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Brown County Fair Tickets Available

The Groton Daily Independent has some Brown County Fair Tickets available for \$50 each. 2 each of Cooper Alan & Jackson Dean, Aug. 12, 8 p.m.; 2 each of Tyler Hubbard & Blackhawk, Aug. 13, 8 p.m.; 2 each of Theory of a Deadman & Sevendust, Aug. 14, 8 p.m.; and 1 of Lee Brice & George Birge, Aug. 15, 8 p.m. I do take Venmo. Text Paul at 605-397-7460 if interested.



Rubble Site Closed

The water from the Pierpont area is now entering the Groton area. As a result, the road to the rubble site is now under water and the site is closed until further notice.

Community Calendar

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

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

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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.

Gene-Edited Beagles

A startup created two allergen-free beagles using CRISPR gene-editing technology, according to a study published yesterday. The advance could expand the number of pet owners, while potentially shifting demand from rescue operations toward breeders.

Scientists at Kindred Companion Sciences edited dog skin cells to disable the main gene responsible for producing allergy-causing proteins, which all dogs carry. They then inserted the edited genetic material into eggs, which were implanted into a beagle surrogate. The surrogate birthed two puppies, Alfie and Bailey, whose saliva, hair, and dander do not contain the proteins. Alfie's and Bailey's owners showed no allergic reaction to samples from the gene-edited beagles despite reacting to breeds that shed less.

Bailey and Alfie are being monitored for long-term health, though scientists say issues are unlikely. Dogs have naturally been born without the allergy-causing protein, albeit extremely rarely.

Turkey-Kurdish Peace Proposal

Turkey's ruling coalition submitted a draft law yesterday outlining plans to secure peace with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The proposal has broad support in parliament and is expected to advance to a debate this week.

The law would shield about 4,000 fighters from prosecution, namely those not charged with homicide who return to Turkey within six months. It comes after the PKK's imprisoned leader called for an end to violence last year, as Syria's new government has made headway in reintegrating its Kurdish region, where many PKK fighters have been based. Following their leader's announcement last year, 30 fighters burned their weapons in a symbolic gesture.

Since the 1980s, the PKK has launched an insurgency in pursuit of an independent Kurdish state or expanded rights and autonomy. The group is designated as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the US, and EU; violence has killed an estimated 40,000 people, many of them Kurdish.

☞ Humankind: Thoughtful customer draws ketchup portrait of a Chili's server, brightening her spirits during particularly difficult shift .

Have You Ever Stared Directly at the Sun?

Scientists have captured the highest resolution images of the sun to date, publishing them in a Nature study yesterday. The images also reveal the existence of a physical phenomenon that can help explain the dynamics behind space weather.

The photographs were captured by the Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope in Maui, Hawaii. Researchers had set out to test the telescope's capabilities when photographs of the sun's surface showed swirling, wave-like patterns. Those shapes confirmed the presence of Kelvin-Helmholtz instabilities, a phenomenon that guides how fluids move, and that, in this case, indicated magnetized plasma passing each other at different speeds. While the instabilities had long been theorized to take place on the sun, they have never before been observed at a granular level of detail.

Solar activity can impact daily functions on Earth, including damaging satellites and causing radio black-outs.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Disney and TikTok strike deal allowing select creators to make short-form videos with Disney assets; the content will appear in a new vertical video feed within the Disney+ streaming app.

NFL preseason begins tonight at 8 pm ET with the Carolina Panthers taking on the Arizona Cardinals in the Pro Football Hall of Fame Game

Preakness Stakes to be the first Triple Crown race held on a Sunday starting in 2027.

Celebrity blogger Perez Hilton is hospitalized after fans contact police over apparent acts of self-harm on a TikTok livestream.

Science & Technology

Scientists build nearly 700 new cancer models derived from patient tumors and make them available to researchers worldwide in hopes of accelerating treatment discovery.

COVID-19 infection may awaken dormant viruses, triggering more severe COVID-19 and lingering symptoms associated with long COVID.

Neanderthal-derived gene variant of the growth hormone receptor may contribute to a higher muscle mass among some adult carriers.

... plus why scientists think Neanderthals were sprinters, not endurance athletes.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 -0.1%, Dow +0.5%, Nasdaq -0.8%).

Google shares drop amid leadership shake-up in its AI division.

Saudi wealth fund, Jared Kushner's Affinity Partners, and Silver Lake complete \$55B purchase of Electronic Arts, taking the video game giant private.

Eli Lilly tops revenue and earnings estimates thanks to GLP-1 demand.

Bank of America spends over \$250M per year on GLP-1 drugs for its employees, CEO says.

Politics & World Affairs

Progressive Abdul El-Sayed wins Democratic primary for the Senate seat in Michigan, narrowly defeating pro-Israel centrist Rep. Haley Stevens (D, MI-11).

Rep. Chuck Edwards (R, NC-11) says he will not run for reelection after House Ethics Committee finds he engaged in inappropriate conduct toward young female staffers.

Senate confirms Erica Schwartz as CDC director, President Donald Trump's third pick for the role (More)

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Groton Chamber of Commerce

August 5, 2026

12pm City Hall

- Members present: Douglas Heinrich, April Abeln, Katelyn Nehlich, Brian Dolan
- The minutes from the previous meeting were approved by Nehlich and seconded by Dolan. All members present voted aye.
- The treasurer's report was given. Dacotah Bank checking account balance is \$33,786.11 in addition to the \$10,154.59 CD. The bucks account balance is \$3,454.80. The CD matures on October 15th. The report was approved by Abeln and seconded by Dolan. All members present voted aye.
- A thank you was received from the Groton Soccer Association for the donation toward their jerseys. An Olive Grove Golf Course Football Book was received for our paid sponsorship.
- Abeln made a prior email motion and Nehlich seconded it to sponsor \$100 for the Storybook Land Theatre. All members present via email voted aye.
- The seesaw has been ordered with \$9,825.19 fundraised. Invoice was given to Nehlich for \$12, 517.70. Fundraising will continue with payment not required until 30-60 days after receiving the unit.
- Motion by Dolan and seconded by Nehlich to do a Homecoming storefront decorating contest with the winner receiving \$50 in Bucks. All members present voted aye.
- Motion by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich to continue membership with Glacial Lakes for 2027 for \$360. All members present voted aye.
- Motion by Nehlich and seconded by Dolan to gift \$25 in Bucks to Wage Memorial Library for their Homecoming scavenger hunt. All members present voted aye.
- New business welcomes were discussed.
- Next Meeting: September 2nd at 12pm at City Hall

Upcoming events:

- 08/06/2026 Family Fun Fest, Downtown Main Street 5:30-7:30pm
- 08/06/2026 Groton Firemen Summer Splash in the GHS Parking Lot 7:30-8:30pm
- 08/07/2026 Storybook Land Theatre on Tour- Pete the Cat 9:30am Music, 10am Play GHS Gym
- 08/29-30/2026 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport



Don't overlook your computer's first line of defense

With the recent storms we've experienced, power outages affecting portions of our community, and the ongoing replacement of electric meters throughout town, now is a good time to think about something many of us don't give much thought until it's too late—protecting our computers.

Whether the power goes out unexpectedly because of severe weather or is briefly interrupted during scheduled electrical work, computers simply don't like sudden losses of electricity. A split-second interruption may seem insignificant, but to a computer it can mean the difference between shutting down properly

and crashing unexpectedly. That can result in corrupted files, damaged operating systems, or, in some cases, hardware failures that require professional repairs.

As someone who has worked with computers over the years, I've seen more than my share of systems that wouldn't boot after a power outage. In many cases, the owner was convinced the outage was "only for a second." Unfortunately, a second is all it takes.

One of the least expensive investments you can make is purchasing an uninterruptible power supply, better known as a UPS or battery backup. For a relatively small cost, a UPS can save hundreds—or even thousands—of dollars in repair bills, replacement equipment, or data recovery services.

Think of a UPS as inexpensive insurance. Most of us insure our homes, vehicles, and other valuables. Yet many people have years of family photos, tax records, business documents, and irreplaceable memories stored on a computer with no protection whatsoever.

A UPS does more than simply keep your computer running for a few minutes during a power outage. It gives you time to save your work, properly shut down your computer, and avoid the sudden loss of power that can damage operating systems, hard drives, and important files. Instead of your computer instantly going dark, the battery backup quietly takes over long enough for you to close programs and power down safely.

However, owning a UPS is only half the battle.

The batteries inside these units don't last forever. Most UPS batteries have a life expectancy of about three to five years. Many units include a warning light or audible alarm indicating when the battery should be replaced, but those warnings are often overlooked. It's easy to assume everything is working because the light on the front of the UPS is still on.

Unfortunately, that isn't always the case.

A worn-out battery can leave you with a false sense of security. Everything appears normal until the electricity goes out—and then you discover your battery backup no longer has enough capacity to do its job. Replacing the battery every few years is a small expense compared to replacing a computer or paying for data recovery.

It's also important to understand that not every outlet on the back of a UPS performs the same function.

Many people assume every outlet is connected to the battery. In reality, most UPS units have two groups of outlets. One group provides both surge protection and battery backup. The other group provides surge protection only.

That's an important distinction.

Your computer tower should always be plugged into one of the battery backup outlets. If you use a desktop computer, your monitor can usually be plugged into one of the surge-protected outlets because it doesn't need battery power to protect your files. Printers, speakers, desk lamps, and other accessories generally belong on the surge-protection-only side. That leaves the battery-backed outlets available for the equipment that matters most.

If you work from home or rely on the internet, you may also want to plug your modem and router into battery-backed outlets. Doing so often allows your internet connection to stay active long enough to save

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your work, send that last email, or finish uploading an important document before shutting everything down.

Another point worth mentioning is that a UPS is not designed to let you keep working for hours after the power goes out. Its purpose is to buy you enough time to shut your computer down correctly. Those few extra minutes can make all the difference.

Of course, a battery backup is only one part of protecting your investment. A UPS cannot replace a good backup routine. Important documents, financial records, business files, and family photographs should be backed up regularly to an external hard drive or a secure cloud service. Computers can fail for many reasons besides power outages. Hard drives wear out. Software becomes corrupted. Accidents happen. Having your files stored in more than one location provides peace of mind that no battery backup alone can offer.

With the recent storms and electrical work taking place around town, this is a perfect opportunity to take five minutes and look behind your computer. Do you have a UPS? Is your computer plugged into the battery backup side instead of just the surge-protected outlets? How old is the battery? Have you ever tested it? And just as importantly, when was the last time you backed up your important files?

Those are simple questions that can save you a great deal of frustration someday.

I've often said that the best repair is the one you never have to make. Spending a modest amount on a quality UPS, replacing its battery when necessary, and keeping good backups of your important files is far less expensive—and far less stressful—than trying to recover from a preventable computer failure.

Sometimes experience is the best teacher. Hopefully, this is one lesson you can learn without having to learn it the hard way.



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.

BROWN COUNTY FAIR

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Beadle County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle versus train fatal crash
Where: 202nd Street and 374th Avenue, Wessington City Limits, South Dakota
When: 1:44 a.m., Wednesday, August 5, 2026

Driver 1: 16-year-old male from Highmore, South Dakota, fatal injuries
Vehicle 1: 2008 Ford F-150
Seat Belt Used: No

Beadle County, S.D.- A Highmore, South Dakota man died Wednesday in a single-vehicle crash versus train crash near Wessington, South Dakota.

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

Preliminary crash information indicates a Rapid City, Pierre, and Eastern Railroad train was traveling eastbound on the train tracks. At the same time, the driver of a 2008 Ford F-150 was traveling northbound on 374th Avenue. The Ford drove into the railroad crossing and was struck by the train. The driver sustained fatal injuries.

Names Released in 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: Randall Lee Hillman, 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: Dawn Hillman, 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.

Preliminary crash information indicates Randall Lee Hillman, 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. Hillman was taken to a Rapid City hospital with serious non-life-threatening injuries. His passenger, Dawn Hillman, died from her injuries.

The investigation is ongoing. All information released is preliminary.

