my teammates and I started a dynasty at that point winning a bunch of Super Bowls in a short amount of time. That was a great experience for me and one that I'll cherish my entire life."

Vinatieri's poise under pressure was unmatched

Prior to facing Vinatieri and the Colts for the final time in 2018 when Brady was still with the Patriots, Brady said witnessing the winning kick against the Raiders would always stand out in his mind.

"I was lucky enough to be (in New England) when he was (there) early in his career and I thought so much of him. He was just so clutch. He always kind of made the kick and that's what the mark of a great kicker is," Brady said. "When you see it now, it's pretty remarkable that he made it and what that meant for this organization. ... What a lucky person to be able to be involved in that 'Snow Bowl' and to watch that kick go through."

Former Patriots coach Bill Belichick said in a 2024 episode of his "The Coach Show" podcast that Vinatieri is alone amongst kickers he's coached.

"Adam's one of these guys, too, he's a kicker but he worked out with the rest of the team," Belichick said. "He didn't act like a kicker. He was a football player. He was tough. He worked hard every day and he was very dependable in the clutch. There's no player I'd rather have out there kicking a game-winning field goal than Adam Vinatieri. Probably even today."

Time with Colts also contributed to Super Bowl win

While Vinatieri may be most remembered for his time in New England, he continued to excel during his tenure in Indy.

In January 2007, the South Dakota State alum made five field goals in a divisional round game that featured no touchdowns at Baltimore.

The 15-6 victory set up an AFC title game rematch between the Colts and Patriots, this time in Indy with Vinatieri on the opposite sideline from Brady and his ex-teammates. Vinatieri's playoff run continued as the Colts reached their first Super Bowl since the franchise moved to Indianapolis.

Vinatieri made three more field goals in a 29-17 Super Bowl win over Chicago and captured yet another ring while finishing that postseason with 49 points and 14 field goals, both one-season playoff records. He also became the first player to make three or more field goals in four consecutive postseason games.

Vinatieri enters the hall as a three-time All-Pro, was a three-time Pro Bowl selection and a member of the NFL's 100th Anniversary All-Time Team.

He ranks second all-time in NFL victories (242), regular-season wins (221) and postseason wins (21) and is one of five players who appeared in a game at age 46.

Induction honor goes to daughter of former Colts owner Jim Irsay

His affinity for his time with the Colts was reflected in his choice to be presented at the Hall of Fame induction by Colts owner and CEO Carlie Irsay-Gordon.

He told Indianapolis' Fox affiliate that he originally wanted to ask late owner Jim Irsay, who died in May 2025.

"Jim was the first pick. There really wasn't anyone else I thought about," Vinatieri said. "I was like, 'You know what? It means a lot to me but also potentially means a lot for her being the fact she's the new owner. I just felt like it was the right thing for both of us. The more I thought of it, the more it became

clear to me that this is the right thing to do.”

Moscow mayor calls a deadly bomb attack on a restaurant a ‘terrorist act’

By The Associated Press undefined

Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyenin called on Sunday a bomb attack on a restaurant in the capital the day before a “brutal terrorist act,” but did not say who was responsible.

The blast on Saturday evening at the Balzi Rossi, an upscale Italian establishment in central Moscow, killed three people, including the woman bomber, Russian state media said, citing local officials.

“Yesterday, a brutal terrorist act was committed in Moscow that claimed human lives. The victims are currently in the city’s hospitals, where they are receiving all necessary care,” Sobyenin wrote on social media Sunday.

He added that a probe into the attack was underway. “Those responsible for committing this crime will certainly be found and will face the punishment they deserve,” he wrote.

At least 21 people were wounded when the explosive device detonated at the restaurant on Kudrinskaya Square, the National Anti-Terrorism Committee said late on Saturday, according to Russian state news agency Ria Novosti.

A woman attempted to smuggle the bomb into the establishment, but a security guard refused to let her in before the bomb exploded, reported Ria Novosti. The Moscow Investigative Committee said on Saturday evening the attack was still being investigated.

As of early afternoon on Sunday, there was no further information from Russian authorities, and no one had publicly claimed responsibility.

According to Ria Novosti, the restaurant was closed for a private function on Saturday evening.

Footage released by Russian state media showed heavily armed law-enforcement officers, several ambulances and other emergency vehicles at the site.

Earlier this year, Russia’s Federal Security Service announced that authorities would tighten security around senior military and government officials, after a series of assassination attempts in Russian cities that followed the Kremlin’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

So far, Russian authorities have not drawn any connections between Saturday’s blast and these earlier attacks or the war in Ukraine.