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



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

South Dakota State Penitentiary loses fourth warden in five years amid senior staff shake-up

Corrections secretary calls changes 'consistent with the agency's mission'

BY JOHN HULT

The South Dakota Department of Corrections has lost its fourth penitentiary warden since 2021 amid staffing changes that also include the departure of two other high-ranking officials.

Joseph Roemmich, who came to South Dakota from New Mexico just over a year ago to oversee the employees and inmates at the oldest parts of the penitentiary in Sioux Falls, is no longer employed by the state, according to department spokesman Michael Winder. He also confirmed the departures of Director of Prison Operations Amber Pirraglia and Maj. Cody Hanson.

Pirraglia was Roemmich's superior. In addition to Sioux Falls, Pirraglia oversaw prisons in Springfield, Yankton, Pierre and Rapid City. She had previously worked in corrections in Colorado, and came to South Dakota shortly after the hiring of another Colorado transplant, former Corrections Secretary Kellie Wasko.

Wasko hired Roemmich last year, a few months before she resigned. Gov. Larry Rhoden hired Secretary Nick Lamb, who'd worked most recently in Iowa, to succeed Wasko.

Hanson, who worked for the prison system prior to Wasko's arrival, was an administrative major at the prison who'd testified to lawmakers as an advocate for a new men's prison. He'd also helped lead media tours of the penitentiary.

Tabatha Benting, warden of the maximum security Jameson Annex, located on the state penitentiary campus, is now serving as penitentiary warden.

Winder did not offer departure dates or other details on the circumstances surrounding the exit of the three employees.

A statement from Lamb on Wednesday said staffing changes are part of a broader effort to improve operations across the prison system, though he did not mention any staff members by name. The statement noted the expansion of community service work by inmates, the adoption of a prison seminary program and additional training programs, the expansion of educational partnerships with Southeast Technical College and Western Dakota Technical College, and a tightening of parole supervision.

"I have been evaluating the agency operations, and we are making some personnel changes consistent with the agency's mission and the steps we're taking," Lamb wrote.

Rhoden, in a separate statement, said he's "proud of the work" Lamb's done in his first nine months on the job and called him "a strong leader" who "clearly shares my mission to keep South Dakota strong, safe, and free."

History of shake-ups amid debate over new construction

The state split warden duties in Sioux Falls into two positions last year. Prior to Roemmich's arrival, the entire state penitentiary campus — which includes the 1881 penitentiary complex, the Jameson Annex and a separate work release center — was supervised by a single warden.

Roemmich's predecessor, Teresa Bittinger, served less than two years and oversaw a period of controversy and unrest, which included lockdowns and a temporary shutdown of tablet-based inmate communications. She was appointed in 2023 to replace Dan Sullivan, who also served fewer than two years. He replaced Darin Young, ousted in a staff shake-up initiated by then-Gov. Kristi Noem in 2021.

State lawmakers voted last fall to replace the oldest parts of the penitentiary, which was built prior to

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South Dakota statehood, with a \$650 million facility now under construction on the eastern side of Sioux Falls. The other two prison buildings on the penitentiary campus, located on a hill overlooking Falls Park less than a mile from downtown Sioux Falls, will continue to house inmates when the new prison complex opens in 2029.

Commission member: Loss of institutional knowledge is concerning

Rep. Kady Wittman, D-Sioux Falls, is chair of the state's Corrections Commission. The group is meant to offer guidance on corrections policy, and to approve any spending decisions on prison industries.

The loss of so many leaders is a concern for Wittman. Beyond the wardens, other long-term employees — including Doug Clark, the former deputy corrections secretary who served as interim warden after Young's departure — have left the prison system over the past five years.

"There's no real institutional knowledge left," Wittman said.

Wittman would like to see the commission move toward monthly meetings and address questions about leadership and institutional knowledge, as well as employee retention more broadly, but said it had been difficult to get traction during Wasko's term.

The former secretary had sought to limit the commission's scope of discussion and access to information, and some of the commission's work has been taken on by the Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force.

The latter group was formed following the Legislature's prison funding vote, with a promise from Gov. Rhoden to address the state's high reoffense rate.

Lamb has appeared at both of the Corrections Commission meetings held since Wasko's departure, introducing himself in the first and offering rundowns of the task force's discussion points during the second.

Wittman said she expects the next Corrections Commission meeting to take place within the next few months. The next meeting of the Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force is scheduled for Aug. 19.

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

Hopes grow for higher ethanol blend with inclusion in US Senate farm bill

Johnson, Thune optimistic about authorization of year-round E15

BY MAKENZIE HUBER

South Dakota's congressional delegation is hopeful that year-round, nationwide approval of E15 — a gasoline blend with 15% ethanol — will clear Congress this year, bolstered by its inclusion in the latest Senate version of the farm bill.

Ethanol is a fuel additive made primarily from corn, and a lower E10 blend is already available year-round. Supporters of year-round E15 availability say it would strengthen the farm economy and make the country more energy independent. Without a law authorizing year-round E15, summertime sales require a federal waiver.

Opponents point to research showing emissions from higher blends could worsen summer smog while encouraging the conversion of grasslands for corn farming. Some lawmakers from oil-producing and refining states also oppose the expansion.

The House pulled year-round E15 from its version of the farm bill earlier this year, instead approving it as separate legislation amending the Clean Air Act.

The farm bill is multi-year legislation that determines federal agriculture, food and nutrition policies. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, voted in favor of both bills.

The Senate Agriculture Committee included year-round E15 when it released its version of the farm bill last week ahead of the committee's hearing this Thursday. The House's standalone E15 bill awaits a hearing in another Senate committee.

The last farm bill was signed into law in 2018 and has been extended after Congress failed to pass a

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new version. Johnson spoke to South Dakota Searchlight on Wednesday at the Sioux Empire Fair in Sioux Falls about the legislation's progress, including the Senate version.

"In general, I don't think the House is going to love this version compared to what we passed, but at some point we'll figure out a way to get to yes, collectively," Johnson said. "We need to. This is really important if we care about American energy dominance, and we just can't get there without E15."

Year-round E15 sales have been a longstanding goal of the ethanol industry. Ethanol plants process more than half of South Dakota-grown corn.

Rising gas prices this summer and the ongoing war with Iran have drawn attention to the United States' continued reliance on liquid fuels in cars and airplanes — and its entanglement in Middle East oil markets, Johnson said.

"I would rather wake up every morning worried about the price of corn in a South Dakota field than worried about the price of oil in an Iranian oil field," said Johnson, who will leave Congress in January after his failed run for governor.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-South Dakota, said in a statement that year-round E15 is a boost for agriculture and rural communities across South Dakota and the country.

"I remain committed to getting the farm bill and E15 to the president's desk to secure these critical wins for South Dakota's farmers and ranchers," Thune said.

South Dakota Republican Sen. Mike Rounds has also spoken in support of year-round E15.

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.

Party will not replace withdrawn US Senate candidate, SD Democratic official says

BY SETH TUPPER

The South Dakota Democratic Party will not select a replacement candidate for the U.S. Senate nominee who ended his campaign Tuesday, a party official said.

That statement came Wednesday from state Democratic Party Deputy Director Joe Zweifel in response to South Dakota Searchlight questions. The deadline to select a new nominee is next week.

Julian Beaudion withdrew his candidacy Tuesday with a written statement mentioning a house fire, a personal financial hardship and "intimidating threats to drop out of this race."

The independent candidate on the ballot, Brian Bengs, responded with a statement saying "nobody has been attacked or threatened." Bengs has received support from some Democrats who've said he has a better chance to beat Republican Sen. Mike Rounds, who is seeking reelection. Zweifel said the state Democratic Party will not endorse Bengs.

Bengs is a former Democrat who was the party's U.S. Senate nominee in 2022, when he received 26% of the votes in an unsuccessful campaign to unseat Republican Sen. John Thune.

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

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Price tag for Trump's D.C. deployment of National Guard: \$1.4B more through 2029

BY SAM GAUNTT

WASHINGTON — The deployment of National Guard troops hailing from all across the country to Washington, D.C. is expected to cost taxpayers more than \$1.4 billion in additional funds through 2029.

The estimate from Jules Hurst III, President Donald Trump's nominee to be the Pentagon's comptroller, came in response to a series of questions from Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., as a part of Hurst's confirmation process.

"While American families are getting flattened by skyrocketing costs, Donald Trump is spending \$1.4 billion to keep troops on the streets in Washington for years on end. The National Guard are not pawns and taxpayer dollars are not a piggy bank for Trump's political stunts," Warren wrote in a statement.

According to the information provided by Hurst, the National Guard deployment is planned to continue until January 2029, the end of Trump's second term.

D.C. mission

Under Trump's requested budget for the next fiscal year, his Make DC Safe and Beautiful mission — which has led renovation efforts of many of the city's iconic landmarks and sought to reduce crime — would receive \$605 million in funding. That would include more \$375 million for payroll expenses and travel allowances and nearly \$230 million for operational expenses, such as housing and meals.

Trump first deployed around 800 National Guard troops in Washington in August 2025, an effort to tackle what he called a "crime emergency" in the city. The move came after similar deployments in many Democratic-led cities across the country, including in Los Angeles and Chicago.

He also sought to federalize and deploy troops in Portland, Oregon, but was later blocked in the federal courts. He threatened similar actions in locations including New York and Baltimore, often following with political battles with those states' Democratic leaders.

National Guard deployments across the country cost nearly \$500 million in 2025, according to the Congressional Budget Office. In general, the office estimated, deploying 1,000 National Guard troops to a U.S. city costs between \$18 million and \$21 million each month.

D.C. deployment grows

The initial deployment in Washington has since grown, with thousands of troops from states all across the country now deployed in the nation's capital.

As of Aug. 1, there are more than 4,600 National Guard members deployed in Washington. About 680 of those guardsmen are from the District itself, while most are predominantly from the South.

Georgia, South Carolina and Mississippi have sent the most guard members.

But that total headcount has risen as many states and territories sent additional troops to help support events as part of the Trump-led Freedom250 celebration of the nation's semiquincentennial in July.

For some states, their National Guard members have been deployed quietly to the nation's capital, including in Idaho, where the state made no formal announcement of the move.

The Department of Defense's budget estimates for fiscal years 2028 and 2029 assume a total headcount of approximately 2,500 National Guard personnel in Washington through January 2029. Future funding includes a planned \$625.8 million for fiscal 2028 and \$198.3 million for fiscal 2029.

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

US Senate confirms Trump's pick for CDC director with yes votes from Thune, Rounds

BY SHAUNEEN MIRANDA

WASHINGTON — Dr. Erica Schwartz will be the next director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, after the U.S. Senate confirmed her nomination Wednesday.

The Senate confirmed, 51-44, President Donald Trump's pick to lead the national public health agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, which has taken heat over the vaccine-skeptical agenda pursued by Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

That agenda marked a central theme of Schwartz's tense confirmation hearing in July before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, where lawmakers on both sides of the aisle pressed her on how she would deal with any political interference from the Trump administration when it comes to vaccine policy.

Schwartz ultimately scored the backing of the panel's chair, Louisiana GOP Sen. Bill Cassidy, who had appeared dissatisfied with her responses at her confirmation hearing.

Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia was the only Democrat who voted to confirm Schwartz's bid.

Five senators did not vote, including GOP Sens. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee and Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, along with Democratic Sens. Ruben Gallego of Arizona and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota.

Schwartz worked as an occupational medicine physician in the U.S. Navy. She transferred to the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, where she achieved the rank of rear admiral.

Schwartz also served as the chief medical officer of the U.S Coast Guard and later as deputy surgeon general of the United States.

South Dakota's votes

FROM SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

Majority Leader John Thune and Sen. Mike Rounds, Republicans from South Dakota, voted in favor of confirming Dr. Erica Schwartz as the next director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Senate approved her confirmation 51-44.

Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.

Trump urges US Senate to pass bill making daylight saving time permanent

BY SHAUNEEN MIRANDA

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is urging Republican senators to "release their holds" and pass a measure making daylight saving time permanent nationwide.

A bipartisan bill passed the House in July but faces hurdles in the Senate, where members from both parties have pushed back against ending the semiannual clock changes.