Russia previously said Kyiv was behind a car bombing in Moscow last April that killed Lt. Gen. Yaroslav Moskalik, a deputy head of the main operational department in Russia’s General Staff. Ukraine did not publicly claim responsibility.

But Ukraine’s SBU security service earlier said it had organized the killing in December 2024 of Lt. Gen. Igor Kirillov, who headed the Russian military’s nuclear, biological and chemical protection forces.

Kirillov was killed by a bomb hidden in a scooter outside his apartment building in Moscow, a day after Ukraine’s security service leveled criminal charges against him.

Among other prominent victims of bombing attacks in Russia were Daria Dugina, the daughter of influential nationalist thinker Aleksandr Dugin, and Vladlen Tatarsky, a well-known pro-Kremlin military blogger.

Kyiv denied involvement in the attack on Dugina, and did not respond to Russian accusations that it was behind Tatarsky’s death.

Of thee I sing: A guide to US patriotic songs, from ‘The Liberty Song’ to Jay-Z and Kanye West

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The history of American patriotic songs offers a lesson about the different ways you can say you love your country.

Composers have celebrated endurance under fire (“The Star-Spangled Banner”) and invoked divine

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approval ("God Bless America"). While Toby Keith's "Made in America" dares anyone to question American eminence, Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land" and Curtis Mayfield's "This Is My Country" highlight a long tradition of weaving in social protest, as if the advance to a "more perfect union" is only possible through acknowledging imperfection.

Patriotic music is also a story of cultural independence. Well into the 19th century, writers were adapting new lyrics to popular melodies — usually originating in England — as a way of ensuring the songs would be widely known.

"Nowadays, it would be like, 'Here are my new lyrics that I just wrote, and you can sing them to this Beatles song,'" explains Loras John Schissel, a senior musicologist at the Library of Congress. "Everyone would say, 'Oh, OK, I know that.'"

Here's a list — admittedly subjective — of some notable patriotic songs, from colonial times to the present.

'The Liberty Song' (late 1760s)

The legacy of Pennsylvania-Delaware statesman John Dickinson has long been shadowed by his refusal to sign the Declaration of Independence. While he thought the break from Britain was premature, he does have some claim to being the lyricist for the earliest patriotic anthem. "The Liberty Song" is a forthright chant with a melody taken from the Royal Navy march, "Heart of Oak." Dickinson's lyrics are an assertion of rights and a warning against would-be oppressors, amplifying colonial fears that all would be reduced to servitude: "In freedom we're born, and in freedom we'll live/Our purses are ready/Steady, Friends, steady."

'Yankee Doodle' (traditional song, original date unknown)

Like Dickinson's song, "Yankee Doodle" wasn't only a statement of rebellion, but of revision and even mockery. "Yankee Doodle" was once a British marching song, tapped out on fife and drums and chanted by British troops in Boston. But by the end of the Revolutionary War, rebels had turned it back on their enemies and used it to accompany British retreat. Now wholly Americanized, "Yankee Doodle" (or "Yankee Doodle Dandy") is the state song of Connecticut and known to movie lovers as the title to the Oscar-winning, World War II-era film that starred James Cagney.

'My Country 'Tis of Thee' (1831-1832)

Imagine a songwriter from a former U.S. territory turning "Hail to the Chief" into a condemnation of the American way. Samuel Francis Smith was a theology student whose hymn to freedom and farewell to tyrants with "haughty steps" rests on the melody of "God Save the King." It has been quoted during moments of protest (the Rev. Martin Luther King during his "I Have a Dream" speech) and sung during moments of unity. (Aretha Franklin at President Barack Obama's first inauguration). It also holds a poignant place in Civil War history: According to an eyewitness account, after Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, a gathering of Black people in South Carolina spontaneously sang it upon hearing that the state's enslaved population had been declared free.

'Battle Hymn of the Republic' (1861-62)

Julia Ward Howe was a 19th-century abolitionist whose husband was a supporter of the martyred anti-slavery crusader John Brown and who adapted her hymn to the Union cause from the melody of "John Brown's Body," which she had heard during a public review of Union troops. The lyrics came to her in a haze. "I awoke in the gray of the morning twilight; and as I lay waiting for the dawn, the long lines of the desired poem began to twine themselves in my mind," she wrote in her memoir. And her song has since been heard everywhere from the 1971 Super Bowl to last year's funeral for President Jimmy Carter.

'God Bless America' (Written in 1918, revised in 1938)

Irving Berlin first intended his celebrated — and criticized — ode for a World War I era revue. But it didn't quite fit with the show's storyline. Berlin set it aside until the late 1930s, when fears of a new world war were rising. "God Bless America" was something of a break from earlier patriotic numbers, says Stephen Winick, a folklorist at the Library of Congress. It was written by an immigrant, and was a statement of personal allegiance ("Land that I love") instead of collective force. Some even questioned whether Berlin had the right to compose it. "He got mail from people basically saying, 'How is it that you, this Russian

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Jew, has any right to ask God to bless America?" Winick says.

'This Land Is Your Land' (1940)

The Woody Guthrie standard was a response to "God Bless America," if only because Guthrie believed that Berlin had failed to appreciate the country's natural beauty beyond invoking "the valleys and the prairies." Guthrie's lyrical turns also fit the narrative of patriotism/protest, with its poetic imagery ("diamond deserts," "wheat fields waving"), and its wry defiance — in at least one version of the song — of a seemingly sacred American right, private property: "As I went walking I saw a sign there/And on the sign it said "No Trespassing./But on the other side it didn't say nothing."

'Back in the U.S.A.' (1959)

Chuck Berry once said that he composed his classic tour of rock 'n' roll Americana after feeling homesick during a trip to Australia. Berry's tribute to skyscrapers, jukeboxes and the open road from "the coast of California to the shores of the Delaware Bay" has been covered by Bruce Springsteen, Linda Ronstadt among others. But not everyone saw the song as an all-out celebration. Citing Berry's line about "looking HARD for a drive-in, searchin' for a corner café," critic Dave Marsh once noted that Berry was well aware that many establishments in the 1950s refused to serve a Black man. "Berry never lets you be sure that he's coming to grips with the contradictory mess we've made of things," Marsh wrote.

'This Is My Country' (Take One, 1940)

Don Raye and Al Jacobs collaborated on this brisk and confident march, written as war broke out in Europe. The lyrics celebrate loyalty and call out for unity across geographic lines: "What difference if I hail from North or South/Or from the East or West?/My heart is filled with love for all of these." The song has since been played at Disney theme park fireworks shows and recorded by everyone from Pat Boone to the Air Force Heritage of America Band.

'This Is My Country' (Take Two, 1968)

Curtis Mayfield's hard-hitting soul composition, recorded with his longtime group the Impressions, was released amid the civil rights movement. It's a history lesson, an assertion of pride and place and a statement that a Black man's patriotism comes out on the other end of unbearable suffering: "I've paid 300 years or more/Of slave driving, sweat, and welts on my back/This is my country."

'Travelin' Soldier' (1996)

Bruce Robinson's classic, written in 1996 and rewritten in 1999, is narrative country at its folkliest: A story about a lonely American soldier during the Vietnam War corresponding with a young woman back home. It's both romantic and painful: He dies, she mourns and it serves as powerful reminder of the sacrifices made by service members and those who love them. "Travelin' Soldier" became a hit in 2002-2003 for The Chicks, formerly the Dixie Chicks, during a contentious national conversation about patriotism amid the aftermath of 9/11 and the impending Iraq War. It was revived last year by Cody Johnson.

'Chicken Fried' (2005)

The post-9/11 moment inspired a new wave of across genres, with particular focus on rock and such country hits as Toby Keith's "Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue (The Angry American)." Zac Brown Band's "Chicken Fried," originally recorded in 2003, was an ode to cold beer, good jeans and other simple pleasures that became a sleeper anthem because of its often overlooked third verse. "I thank God for my life / And for the stars and stripes / May freedom forever fly, let it ring," Brown sings a cappella, the lively instrumentation ceasing in exchange for listeners' attention.

'Made in America' (Take One, 2011)

Keith had written so many patriotic songs that he considered shelving "Made in America" for fear of overdoing it. A conversation with cowriter Bobby Pinson and actor/singer Scott Reeves inspired his hit about the popularity of cheap, foreign-made products. Keith and Pinson turned out a power ballad about an old man "livin' off the land," an upholder of traditional values so loyal to all things American that he's willing to "spend a little more in the store for a tag in the back that says 'USA.'"