"People are sick and tired of having to change their clocks twice a year," Trump wrote in a social media post Tuesday night, adding that "it is foolish, inconvenient and, in some cases, very costly."

Trump said "this is an issue that Republicans, Democrats, and Independents can unite behind" while asking GOP senators to "release their holds, and allow the hotline to clear on the Republican side." Members of the Senate are scheduled to adjourn for an August recess later this week, though it's also possible they may get delayed by pending legislation.

The president also flexed the benefits of ceasing the semiannual clock changes, saying "leading Medical, Crime, and Economic Studies" show it would help decrease robbery and murder rates, reduce car accidents, lower risk for cardiac issues, stroke and seasonal depression and also make it safer for children to get home from school, among other advantages.

Florida GOP Rep. Vern Buchanan introduced the measure in the House — dubbed the Sunshine Protection Act — which passed it, 308-117.

But the Senate has yet to take up the legislation, with at least one fierce critic of the move, GOP Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas, having argued in a floor speech last year that making daylight saving time permanent would “push winter sunrises to an absurdly late hour, depriving Americans of morning sunshine that’s essential for our safety and well-being.”

Cotton also noted that the darkness from making daylight saving time permanent would be “especially harmful for schoolchildren and working Americans.”

Meanwhile, GOP Sen. Rick Scott of Florida, who sponsored a companion bill in January 2025, celebrated the House’s passage and urged the Senate to “take it up NOW and send it to President Trump’s desk,” per a July social media post.

Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom’s Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.

States begin banning ‘surveillance pricing’ that uses personal data to charge more

Maryland and New Jersey laws target grocery stores, while Connecticut’s applies more broadly to retailers

BY ROBBIE SEQUEIRA

Three states this year became the first ones to enact laws restricting companies from using personal data such as browsing history or shopping habits to set individualized prices on goods and services, a practice known as surveillance pricing.

The laws in Connecticut, Maryland and New Jersey take different approaches to which retailers and products they cover, the discount exceptions they allow and how violations are enforced.

Lawmakers in at least 11 states considered similar bills this year, but often faced opposition from business groups that say some of the legislation is overly broad.

Maryland’s new law, which was the first in the country and takes effect Oct. 1, applies to grocery stores of at least 15,000 square feet and third-party food delivery services. Under the law, these businesses are prohibited from using personal data to set a price for a specific shopper for most groceries. It does, however, allow loyalty programs, subscription prices and differences based on supply, location or operating costs. Businesses also have 45 days to correct a violation before the state can bring an enforcement action.

New Jersey’s new law, signed by Democratic Gov. Mikie Sherrill in July, prohibits retailers from using personal data to set individualized prices for groceries and placed a one-year moratorium on the installation of new electronic shelf labels while the state studies their effects. Retailers with these shelf labels already installed can continue to use them and maintain them.

“New Jersey families are already feeling the pressure of higher costs,” Sherrill said in a statement. “The last thing they need is companies secretly using their personal data to charge them more than someone else for the exact same product.”

Connecticut’s law, signed by Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont in June, broadly prohibits retailers and third-party delivery services from using surveillance pricing. It includes exceptions for discounts and certain price differences unrelated to a shopper’s personal data.

Consumer advocates say surveillance pricing is difficult to detect because shoppers generally cannot see what another customer is being charged. Retail and technology groups have argued that overly broad restrictions could interfere with discounts and rewards programs and be expensive for businesses to comply.

Stateline reporter Robbie Sequeira can be reached at rsequeira@stateline.org.

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

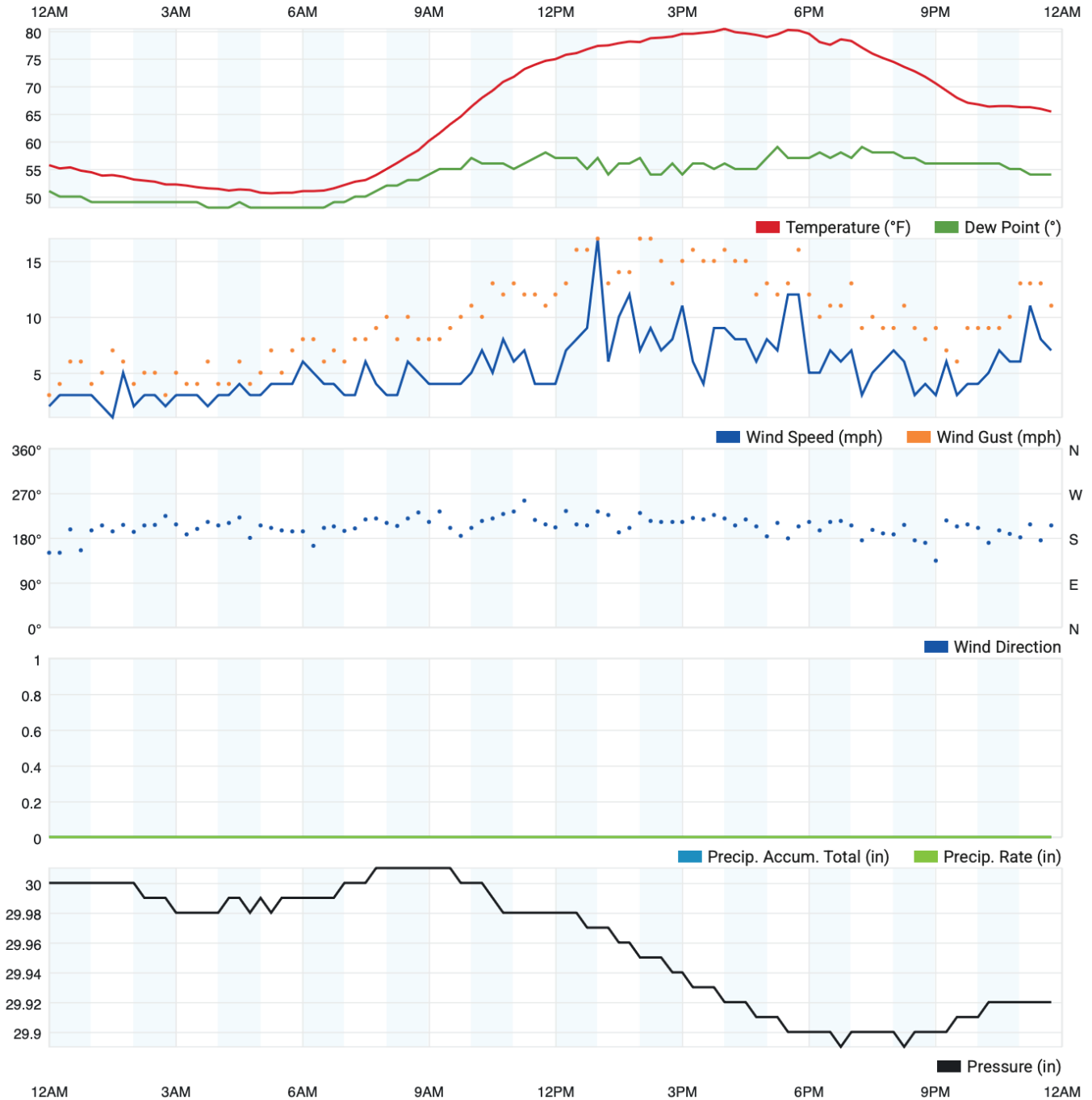
Robbie Sequeira is a staff writer covering housing and social services for Stateline.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 5, 2026



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Today



High: 88 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 61 °F

Partly Cloudy

Friday



High: 81 °F

Becoming
Sunny

Friday Night



Low: 56 °F

Mostly Clear

Saturday



High: 85 °F

Sunny



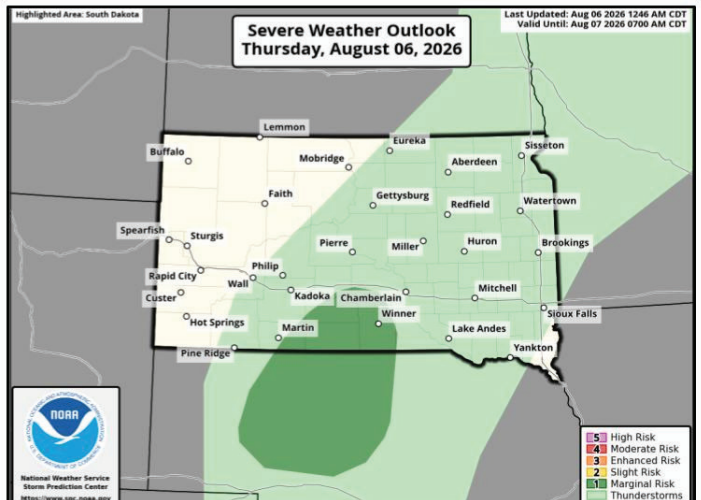
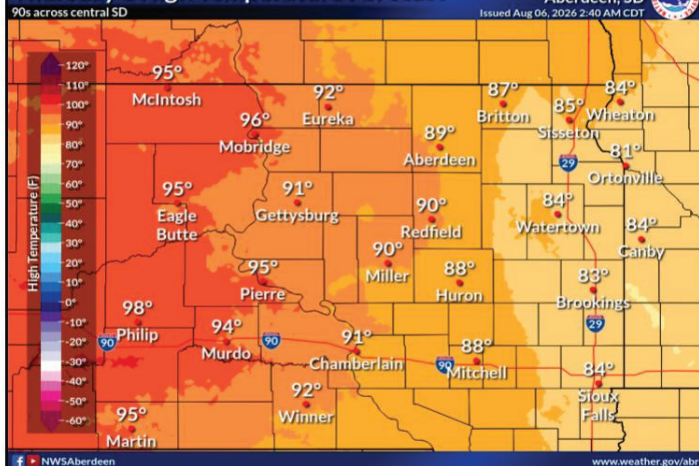
Hotter Temperatures Today

August 6, 2026
3:01 AM CDT

Very small chance (20% or less) for a stray thunderstorm

- Heating up today into the 90s across central SD. **Cooler again on Friday** after passage of a cold front.
- Breezy/gusty southwest winds from 20-30 mph over northeast SD.
- Very low chance (20% or less) for a stray thunderstorm south central to northeast SD late afternoon into the evening.

Thursday's High Temperature Forecast



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Temperatures will heat up more into the 80s and 90s across the region today, with the hottest temperatures over central SD. South to southwest winds will become a bit breezy today across northeast SD where they may gust to around 30 mph. Very small chance (20% or less) for a thunderstorm or two across south central SD into northeast SD late this afternoon through the evening hours. There is a Marginal Risk (level 1 of 5) for severe storms over south central SD into Nebraska.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 80 °F at 4:03 PM

Low Temp: 50 °F at 5:05 AM

Wind: 19 mph at 2:20 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 108 in 1941