'Made in America' (Take Two, 2011)

Around the time Keith's "Made in America" was released, Jay-Z and Kanye West were working on the

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protest/patriotic rap "Sweet Baby Jesus," eventually named "Made in America." The lyrics are a boast, a reminder and a vow to push forward, as if echoing King's likening the American Dream to a promissory note the leaders had yet to make good on: "Built a republic that still stands/I'm tryna lead a nation, to leave to my little man's/Or my daughter, so I'm boiling this water/The scales was lopsided, I'm just restoring order."

Ken Martin hunkers down at the Democratic National Committee as a storm gathers around party leader

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Politics Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Ken Martin is in survival mode.

Desperate to save his job as chair of the Democratic National Committee, he is avoiding media appearances, monitoring his critics' social media posts and refusing — at least so far — to make any substantive changes at his troubled organization.

A half dozen state leaders and other committee members, most of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal conversations, described Martin as defensive and extremely distrustful of others, even some people on his own team, as calls for his resignation grow louder among Democratic operatives who lament his leadership decisions, lackluster fundraising and even his tendency to lash out in anger.

But there is no sign that the organization's membership plans to replace Martin before the midterm elections in November, even as some wonder how much longer he can hold on. The drama threatens to undermine the party's momentum in the battle to retake control of Congress from President Donald Trump's Republican Party.

"I sense no movement from the DNC to make a change, and so that decision's up to Ken. And he's told me he's in it, so I trust him on making that decision," said Colorado Democratic Party Chair Shad Murib, a DNC member and strong Martin supporter. "What we're seeing right now is a whole group of folks who live on Twitter and consultants fighting harder against Ken Martin than they've ever fought against Donald Trump."

Martin did not grant an interview request. In a recent Substack post, Martin defended himself this way: "If the question is whether the Democratic Party will be ready to win — everywhere, at every level, in this election and for the decade ahead — the answer is a resounding yes."

Martin's critics are everywhere all at once and some want him out

As one of its most important responsibilities, the DNC is tasked with building out the party's national infrastructure, including fundraising, to support the Democrats' next presidential nominee. Yet few members of the next class of White House prospects are willing to speak out on Martin's behalf.

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore, who has traveled to key states in recent weeks before a potential presidential bid, praised the DNC for embracing a new primary calendar that promotes more diverse states such as South Carolina and Nevada.

But Moore declined three separate times to answer directly when asked whether he has confidence in Martin heading into 2028.

"My confidence is in the people," Moore told The Associated Press. "My confidence is in making sure that we have a system in place that actually allows the people's voices to be heard."

He said he is not looking for "wins on behalf of a political structure or party bosses."

Others have been explicitly critical of Martin.

Shannon Watts, the former leader of Moms Demand Action and a member of the DNC's finance committee in 2024, criticized Martin's lack of communication with donors and key stakeholders. She said she was ready and willing to help Martin after he took over last year, but he never called.

She did, however, get a call from a DNC staffer urging her to delete a social media post that was critical of Martin. Such calls have become common occurrences in recent months.

"Ken needs to step aside. I think Ken knows he needs to step aside," Watts said. "There's a reason he's worried he's going to be fired and it's because he's not up to the job."

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Even those close to Martin, including senior members of the DNC leadership, privately complain that Martin is not doing more to maintain ties with committee members, donors and prominent outside officials. He was known for building strong relationships in his previous post as leader of the Association of State Democratic Chairs, which is largely why he was elected national chair.

His allies are baffled as to why he has not done the same in his new job. There are also lingering frustrations over how Martin handled the follow-up report on the 2024 election. He promised to release the document, then withheld it, then eventually made it public while saying it was too flawed to be helpful.

Dems look to a possible change but there's no clear alternative right now

Few expect Martin to be replaced before the fall elections, largely because no clear alternative has emerged as the midterms loom. But members are looking toward the DNC's winter meeting after the November contests — and before the 2028 presidential primary process begins in earnest — as the most likely time to make a leadership change.

Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley has fielded calls to discuss a candidacy to replace Martin, according to a person with knowledge of the conversations who requested anonymity to discuss private discussions. O'Malley, who did not respond to a request for comment, finished a distant third in the DNC chair election last winter.

The growing chorus of criticism has shaken the confidence of Martin's loyalists.

They were especially concerned about an essay this week by Rufus Gifford, the finance chairman for President Joe Biden's reelection campaign, who warned that the DNC under Martin's leadership was "spiraling toward irrelevance."

"At this point, I think there is no saving Martin's chairmanship. He is a good man with good intentions but simply not meeting this critical moment," Gifford wrote on Substack. "As Democrats, the only solution is to acknowledge the problem and fix it. Now."