Record Low: 44 in 1902

Average High: 84

Average Low: 59

Average Precip in Aug.: 0.44

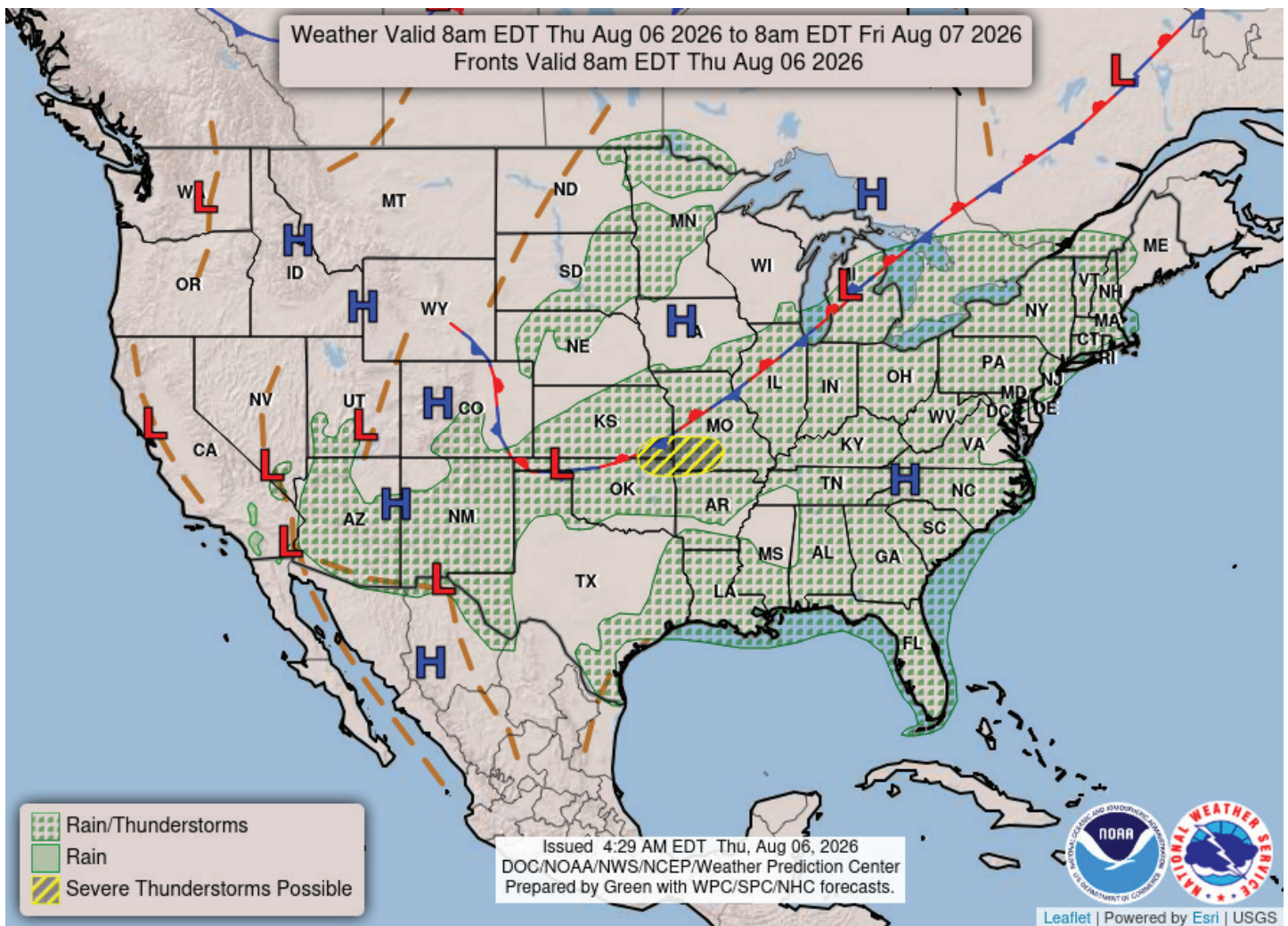
Precip to date in Aug.: 9.79

Average Precip to date: 14.54

Precip Year to Date: 19.26

Sunset Tonight: 8:54 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:23 am



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Today in Weather History

August 6, 1962: Wind damaged farm buildings and hail damaged crops over a large area. The area affected was northern Faulk, portions of Spink, Northern Clark, Codington, and Grant, along with Day County.

August 6, 1969: During the day and evening hours, two relatively large storms brought destructive weather to much of Minnesota. The northern storm area moved in from North Dakota between Fargo and Grand Forks. The southern storm rapidly developed north of Wadena. These two storms combined to cause twelve tornadoes, two vast areas of wind and hail damage, and one waterspout. The storms killed 15 people, injured 106, and caused 4.8 million dollars in property and public utility damage.

August 6, 1969: The first report of high winds was southeast of Piedmont with gusts of 65 to 70 mph estimated by a National Weather Service employee. Damage in that area included several downed trees and leveled gardens. As the storm moved east, large hail was reported. The first wind gust at Ellsworth AFB was 89 mph at 1918 MST on the northwest end of the runway. By 1925 MST, sustained winds were over 50 mph for nearly 10 minutes, and the peak gust was 114 mph. The sensor on the southeast end of the runway, 2.5 miles away, recorded a wind gust of 114 mph at 1929 MST. The damage on the base included several large trees blown over and snapped in half and roof damage to base housing units. A few tents set up on the taxiways for an air show were blown around, but not significantly damaged. A survey by base meteorologists indicated the main downburst winds hit over open prairie surrounding the runway, where there are no trees or structures. Also between 1920 and 1930 MST, a meteorology student estimated winds between 70 and 80 mph at Box Elder, where gardens were leveled, and wooden fences and roofs were damaged.

1890 — Thunderstorms left four inches of hail covering the ground in Adair County and Union County in Iowa. The hail drifted into six foot mounds, and in some places remained on the ground for twenty- six days. (The Weather Channel)

1918 — Unusually hot weather began to overspread the Atlantic Coast States, from the Carolinas to southern New England. The temperature soared to an all-time record high of 106 degrees at Washington D.C., and Cumberland and Keedysville hit 109 degrees to establish a state record for Maryland. Temperatures were above normal east of the Rockies that month, with readings much above normal in the Lower Missouri Valley. Omaha NE reached 110 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1959: Hurricane Dot crossed Kauai in the Hawaiian Islands producing sustained winds of 105 mph with gusts to 125 mph. Over 6 inches of rain fell with over 9 inches on the big island of Hawaii. The sugar cane crop on Kauai sustained \$2.7 million in damages.

1993: Virginia experienced its worst tornado outbreak ever as 18 tornadoes ripped through the state in 5 hours. The most devastating tornado caused severe damage in the historic part of Petersburg. The storm then moved on to Pocahontas Island and into Colonial Heights. There, the storm ripped apart a WalMart store, killing three people and injuring nearly 200. The F4 twister was the first known violent tornado in Virginia history. It killed a total of 4 people and injured 246 along its 12-mile path. Total damages were near \$50 million.

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Daily Devotion

No Trial Is Beyond God's Help

When difficulties arise, trust that the Lord will stay true to His promises.

Jude 1:24-25: 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,

25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Scripture is filled with many wonderful promises from the Lord, but we often struggle to accept them as true in our own life. God wants us to believe that He's willing and able to do what He has said He will accomplish.

God assures us we don't have to give in to sin (1 Corinthians 10:13). Jesus experienced this truth when the Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness for an encounter with Satan (Matt. 4:1-11). Our Savior successfully resisted the Devil's enticements by recalling who the Father is and what He had promised.

The world we live in has a lot of traps, and they can be hard to detect. For example, Peter had a conversation with a servant girl and ended up denying that he knew Jesus Christ (Matthew 26:69-74). Like the disciple, we sometimes have trouble recognizing a situation's potential danger, but our heavenly Father understands what is involved—and He knows just how we should respond.

When you face temptation or encounter an unexpected difficulty, the approach needs to be the same. Turn your attention to the Lord, and keep it there until your mind is filled with the knowledge of Him. Allow the Scriptures to guide your prayers, and stand firm until the promised help comes.

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

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The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.05.26

25 27 32 38 54 3

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 13 Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.04.26

14 21 51 55 65 21

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$70,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 58 Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.05.26

1 19 20 40 51 5

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,400,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 13 Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.05.26

8 18 28 31 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$21,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 28 Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.05.26

6 33 54 63 66 18

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 57 Mins 51 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.05.26

14 20 59 60 61 25

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$856,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 57 Mins 51 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Dozens of health workers at epicenter of Congo's Ebola outbreak protest lack of payment

By CONSTANT SAME BAGALWA Associated Press

BUNIA, Congo (AP) — Dozens of health workers working at the epicenter of Congo's Ebola outbreak staged protests Thursday to demand payment for their wages, abandoning several health facilities even as aid workers warn that the world's fastest-growing outbreak of the disease is spreading at an alarming rate.

The health workers are protesting at the governor's office in Bunia, the capital of Ituri province, which accounts for nearly 90% of the Ebola cases in the country. They are the latest group to walk off their jobs since protests over pay issues began weeks ago.

The health workers, including nurses providing critical care to Ebola patients, said they haven't received wages and bonuses for their work fighting Ebola since the outbreak was declared in mid-May.

"With this way of managing things, Ebola will not end in this province. We ask the authorities to get involved at all levels so that a solution is found quickly," said Edouige Makosi, one of the protesters.

Officials have in the past blamed logistical issues for the payment delays. Congolese authorities did not immediately respond to an inquiry for comments on Thursday.

Poor welfare for frontline workers has been a key source of concern in the outbreak, the second-largest in history unfolding in one of Congo's most remote and vulnerable areas. Apart from the payment issues, many health workers and facilities have been attacked by rebels and angry mobs.

During his visit to Congo on Wednesday, World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus urged authorities to prioritize care and support for the responders.

The medical charity Doctors Without Borders said this week that the outbreak is still "spreading at an alarming and unprecedented rate" and that the response which has been expanding with more steps "is still not reaching communities quickly enough to break transmission chains."

Ukraine strikes more oil facilities deep inside Russia, Zelenskyy says

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine hit more oil facilities deep inside Russia in nighttime attacks, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday, as Kyiv kept up its campaign to undermine Moscow's war-time economy and embarrass the Kremlin.

The repeated strikes have caused fuel shortages and rattled Russians while heartening Ukrainians who are enduring regular Russian barrages that Kyiv's weakened air defenses are struggling to counter.

Ukrainian forces hit a refinery in Bashkortostan, more than 1,300 kilometers (800 miles) behind the front line in eastern Ukraine, as well as a refinery in the Yaroslavl region, almost 700 kilometers (400 miles) from the Ukrainian border, Zelenskyy said on social media.

Also, Ukrainian forces hit two Russian military patrol boats in the Black Sea, according to Zelenskyy, as well as vessels belonging to Moscow's so-called shadow fleet, which Russia uses to evade Western restrictions on its oil exports. He did not provide details about the vessels or the extent of the damage.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Thursday that its air defenses overnight shot down 605 Ukrainian drones over a number of Russian regions, as well as illegally annexed Crimea and the Black and Azov seas.

Ukraine seeks more interceptor missiles to bolster air defenses

Meanwhile, Russian drone and glide bomb attacks across Ukraine during the night killed at least three civilians and wounded 22 others, authorities said Thursday, as countries helping Kyiv resist Russia's invasion scrambled to find more vital air defenses for its fight.

Moscow's forces have in recent weeks pummeled Ukraine with ballistic missiles that Kyiv officials say

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only the U.S.-made Patriot air defense system can stop. But the Iran war has drained stocks of Patriot interceptor missiles, leaving Ukraine at the mercy of Russian bombardments that seek to exploit its weakened aerial defenses.

"We are working as hard as possible with all partners who can assist with the supply of interceptor missiles to protect against such insane Russian strikes targeting life, people, and civilian facilities," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on social media late Wednesday after a Russian barrage killed 17 people in the Kyiv region.

He said he had spoken to NATO chief Mark Rutte and Finnish President Alexander Stubb about urgently procuring interceptors from stockpiles.

Zelenskyy said he and Rutte "coordinated our efforts regarding countries that have the necessary missiles and the capacity to help."

"It is important to cut through all red tape and make the necessary political decisions," Zelenskyy said.

"I am discussing with allies how we can continue to get Ukraine the air defenses they urgently need," Rutte said on X.

Russian glide bombs wound 12 in Sumy region

Russia appears determined to exhaust Ukraine through sheer weight of numbers in terms of soldiers, armor and weapons. Russian President Vladimir Putin thinks that time is on his side, that Western support will fade and that Ukraine's resistance will eventually collapse under pressure, Western analysts and officials say.

Russia fired four missiles and 101 long-range strike drones at Ukraine from Wednesday into Thursday, Ukraine's air force said, with air defenses shooting down or jamming 66 drones.

Three people were killed in Balakliia in the northeastern Kharkiv region, according to Vitalii Karabanov, head of the city's military administration.

A first strike hit a home, killing a woman and starting a fire, he said, while a second strike near another home killed a man and a woman.

In the neighboring Sumy region, Russian glide bombs wounded 12 people, the National Police said. Apartment buildings and infrastructure were damaged near the impact sites, with hundreds of windows shattered, regional military administration chief Oleh Hryhorov said.

In the southern Kherson region, a Russian drone struck a bus carrying farmworkers to a field, wounding six people, regional authorities said.

A Russian drone also struck a residential area in the southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia, wounding four people, regional administration head Ivan Fedorov said.

Gianni Infantino gets internal support at crisis meeting to remain as FIFA president

By JAMES ROBSON AP Soccer Writer

FIFA said Wednesday it had apologized for errors made over Gianni Infantino's failed plan to sell stakes in the World Cup and that senior staff in attendance at a crisis meeting in Morocco "reaffirmed their full support" for his presidency.

World soccer's governing body attempted to present a unified front amid the turbulence caused by Infantino's controversial plans, with calls for him to step down.

In a statement, FIFA said Secretary-General Mattias Grafström and members of the management board in attendance in Rabat had given their support to the embattled president.

Referring to the plans to sell profits in the World Cup through a commercial subsidiary called FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE), the statement said "mistakes made were acknowledged" and that the "process should have been handled differently."

FIFA said a letter had been sent to FIFA Council and member associations apologizing for errors and committed to "ensure they do not happen again."

Grafström's stated support was notable after he distanced himself from Infantino's now abandoned plans

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in an email to all FIFA staff calling the last week a "sad and reproachable series of events."

FIFA said Infantino had also reaffirmed his support for his secretary general.

World soccer's governing body said the FFE proposal was "now off the table."

"There are always lessons to be learned, and FIFA will continue to improve its processes in light of this experience," it said.

'Serious questions'

Earlier Wednesday, the association of European soccer leagues — including the Premier League, La Liga and Serie A — called for governance reform of FIFA. It described the FFE proposal as "dangerous" and said it pointed to deeper concerns about how the governing body operates.

It said it raised "serious questions about FIFA's governance, internal culture and decision-making."

"Now more than ever, FIFA requires governance reform that ensures that all relevant stakeholders have a formal role in decisions that shape the future of our game."

In the statement, European Leagues hit out at the possibility of further expanding the World Cup to 64 teams and said "FIFA must not be allowed to continue taking unilaterally disruptive decisions."

It said that until there was reform it would reject the "expansion or creation" of FIFA competitions.

Portugal and Real Madrid great Luis Figo also called for Infantino to step down, saying he had "debased the office."

FIFA denied a British media report suggesting Infantino, in seeking support for his presidency, had offered Morocco the hosting of the final at the 2030 World Cup. Spain, Portugal and Morocco are the main co-hosts for the 2030 edition. Morocco hopes to host the final at the planned 115,000-seat King Hassan II Stadium near Casablanca; Spain has at least two contenders — the home stadiums of Real Madrid and Barcelona.

A FIFA spokesperson said it's "false and misleading to claim the FIFA president has made any promise in relation to hosting the FIFA World Cup 2030 final. A decision will be made by FIFA in due course."

Canada's Carney raises concerns

Also Wednesday, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said he no longer has confidence in Infantino. He said the FIFA president committed a "fatal" governance failure by not consulting senior advisers.

"Certainly I don't have confidence in Mr. Infantino," said Carney, who had appeared alongside Infantino at several events during the 2026 World Cup co-hosted by Canada, Mexico and the United States.

A tumultuous week have raised questions about Infantino's presidency of FIFA ahead of elections in March.

European soccer's governing body UEFA has applied the most intense pressure by voting to boycott the World Cup if Infantino pressed ahead with FFE.

Even after Infantino's climbdown UEFA said it had lost confidence in FIFA's leadership — possibly paving the way for a challenge to his presidency. The governing body for North and Central American and Caribbean soccer (CONCACAF) also said FIFA leadership had "stopped putting football first."

There have also been signs of division within the organization with chief of global football development Arsène Wenger distancing himself from the FFE plans. Infantino's senior adviser Carlos Cordeiro resigned last week and chief operating officer Kevin Lamour said staff were "deceived" by the president's lack of openness.

Infantino is aiming to win a fourth and final term in office at the March elections.

2 soldiers killed in Lebanon in the first Israeli deaths since June truce with Hezbollah

By ABBY SEWELL and KORAL SAEED Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The Israeli military said Thursday that two of its soldiers were killed in an explosion in southern Lebanon in the first Israeli deaths since the implementation of a shaky truce between Israel and the Iran-backed Lebanese militant group Hezbollah in June.

Four other soldiers were seriously wounded, the military said. The deaths had been reported by Israeli media a day earlier. An Israeli military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity in accordance with

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the army's policy, said that "an explosion was detonated" when the soldiers entered a site in the village of Majdal Zoun and that the nature of the explosive was under review.

The Israeli army launched strikes Wednesday in southern Lebanon in response to what it described as Hezbollah's violation of the ceasefire and issued a call for residents of the village of Mansouri to flee — the first such warning Israel has issued in Lebanon for weeks.

There was no immediate statement from Hezbollah.

The escalation came as Lebanese and Israeli negotiators met in Rome to discuss implementation of a June 26 deal under which Israeli forces are supposed to withdraw from areas they occupy in southern Lebanon and allow the Lebanese army to take control, in exchange for Hezbollah's disarmament,

Wednesday's talks ended early due to the escalation on the ground. The talks were set to resume Thursday.

Lebanon's Health Ministry said one person was killed and 12 wounded in an Israeli strike in the town of Tebnine Wednesday. The state-run National News Agency reported more people wounded in overnight strikes on the village of Burj al-Shemali, but the number was not clear. Artillery shelling also targeted the areas of Mansouri and Majdal Zoun, it said.

The latest Israel-Hezbollah war erupted on March 2, when Hezbollah fired rockets across the border two days after the U.S. and Israel launched their attacks on Iran. More than 4,000 people have been killed by Israeli strikes in Lebanon since then, including hundreds of civilians. About 40 soldiers and three civilians - including a military contractor - have been killed on the Israeli side.

A shaky truce between Israel and Hezbollah has largely held since June 20, but Israeli forces have continued to occupy swaths of southern Lebanon and to carry out periodic airstrikes and shelling.

The talks in Rome have focused on implementation of "pilot zones" where Israeli forces would withdraw and the Lebanese army would take control. Implementation began last month with an initial pilot zone in an area that wasn't occupied by Israeli forces but had previously sustained Israeli fire.

The Lebanese army entered the town of Zawtar al-Gharbieh and some civilians returned, although many came only to find their homes destroyed and left again.

A diplomat familiar with the negotiations who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly said earlier this week that Lebanon had asked for the next pilot zone to be either in the town of Khiam or Bint Jbeil. Both areas saw heavy fighting in the latest Israel-Hezbollah war and are currently occupied by Israeli forces.

But U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Michel Issa suggested ahead of the three-day talks that no new pilot zones would be immediately implemented, saying that "moving too quickly risks jeopardizing the very civilians this process is meant to protect."

Hezbollah was opposed to the direct Lebanon-Israel talks and was not a party to the deal. The group has accused the Lebanese government of making too many concessions without guaranteeing an Israeli withdrawal.

WHO chief says Ebola outbreak is outpacing response as aid workers strike over pay

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) — The world's fastest-growing Ebola outbreak is spreading faster than efforts to fight it, the head of the World Health Organization said on Wednesday during a visit to Congo where some health workers are striking over a lack of pay.

Nearly three months into the outbreak, new cases are doubling in some hot spots, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a post on X after meeting with officials in the capital, Kinshasa. It was the second visit by the WHO director-general to the Central African country since the outbreak was declared in mid-May.

"We all agree that we must urgently and massively scale up all our efforts across all pillars of the response and by all partners," Tedros said.

The outbreak has accounted for 3,874 confirmed cases, including 1,751 deaths, as of Monday, according to the latest data from Congo's Ministry of Health.

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In Ituri province, the epicenter of the outbreak, families said many front line workers have gone on strike, worsening access to healthcare that was already challenged by rebel conflict in one of Congo's most remote and vulnerable areas, its east near the borders of South Sudan, Uganda and Rwanda.

While some workers say they have started receiving payment in the last week for work done since the outbreak began, they are demanding improved wages.

Anicet Baluku, a resident of Bunia, the capital of Ituri, blamed the death of his two brothers from Ebola on the strike. "We urge the authorities to quickly find a solution to prevent other families from experiencing the same tragedy," he told The Associated Press.

The U.S. Department of State said on Wednesday that it will provide an additional \$242 million in funding for immediate Ebola response and preparedness efforts in the region and for humanitarian assistance related to the outbreak. Such funding, it said in a statement, has now exceeded \$512 million in direct assistance.

The outbreak has eclipsed all previous Ebola outbreaks in its speed of transmission and is the second-largest outbreak on record, behind the 2014-2016 West Africa outbreak that recorded more than 28,000 cases, including over 11,000 deaths.

The Bundibugyo virus that is causing this outbreak has no approved treatment or vaccine, and local officials believe it began in a remote area long before it was declared on May 15.

The outbreak is still "spreading at an alarming and unprecedented rate," the medical charity Doctors Without Borders said on Wednesday, adding: "The response is expanding but is still not reaching communities quickly enough to break transmission chains."

Dr. Jean Kaseya, head of the Africa Centers for Disease and Control, said on Tuesday during a visit to Bunia that contact tracing isn't working, with at least 60% to 70% of new cases coming outside of those being monitored after exposure to patients.

Late detection of cases has been a key contributor to the 45% fatality rate, officials say. Of the 77 most-recent cases reported during a 24-hour period, 44 were fatal, according to the health ministry. At least 717 patients are in isolation while 749 patients have recovered.

Kaseya, who met with Tedros on Wednesday, said Africa CDC is aligning its efforts with responders "around earlier detection, stronger contact tracing, rapid access to quality care and deeper engagement with communities."

Tedros called for action to reach all affected localities, strengthen coordination under the government's leadership and protect health workers.

"Above all, communities must be at the center of and have ownership of the response," he said. "We cannot stop Ebola without their trust, leadership and partnership."

Wildfire near Athens leaves rescuers scrambling to reunite hundreds of animals

By SRDJAN NEDELJKOVIC and DEREK GATOPOULOS Associated Press

MEGARA, Greece (AP) — Sasa, an alert and floppy-eared mixed-breed puppy, did not return home when the remaining containment lines were lifted Wednesday in the wake of a wildfire that swept across mountains and coastal areas near Athens.

The pup was one of hundreds of pets and wild animals rescued by volunteers this week during the blaze, which prompted multiple evacuations.

The fire — at one point burning on five fronts — torched dozens of homes and more than 100 square kilometers (39 square miles) of land. It was the latest scene of destruction during Europe's searing summer, where massive fires — including in countries accustomed to cooler summers — have worried animal welfare groups.

In the town of Megara, 40 kilometers (25 miles) west of Athens, rescue organizer Elena Dede said the local volunteer effort saved more than 280 animals, mostly dogs, during scorching heat and high winds.

Sasa and others were housed on an indoor sports court inside a collapsible wire cage with a rubber ball

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to play with and a metal water bowl.

"There was so much heat and the fire was so aggressive. It was changing directions all the time," Dede said.

Richard Parr, director of the U.K.-based Center for Wild Animal Welfare, described these animal rescue efforts by firefighters and local charities as "heroic" but argued that hotter summers are increasing the risk facing millions of animals.

"At the moment, all too often, it is ad hoc, and it falls on the shoulders of private individuals, small charities," he said. "The scale of the challenges they're facing in terms of the number of animals affected and the areas of fire is gigantic and completely out of step."

The organization is campaigning for a dedicated European Union animal rescue service and funding to address the problem.

"There's just a massive mismatch between the huge scale of this problem and the resources and the capacity that are available to respond to it," Parr said.

He also urged governments to consider setting up "fire refuges" for animals, such as ponds and rock piles that could offer shelter.

In Greece, the blaze has left rescuers with a logistical headache: where to return displaced animals like Sasa. Dede said local authorities were helping match missing-animal notices with rescued animals and find temporary homes until the process was completed.

However, she said she was mindful that the dogs at the stadium were among the fortunate.

"It was really hard for every volunteer and every person involved to survive the smoke and the stress," she said.

"I will never forget the animals that we knew were left behind. I'm just hoping they were saved and ran free."