One Martin ally likened the fallout from Gifford's statement to the day after Biden's disastrous debate performance that effectively forced him to abandon his reelection campaign.

Martin has stayed on the road but remained quiet

Martin got a lifeline this week from New York Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, the House Democratic leader, who said while campaigning in Pennsylvania that Martin "has my full support."

Jeffries noted that Democrats have won the overwhelming majority of elections since Martin took over the DNC, which also coincides with Trump's return to the White House. Jeffries also played down the party's financial challenges.

Federal filings show that the DNC reported about \$16.3 million in the bank with more than \$18 million in debt at the end of June, compared with the Republican National Committee reporting more than \$128 million in cash and no debt.

The DNC under Martin used the party's Washington headquarters as collateral to secure a \$15 million line of credit last fall. His critics seized on the decision as an example of financial mismanagement, although the building was used as collateral under former party chairs as well.

DNC officials note that the committee has actually raised more money under Martin than it raised in 2018, the last time the party did not have the White House in a midterm year.

"The current DNC has raised the most money of any DNC without the White House in the 198-year history of the Democratic Party," Martin wrote recently on Substack.

While Martin has avoided national media appearances, which are considered a major responsibility for the chair, he has been traveling almost constantly to support party officials and key stakeholders across the country.

He visited six states over the past two weeks alone. This past week, for example, he met with civil rights leaders in Nashville, Tennessee, and mayors from across the country in Atlanta.

Kansas Democratic Party Chair Jeanna Repass said Martin should be praised for his commitment to strengthening state parties at a critical moment. Indeed, instead of hoarding the DNC's cash, Martin is distributing it aggressively to needy state parties, just as he promised while campaigning for the chairmanship.

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"This is a ridiculous conversation to be having right now," Repass said. "If people don't like Ken, they can have a conversation with him in two years. But right now, we all need to be behind the chair and keep our heads down and do our jobs."

Today in History: August 3, deadly Walmart shooting in El Paso

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, Aug. 3, the 215th day of 2026. There are 150 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On August 3, 2019, a gunman opened fire at a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas, resulting in the deaths of 23 people; after surrendering, the gunman told detectives he targeted "Mexicans" and had outlined the plot in a screed published online shortly before the attack.

Also on this date:

In 1492, Christopher Columbus set sail from Palos, Spain, on his first voyage that took him to the present-day Americas.

In 1852, in America's first intercollegiate sporting event, Harvard rowed past Yale to win the first Harvard-Yale Regatta.

In 1916, Irish-born British diplomat Roger Casement, a strong advocate of independence for Ireland, was hanged for treason.

In 1936, Jesse Owens of the United States won the first of his four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics as he took the 100-meter sprint.

In 1972, the U.S. Senate ratified the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In 1977, the Tandy Corporation introduced the TRS-80, one of the first widely-available home computers.

In 1981, U.S. air traffic controllers went on strike, seeking pay and workplace improvements (two days later, President Ronald Reagan fired the 11,345 striking union members and barred them from federal employment).

In 2004, the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty opened to visitors for the first time since the 9/11 attacks.

In 2018, Las Vegas police said they were closing their investigation into the Oct. 1, 2017, shooting that left 58 people dead at a country music festival without a definitive answer for why Stephen Paddock unleashed gunfire from a hotel suite onto the concert crowd.

In 2021, New York's state attorney general said an investigation found Gov. Andrew Cuomo had sexually harassed multiple current and former state government employees; the report stepped up pressure from fellow Democrats for Cuomo to resign, and he did so a week later.

In 2022, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi arrived in Taiwan, becoming the highest-ranking American official in 25 years to visit the self-ruled island claimed by China, which quickly announced it would conduct military maneuvers in retaliation for her trip.

Today's Birthdays: Football Hall of Fame coach Marv Levy is 101. Actor Martin Sheen is 86. Lifestyle guru Martha Stewart is 85. Film director John Landis is 76. Actor JoMarie Payton (TV: "Family Matters") is 76. Hockey Hall of Famer Marcel Dionne is 75. Actor John C. McGinley is 67. Rock singer/guitarist James Hetfield (Metallica) is 63. Actor Lisa Ann Walter (TV: "Abbott Elementary") is 63. Rock musician Stephen Carpenter (Deftones) is 56. Former NFL quarterback Tom Brady is 49. Actor Evangeline Lilly is 47. Olympic swimming gold medalist Ryan Lochte is 42. Model Karlie Kloss is 32. Actor Chandler Kinney is 26.