After Michigan, Democrats' next battleground over the party's future shifts to Wisconsin

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

NEW GLARUS, Wis. (AP) — Sarah Miller, a software engineer from the liberal stronghold of Madison, has heard all of the chatter about a civil war in the Democratic Party between progressives and moderates. But all she cares about is winning.

That's why Miller said she is voting in Tuesday's gubernatorial primary for David Crowley, the Milwaukee County executive endorsed by two-term Gov. Tony Evers. He faces democratic socialist Francesca Hong in a contest that will be the latest test nationally of how far Democrats are willing to swing to the political left.

Wisconsin's primary comes a week after progressive Abdul El-Sayed narrowly defeated Rep. Haley Stevens in Michigan's U.S. Senate primary, setting up a crucial test for progressives in November in a key battleground state. Also on Tuesday, voters in Minnesota will decide another U.S. Senate contest featuring a centrist and a progressive.

In a year where voters upset with the Democratic Party mainstream have propelled outsider candidates to victory across the country, Crowley is hoping to buck the trend in Wisconsin. He's banking on the support of Evers, one of the state's most popular elected officials, to make up ground in the waning days of the chaotic primary.

Crowley said that El-Sayed's slim margin of victory "does give me a little bit of hope."

"We're going to focus on those undecided voters," Crowley said.

Wisconsin Democratic voters grapple with electability, chaotic primary

"The divide is real," Miller, 49, said of the struggle between progressives and more mainstream Democrats. But her focus remains on November, when the winner of the primary will face Republican U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany, a staunch supporter of President Donald Trump and one of the most conservative members of Congress.

Miller, who described herself as a progressive, called Hong a "very, very weak candidate" and described

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her popularity as "a little bit of a mirage."

"I don't think she can win," Miller said at a Crowley campaign stop a week before election day at a winery in the rolling hills of New Glarus.

Crowley is banking on more voters feeling that way. A Marquette University Law School poll of Wisconsin Democratic primary voters conducted in late July, before former Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes dropped out, showed Hong with a significant lead over the other candidates. More than 112,000 absentee ballots had already been returned by the day the poll was released.

Complicating the path for Crowley is the fact that he withdrew from the race on July 8 and only got back in 10 days later, with the backing of Evers, after Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez ended her candidacy. Then, 12 days later, Barnes also ended his campaign amid allegations of inappropriate behavior.

Barnes and Rodriguez, who were both seen as potential front-runners, remain on the ballot and votes already cast for them can't be undone.

"We've created a mess," said Michael Gebben, a 64-year-old Democrat who voted absentee for Rodriguez before she dropped out. "Hopefully we can get out of it."

Hong bats down controversies as Crowley makes a final sprint

As Crowley sprinted across the state to capture undecided voters, Hong was batting down controversies.

Hong, a single mom and former restaurant cook, faced questions about past social media posts where she called for canceling Thanksgiving because "we should stop celebrating colonialism," disparaged Valentine's Day as "another day capitalism tells you how to show love" and repeatedly called for defunding the police.

She has backtracked or clarified many of those past statements in recent days, now saying that she does not support abolishing the police.

Tiffany pointed to Hong's comments on Thanksgiving and said she wants "to destroy the traditions and culture that unite us." Tiffany, who had 10-times more cash on hand than either Hong or Crowley did entering August, has portrayed the race as a contest between chaos and common sense.

"Wisconsinites can't afford for November to come down to the most extreme things Tom Tiffany and Francesca Hong have said online," Evers' spokesperson Britt Cudaback said this week in a social media post explaining why the governor endorsed Crowley.

Crowley's mention of the Evers endorsement drew a round of applause at both of his campaign stops in New Glarus and Madison this week, but similar votes of confidence haven't always been decisive in other primaries. In Michigan, Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer endorsed the moderate Stevens who came up short.

Even with Evers' backing, Crowley insists he is not an establishment Democrat despite having served more than three years in the Legislature and as the top elected official in Milwaukee County, the state's largest, since 2020.

"When people try to call me the establishment, I look at that as a slur, particularly as an African American candidate," said Crowley, who is looking to become Wisconsin's first Black governor. "I have never run for office to protect the establishment. I've always been here to protect people."

Voters say message from progressive candidates resonates

Hong supporter Chris Vestin has heard the concerns about electability before.

To him, the fears about Hong's chances against Tiffany in November sound like a repeat of those who pushed Hillary Clinton over Bernie Sanders in the 2016 presidential race. Sanders defeated Clinton in the Wisconsin primary by 13 points that year, before losing the presidency to Trump. Trump carried Wisconsin in 2016, lost it in 2020 and then won it again in 2024.

"It frustrates me when they say that person is unelectable," Vestin said of Hong, who is vying to become Wisconsin's first woman governor and first Asian American governor. "A lot of times it's racist, it's sexist."

Vestin, 54, called Evers' endorsement of Crowley "counterproductive."

"Establishment Democrats want to take the choice away," Vestin said.

On Tuesday in Minnesota, voters will choose between moderate U.S. Rep. Angie Craig and progressive Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan in the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate that's playing out in the aftermath of

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Trump's aggressive immigration enforcement surge in the state.

But the stakes are even higher in Wisconsin.

Democrats are trying to hold onto the governor's office and flip both chambers of the Legislature to have full control for the first time since 2010.

Republicans transformed Wisconsin by enacting a wide array of conservative priorities, including effectively doing away with public worker collective bargaining, when they had full control from 2011 to 2018.

"We need a trifecta," Crowley told his supporters at the New Glarus rally. "And who is at the top of the ticket matters."

Crowley supporter Lindsey Lee, 61, of Madison said before the rally there that he believed previously undecided Democrats were coalescing around Crowley.

"It's like the last 50 yards of a horse race," Lee said. "Hong is obviously in the lead but Crowley is coming up on a side lane. I think it will be a photo finish."

Senate panel to vote on holding Fauci in contempt for refusing to answer questions

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Senate committee is set to vote Thursday on whether to hold Dr. Anthony Fauci in contempt of Congress and refer him to the Justice Department for potential prosecution over his refusal to answer questions at a hearing last week focused on his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fauci invoked his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination more than 100 times when he appeared before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, the Republican committee chairman, has said that constitutional protection did not apply since Fauci last year received a pardon from President Joe Biden and thus did not have to worry about the threat of prosecution.

But Fauci, in a statement issued before the hearing, said he had good reason to fear the possibility of criminal charges given what he said was Paul's determination "to get me to say something, anything, that could vindicate his repeated public pledges that I end up, in his words, quote, behind bars, unquote."

The pardon from Biden covered acts from 2014 through the January 2025 day it was issued but does not shield Fauci from state-level prosecutions or from investigations into any testimony that he did give that lawmakers thought was false.

The Republican-led panel is set to vote Thursday morning on whether to refer Fauci to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Washington, which would make a decision on whether or not to investigate or potentially attempt to prosecute the doctor for contempt.

Paul, who has previously sent referrals on Fauci on his own, acknowledged Wednesday that contempt resolutions have often gone through the full Senate but said he did not "want to waste time" moving the matter to a vote of the full Senate, where it would be unlikely to muster the required 60 votes needed to advance.

"We still might come to the floor," he said, "but at this point, the first thing we will do is we will send it over as a recommendation from our committee, if it passes."

No matter what happens, the episode raises fresh and complicated questions about lawmakers' ability to compel testimony from previously pardoned witnesses — and the outcome could resonate beyond Fauci given the possibility that Trump may also grant clemency to his own aides before leaving the White House.

Drone with explosives found at German airport, official sees 'new quality' of threat

By GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — A drone with explosives was found at Germany's Leipzig/Halle Airport and the device was defused, authorities said Wednesday, in an incident that the country's top security official said posed

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a “new quality of danger.”

Both the runways at the major freight hub were closed and several flights, including one passenger plane, were diverted to other airports after a flying object was sighted nearby shortly before midnight Tuesday. An anti-explosives robot was deployed to check an object near the south runway.

Regional police and prosecutors later said an airport employee discovered a drone near the airport’s south runway with “an unknown explosive device,” and the object was examined by police. They removed its detonator.

That the drone was carrying explosives “is a new quality of danger,” German Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt told reporters at the airport after interrupting his vacation to travel to the scene.

“Drone sightings, drone threats including in a hybrid context, are something we know from the past,” he added. “That a drone armed with explosives is at an airport is a new threat scenario.”

Dobrindt described what happened as “a hybrid attack scenario,” but didn’t offer more details of authorities’ assessment or specify who might be responsible.

He said questions about details of the explosives, the origin of the drone and who was behind the incident were a matter for the ongoing investigation.

The regional interior minister of Saxony state, Armin Schuster, said authorities were looking for parts of a possible second drone.

Police and prosecutors said an apparent second flying object collided with a freight airplane after it aborted a landing at Leipzig/Halle because the runway was closed. The plane flew to another German airport, Hannover, about 200 kilometers (125 miles) to the northwest, where officials found slight damage.

The north runway at Leipzig/Halle was reopened after about two hours. The south runway was scheduled to be out of action for maintenance on Wednesday. Authorities said there was no danger to passengers or airport employees, and flights weren’t affected during the day.

Photos from the scene showed police technicians with an explosives-disposal robot near a Ukrainian plane. The airport is a leading cargo hub and the planes located there include Ukrainian Antonov transport aircraft.

NATO said it was aware of the incident but referred queries to German authorities.

In 2024, an incendiary device ignited at a logistics center at the airport and set fire to a freight container, part of a plot that Western security officials suspect Russian intelligence was behind. The flight it was supposed to take was delayed.

Western officials have accused Russia and its proxies of staging dozens of attacks and other incidents across Europe since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than four years ago.

How Abdul El-Sayed went from political oblivion to progressive breakthrough in Michigan Senate race

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Abdul El-Sayed, a former public health official who harnessed Democratic frustration with the party establishment, narrowly defeated Rep. Haley Stevens in Michigan’s U.S. Senate primary, setting up a crucial test for progressives in a key battleground state.

El-Sayed will face Republican Mike Rogers, a former congressman, in November in a race that will help determine control of the Senate. His first challenge will be unifying Democratic factions after a bitter primary that offered divergent visions for a party desperate for a path back to power.

The margin was extraordinarily close. El-Sayed walked off the stage at his Tuesday night election party without declaring victory, and the race was not called until early Wednesday, after nearly all ballots state-wide had been counted. At the time The Associated Press declared him the winner, El-Sayed led Stevens by 14,893 votes — just under 1 percentage point — out of more than 1.5 million ballots counted, the most in recent state history.

The political significance of the result, however, extends well beyond the slim margin.

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"Abdul's victory was, in my opinion, the most extraordinary victory that I can think of in modern American politics," said Sen. Bernie Sanders, a leader of the progressive movement who was an early supporter of El-Sayed's candidacy.

El-Sayed, 41, has never held elected office and entered the race seven years after losing Michigan's Democratic gubernatorial primary by more than 20 percentage points. This time, running on an unapologetically progressive agenda, he overcame more than \$60 million in outside spending and an opponent backed by many of Michigan's top Democrats, including Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and outgoing Sen. Gary Peters, and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer.

"In the words of Muhammad Ali, we shook up the world," El-Sayed said early Wednesday, standing before The Spirit of Detroit, a landmark bronze statue in the city's downtown.

El-Sayed went from political wilderness to progressive breakthrough

El-Sayed was joined Wednesday by state Sen. Mallory McMorrow, a former opponent in the Senate primary, and Curtis Hertel, chair of the Michigan Democratic Party. It was an initial step toward a unified front after a bitter primary, and it reflected El-Sayed's extraordinary political trajectory in less than a decade.

After losing the 2018 Democratic primary for governor to Whitmer, El-Sayed retreated into the political wilderness. He started a podcast, wrote a book and became a regular presence on YouTube and television, slowly building a following while waiting for a political opening he did not know would come.

It arrived when Peters made the surprise announcement that he would not seek reelection, creating an open Senate seat in one of the country's most competitive states.

El-Sayed launched his campaign in April 2025 with a staff of four. In his victory speech Wednesday, he recalled the small rooms that defined its early months.

"Back in April, I remember talking to a room of five people," he said. "It was an opportunity for us to share a honest conversation about pain and about purpose. And I've been able to have 500 more of those discussions over the past 15 months."

El-Sayed said he visited 110 cities and hosted more than 500 events. His volunteer network grew alongside the campaign, eventually reaching 12,000 people, according to his campaign.

Julie Brink, a 29-year-old volunteer from the Detroit area, said the campaign still felt like an "underdog" when she joined in February. From there, she said, it was "gaining momentum really consistently."

"It was a lot of little things along the way," Brink said.

The campaign also embraced a media strategy that reflected El-Sayed's years outside elected office, aggressively pursuing attention across traditional outlets, podcasts and online platforms. Some appearances, including multiple interviews with controversial streamer Hasan Piker, drew swift backlash.

A turning point came when an opponent dropped out

On July 5, McMorrow ended her campaign, leaving a two-person race between El-Sayed and Stevens. Soon after, El-Sayed stood before door-knocking volunteers in a Grand Rapids park and declared that "we have a chance of winning this election."

"More importantly, we have a chance at winning our politics," El-Sayed said. "What we're doing is building a movement of the many against the money."

In the final days, El-Sayed leaned even further into the strategy that had helped build his campaign. He marched through downtown Detroit alongside social media influencers, then attended a private pool party with content creators, including Piker.

On Election Day, El-Sayed did three interviews with content creators at Detroit's Eastern Market before doing three more with traditional news organizations, including The Associated Press and MS NOW.

Hours later, the campaign that had once struggled to fill small rooms packed Detroit's Majestic Theatre for an election night party.

Progressives see a test of their movement

El-Sayed's victory gave progressives something they have been seeking — evidence that their politics could prevail not just in deep-blue cities and congressional districts, but in a Democratic primary in one of the nation's premier swing states.

"Abdul El-Sayed is now the tip of the spear for the theory that shake-up-the-system economic fighters

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can win in swing states," said Adam Green, co-founder of the Progressive Change Campaign Committee, who campaigned alongside El-Sayed in the final days.

The November race against Rogers, Green added, is "put up or shut up time" for the movement.

El-Sayed campaigned on "Medicare for All," ending military aid to Israel and campaign finance reform. He had support from progressive leaders including Sanders and U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who framed the race as both a grassroots movement and a broader fight against the establishment and big-money spending.

Outside groups backing Stevens ultimately spent more than \$60 million, including more than \$30 million from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and its affiliates.

"We took on a machine," El-Sayed said Wednesday.

Sen. Chris Van Hollen, another progressive leader who endorsed El-Sayed, said the victory "should be a wake-up call to the Washington Democratic establishment."

The harder test comes in November

El-Sayed now has three months to prove the movement that carried him through the primary can win a general election. Failure could be a dramatic setback for progressives, who have insisted for years that their approach could be more successful in a political era defined by President Donald Trump.

The Senate Republican campaign arm has already reserved \$45 million in Michigan advertising to support Rogers, a number likely to grow as Republicans make clear they prefer their chances against El-Sayed.

AIPAC, which spent more money on Michigan's primary than any other race, also signaled Wednesday that its involvement would not end, saying it would oppose El-Sayed and "his radical anti-Israel agenda" in November.

The narrowness of El-Sayed's victory also complicates any sweeping conclusions about what the result says about the Democratic Party. Nearly half of Tuesday's primary voters backed Stevens, who argued throughout the campaign that her more moderate approach and history of winning competitive races made her better positioned to defeat Rogers.

Stevens called El-Sayed early Wednesday to concede the race, with El-Sayed describing it as a "great conversation." She pledged her support for him, and Michigan Democrats are expected to gather for a unity breakfast Thursday before a public rally Friday.

Hertel, the state Democratic chair, said the primary's ideological fight was not itself a problem, arguing that voters — rather than party leaders — should determine their direction.

"I don't think that having a robust discussion is a bad thing," Hertel said Wednesday. "What I think is important is that we are united afterwards."

"We will unite together, and we will win this race," Hertel added, "because we have to."

Investigators look at why a plane was allowed to take off as President Trump's helicopter approached

By JOSH FUNK and GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's not clear why a plane was allowed to take off as President Donald Trump's helicopter was approaching Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport on Tuesday afternoon in an apparent violation of safety procedures put in place after last year's midair collision near the busy airport.

Both the National Transportation Safety Board and the Federal Aviation Administration said Wednesday they were investigating what happened when a commercial jet took off just as Marine One left the White House for Andrews Air Force Base with the president aboard for the first leg of a West Coast trip.

The FAA decided after 67 people died on Jan. 29, 2025, when an airliner collided with an Army Black Hawk helicopter that all takeoffs and landings at the Washington, D.C., airport would be halted anytime a helicopter passes by on a conflicting route. The airspace near the White House and Reagan is heavily congested with military and commercial aircraft.

The airplane that took off Tuesday was climbing above Marine One as the helicopter approached, so the

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two aircraft were not on a collision course.

The FAA said in a statement that a preliminary investigation showed “there was a momentary loss of separation after which the aircraft continued to move away from one another.”

“The air traffic controller was in contact with both the commercial pilot and Marine One pilot during the loss of separation,” the FAA said.

The White House emphasized that Trump was never in danger.

“Marine One flights are piloted by some of the best aviators in the world, and at no point was the President in harm’s way,” White House spokesperson Kush Desai said in a statement.

The Marine Corps defended the actions of their helicopter pilots.

“There were no ‘close calls’ with the routine Marine One movement,” Marine Corps spokesperson Capt. Jacob Sugg said in an email. “Washington National Tower did not delay the helicopter crew, ask them to hold, or otherwise alter their flight profile.”

Tower audio appears to show confusion over Marine One’s plan

Audio recorded by Air Traffic Control shows the Marine One pilot calling the tower ahead of time: “Tower, just want to make sure you copy. Marine One, three minutes to lift.”

The air traffic controller didn’t acknowledge that transmission and after the pilot tried again, the controller said the message was broken and unreadable. So when Marine One’s pilot announced the helicopter was proceeding as briefed, the controller seemed surprised.

“Uh, Marine One, you said, uh, you’re proceeding as briefed?” the controller asked before giving the helicopter directions and commenting, “OK, no three minutes, roger, proceed as briefed.”

After the controller warned the helicopter about the plane taking off, the Marine One pilot said he saw the traffic and declared, “We’ll be doing a momentary delay.”

The Wall Street Journal first reported the incident.

Last year’s midair collision highlighted communication problems

Poor communication between the military and the civilian air traffic controllers at Reagan has been an issue in the past. It came out last spring after one of the hearings on the midair collision that a hotline connecting the Pentagon to the tower at Reagan hadn’t been working for more than three years, and the FAA hadn’t even realized it.

The FAA took steps to ensure that helicopters and airplanes would no longer share the same airspace around the airport shortly after the investigation into last year’s collision began. The rules also require air traffic controllers to use radar — and not rely on pilots’ eyes — to maintain separation and require all military aircraft to broadcast their locations.

The main group of family members of the victims of last year’s crash questioned why the government hasn’t done more to prevent collisions in the crowded airspace around Reagan in a post Wednesday on the social platform X. The family members have been urging Congress to reach a compromise and pass the package of aviation safety reforms that the NTSB recommended after the midair collision.

US suspends avocado inspections in Mexican state of Michoacan due to threat

By MARIA VERZA Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The United States announced Wednesday that it had suspended all government operations in the Mexican state of Michoacan because of a “threat to U.S. interests,” including a halt to the inspections of avocados required for their export.

While the U.S. Embassy did not specify the nature of the threat in its security alert, Michoacan Gov. Alfredo Ramírez Bedolla said on social media that the temporary halt to inspections was intended to safeguard workers following recent arrests linked to extortion. The inspections are necessary for avocados to be shipped to the United States and their suspension could disrupt exports.

The western state of Michoacan is the leading exporter of avocados to the U.S. and has a high level of organized crime activity with at least four cartels — designated as terrorist organizations by the Trump

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administration — operating in the region. Besides trafficking drugs, cartels also make money through extortion, including of the avocado industry.

Michoacan State Security Secretary Antonio Cruz told The Associated Press that one of the arrests mentioned by the governor was of “El Poncho,” the alias of Alfonso Fernández Magallón, leader of a local cartel operating in the avocado-growing region around Los Reyes.

U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Ronald Johnson welcomed the arrest, which came over the weekend. The U.S. government had offered a \$5 million reward for Fernández Magallón’s arrest.

Cruz said his department was unaware of any direct incidents involving the avocado inspectors. Nevertheless, 300 security personnel were deployed to the Los Reyes area as a preventive measure.

The governor said the priority was to “ensure the security conditions necessary for these operations to resume normally,” as has happened in the past.

Mexico supplies approximately 80% of U.S. avocado imports - a product known in the region as “green gold.” Its cultivation generates around 200,000 jobs in Michoacán alone.

In 2025, Mexico sold \$3.65 billion worth of avocados to the United States, and in the first four months of this year, those exports rose by 35% compared to the same period in the previous year.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture sends inspectors in Mexico to monitor plantations and packing houses to ensure that exported produce is free of pests. Threats and violence against the inspectors have caused the U.S. to suspend inspections in the past.

Iran and the US say a Strait of Hormuz deal is close, but one or both would have to back down

By ELENA BECATOROS, SAMY MAGDY and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Iran said Wednesday it is in the “final stage” of drafting an agreement with Oman over the Strait of Hormuz, and U.S. President Donald Trump has said a deal could be announced this week. That could potentially reopen the critical waterway, ease pressure on the world economy and help bring an end to the war.

But the agreement is likely to be contingent on the U.S. lifting its blockade on Iran’s ports. The Trump administration has previously ruled out any deal that would cement Iran’s grip over the strait, which would amount to a major loss for the U.S. and a break with global norms.

Iran has insisted on some measure of control over the strait, saying it will not go back to being an open international waterway, as it was before the war.

The U.S., along with Israel, launched the war on Feb. 28, citing various goals including toppling Tehran’s government and ending its nuclear program. Those have not been achieved, and the conflict has devolved into a fight over the strait as Iran’s assertion of control and attacks on shipping have ground traffic to a near halt.

Closure of the strait, through which a fifth of the world’s traded oil and natural gas once passed, has driven up the price of fuel and basic goods, roiling the global economy. Trump is also under mounting pressure to end an unpopular war ahead of U.S. congressional elections.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Esmail Baghaei, said that the agreement with Oman is in the “final stage” of drafting, and that a joint statement will be issued “if certain parties do not obstruct this process,” apparently referring to the U.S.

Regional officials tell AP negotiators have finalized a draft

Iranian and Omani negotiators have finalized the draft deal to reopen the strait and await final approval from Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, two regional officials told The Associated Press on Wednesday. Khamenei is believed to have been wounded in the war’s opening strikes and has not been seen in public since then.

The officials, who were briefed on the negotiations, portrayed the potential deal as a temporary solution to the dispute over the strait. They said it is tied to an agreement reached between the U.S. and Iran in

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June that aimed at ending the fighting and reopening the waterway but ultimately collapsed.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private talks, said the potential deal will pave the way for the U.S. and Iran to resume negotiations on Tehran's nuclear program.

Earlier, they had said the potential agreement would have ships enter the Persian Gulf through an Iranian-controlled route and exit through a route controlled by Oman. Service fees would be charged for providing security and preserving the maritime environment, the officials said.

The U.S. has said it is strongly opposed to any arrangement that would see Iran charge fees.

Trump said a deal to reopen the strait is close

Trump was asked on Tuesday evening by reporters about a report on the Axios news site that an announcement on the strait could be made on Wednesday.

"It could happen. Tomorrow or the next day," Trump said. "A lot of progress has been made."

Vice President JD Vance acknowledged Wednesday that it can seem like the U.S. is not making progress in Iran, describing the effort to end the war as "messy" and that "it's going to take some time"

Vance said in an interview that aired in the evening on Fox News Channel that the Iranians are "extraordinarily difficult people" and that efforts to try to resolve the war sometimes require moving backward before moving forward.

Also on Wednesday, oil prices initially eased but later inched up. Brent crude, the international standard, was around \$80 per barrel — still well below the levels it hit at the height of the conflict.

In recent days, Trump has alternately threatened massive strikes and voiced support for diplomatic efforts.

Attacks on regional shipping continue

The Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen claimed Wednesday they had fired ballistic missiles toward a Saudi oil tanker on the Red Sea off the Saudi port of Yanbu, without providing evidence. There was no immediate comment from Saudi Arabia.

A vessel sailing in the Gulf of Aden off Yemen reported a loud explosion that happened in close proximity, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said Wednesday, adding that the crew was safe. The Houthis claimed to have fired a ballistic missile at another Saudi oil tanker.

A recent escalation between the rebels and Saudi Arabia threatens to reignite Yemen's civil war, which pitted the Houthis against a Saudi-led coalition supporting the country's government.

In July, the Houthis announced they were closing the Bab el-Mandeb Strait that leads to the Red Sea for Saudi-linked shipping. That puts additional pressure on international shipping since the Red Sea became a key alternative route for Saudi oil exports during the war.

Israel and Hezbollah's ceasefire increasingly shaky

The shaky ceasefire between Israel and the Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah grew more volatile Wednesday, as the Israeli military issued an evacuation warning to residents of the southern Lebanese village of Mansouri — the first such warning in weeks.

Later, the Israeli military said it had begun conducting "precise strikes" in southern Lebanon in response to what it described as "a blatant violation of the ceasefire" that had largely held since June 20.

The escalation came as Lebanese and Israeli negotiators met in Rome for a second day to discuss implementation of a deal under which Israeli forces are supposed to withdraw from areas they are occupying in southern Lebanon in exchange for Hezbollah's disarmament.

A State Department official said the talks in Rome ended early "due to events on the ground" but could continue on Thursday. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the diplomacy, said the discussions "were extremely productive."

State of New Mexico sues Justice Department and Todd Blanche, saying they blocked its Epstein probe

By SAVANNAH PETERS Associated Press

CEDAR CREST, N.M. (AP) — New Mexico's attorney general sued the U.S. Department of Justice on

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Wednesday, accusing it of blocking the state from investigating sex crimes at Jeffrey Epstein's former ranch near Santa Fe.

The lawsuit in federal court in Washington, D.C., said the department and acting Attorney General Todd Blanche stonewalled New Mexico Attorney General Raúl Torrez's criminal investigation into Epstein and others, taking action that "harms victims and undermines the public interest."

The lawsuit sought judicial intervention to force the federal government to turn over materials to New Mexico's investigators. It was filed the same day that the New Mexico House of Representatives released a report saying "those directly responsible for protecting New Mexicans relied on others to do their job," including federal prosecutors in New York.

Epstein took his own life in a federal jail in New York City in August 2019 after he was denied bail on sex trafficking charges lodged against him when he was arrested a month earlier.

Epstein's former girlfriend and close associate, Ghislaine Maxwell, is serving a 20-year prison sentence after her 2021 conviction on sex trafficking charges in New York. Witness testimony at Maxwell's trial alleged she and Epstein had sexually abused women at his New Mexico ranch.

Justice Department says it's following court orders to protect victims

According to New Mexico's lawsuit, state prosecutors "have faced sustained resistance" to the kind of information-sharing common between state and federal investigators.

The Justice Department said in a statement it was not releasing some information the state requested because of federal court orders that ban disclosing victim-identifying information.

"New Mexico has provided no lawful basis to justify such sweeping disclosures," the agency said. It said protecting victim privacy remains a top priority and the Justice Department "remains available to assist New Mexico's investigation consistent with the law and binding court orders."

The lawsuit claims the Justice Department and Blanche were hiding information about Epstein and his co-conspirators when the state is one of the few jurisdictions that may still be able to hold Epstein's associates accountable or "provide some sense of justice to survivors."

New Mexico's attorney general said his office made 10 requests for key information that were ignored or denied.

"We have heard repeatedly they will cooperate and what our team has experienced is anything but cooperation," Torrez told reporters in a video call.

State calls on Blanche to fix things with 'a stroke of the pen'

"Todd Blanche today with a stroke of a pen could grant us the access that he claimed," Torrez said. "Instead they have decided to stonewall, to obstruct and to frankly conceal for whatever reason."

The interim report released by the New Mexico Survivors' Truth Commission in part blamed federal prosecutors in Manhattan for a dearth of information about Epstein's activities in New Mexico. The commission, established in February by state lawmakers, said federal officials focused on Epstein's misdeeds in New York, Palm Beach, Florida, and the Virgin Islands, while leaving his offenses in New Mexico unexamined.

But the commission also cited evidence gathered by federal prosecutors in New York to describe women who recounted suffering sexual abuse from Epstein at his Zorro Ranch.

At Maxwell's trial, Annie Farmer, now a psychologist, testified she was 16 when she agreed to go to the ranch, where Maxwell touched her breast during a massage and Epstein unexpectedly crawled into bed and pressed himself against her.

A spokesperson for federal prosecutors in New York sent along the Justice Department statement on Epstein in response to a request for comment.

Coinciding with the release of the report, about 50 members of the media and the public gathered in a legislative hearing room at the New Mexico state capitol on Wednesday to hear about the commission's preliminary findings.

Epstein accuser tells commission about abuse

Rachel Benavidez, the lone speaker in the "survivor testimony" portion of the meeting, alleged that Epstein sexually abused her at Zorro Ranch. Benavidez said Epstein's connections with powerful people in the state allowed him to "roam free here in New Mexico unchecked" after he was convicted of sex

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crimes elsewhere.

"We don't need more paper files sitting as artifacts," Benavidez said, urging the commission to question "co-conspirators" who helped Epstein evade accountability in the state.

Benavidez has said in interviews that she was brought to the ranch to work as a massage therapist beginning in the late 1990s. She said Wednesday that Epstein exploited "the one thing that meant everything to me at that time, my hard earned career."

A group of Epstein victims and victims' family members accused Blanche in a statement of "continuing to protect abusers" by withholding the information sought by New Mexico.

"The DOJ's argument that it won't hand over files in order to protect survivors' identities is laughable when the DOJ has already revealed their names and personal information," they said.

Epstein purchased his expansive property in Stanley, New Mexico, a sparsely populated ranching community about 30 miles (48 kilometers) south of Santa Fe, in 1993 from former Democratic Gov. Bruce King and built a hilltop mansion with a private airstrip and helipad.

Epstein's ranch has been renamed 'San Rafael Ranch'

The property was sold by Epstein's estate in 2023 to the family of Don Huffines, a Republican recently appointed Texas' state comptroller. In a February social media post, Huffines said the property has been renamed San Rafael Ranch after a saint associated with healing and that his family plans to operate a Christian retreat there.

The Justice Department in December started releasing investigative records pertaining to Epstein and Maxwell in accordance with the Epstein Files Transparency Act.

Accusers and members of Congress who fought to pass the transparency act quickly complained about shoddy redactions and too many sealed materials. Records that were released, including photographs, interview transcripts, call logs, court records and other documents, were either already public or heavily blacked out, and many lacked necessary context.

Judge criticizes the Justice Department as he dismisses Jan. 6 seditious conspiracy case

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge decried efforts to rewrite the history of the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol as he reluctantly dismissed the seditious conspiracy case against members of the far-right Oath Keepers extremist group at the Trump administration's request.

The move Tuesday closes the book on the Jan. 6 cases that were wiped out with Republican President Donald Trump's sweeping pardons and commutations last year, freeing people convicted of violent assaults on police and other crimes from prison.

The Department of Justice in April acted to vacate the convictions of Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes and others in the seditious conspiracy case, who had their sentences commuted but did not receive pardons. It was a stunning reversal from the Democratic Biden administration, which hailed the guilty verdicts in one of the most serious cases stemming from the Capitol attack.

U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta, who oversaw the Oath Keepers' trials, criticized the department's move, writing in his ruling that the government "asks to absolve these Defendants of crimes against the United States itself." But Mehta wrote that he had no choice but to grant the administration's request.

"This is the last of the prosecutions seeking to hold accountable those responsible for the events of Jan. 6. That book is now closed," wrote Mehta, who was nominated to the bench by Democratic President Barack Obama.

"Today's epilogue diminishes the gravity of that day, denigrates the work of the prosecutors and law enforcement officers who secured these convictions, and excuses criminal acts that caused a centuries-long pillar of our democracy — the peaceful transfer of presidential power — to buckle. The court cannot write a different ending," he wrote.

Juries in the nation's capital convicted Oath Keepers leaders and members of another group, the Proud

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Boys, of orchestrating violent plots to stop the peaceful transfer of power after Trump's 2020 election loss to Biden. Rhodes was released from prison in January 2025 after Trump commuted his 18-year sentence.

Rhodes, who did not enter the Capitol on Jan. 6, has denied any wrongdoing and described himself at his 2023 sentencing as a "political prisoner." James Lee Bright, an attorney who represented Rhodes at trial, wrote in a text message that he was "disappointed in the tenor" of Mehta's order, adding that it was "not necessary to inject his personal opinions in such a fashion."

Trump has argued that the Jan. 6 defendants were treated unfairly by the justice system, saying the pardons were intended to end "a grave national injustice that has been perpetrated upon the American people" and begin "a process of national reconciliation."

More than 1,200 people across the United States were convicted of Jan. 6 crimes, including roughly 200 people who pleaded guilty to assaulting law enforcement.

Most of the Jan. 6 defendants were granted "full, complete and unconditional" pardons, while Rhodes and other defendants in the seditious conspiracy cases only had their sentences commuted. Trump also ordered the attorney general to seek the dismissal of roughly 450 cases that were pending before judges stemming from the largest investigation in Justice Department history.

Three people charged with threatening judge, witness and officials tied to Nolan Wells investigation

By JOSH KELETY Associated Press

Three people have been charged with threatening a judge, a witness and local officials connected to the investigation into the death of Nolan Xavier Wells, an 18-year-old found dead after a July Fourth boat trip with friends to an island off Mississippi's Gulf Coast.

None of the three appear to know Wells, his family or the boating group, or be part of the investigation. The threats came amid rampant speculation and scrutiny of the investigation, deepened in part by uncertainty surrounding Wells' final hours, distrust of law enforcement and the state's long history of racist violence.

The teenager, who was Black, had traveled to the uninhabited island with a group of friends from high school, all of whom were white. He did not return with his friends to the mainland that evening. His body was found two days later off the island's coast.

Authorities have not made any arrests or named any suspects. An independent autopsy commissioned by Wells' family found the 18-year-old's cause of death to be "undetermined" pending further investigation.

Attempts to reach the defendants for comment were unsuccessful. Phone numbers listed for some of the defendants in affidavits weren't active and a call to another number went unanswered. Emails sent to addresses listed in an affidavit for one of the defendants went unanswered. It is unclear if they have attorneys.

One of the defendants, Edward James Porter of Illinois, allegedly called an unnamed witness on July 31 and threatened to kill them and their family, according to an affidavit. Porter also allegedly told another person in Mississippi in a phone call that he would cut them up and put them "into a suitcase." Porter was charged on July 31 in federal court for the Southern District of Mississippi for the threat.

Porter threatened two members of the family of Bart Edminston Jr., a 21-year-old who knew Wells and provided aid to the boat the group used on July Fourth, said family attorney Russell Latino. Latino said that one of the family members who Porter threatened is a witness in the investigation into Wells' death.

An Ohio woman was also charged with allegedly placing bomb threats at the George County Chancery Clerk's Office and the Jackson County Sheriff's Office on July 23. The woman, Michelle Francine Edwards, allegedly called the clerk's office 21 times and said, "the clock is ticking," according to an affidavit.

A California man, Joseph Alfredo Vasquez Dumarce, was charged on July 14 for allegedly sending a threatening Facebook message to a Jackson County Chancery Court judge with ties to the Wells investigation. According to an affidavit, a Facebook user believed to be Dumarce sent a message to the judge's account that constituted a "threat that a bomb would be mailed to the judge's office."

Judge Ashlee Cole posted a screenshot of Dumarce's threatening message on Facebook on July 9. Cole

wrote in an earlier Facebook post that her son last saw Wells on July Fourth around 3 p.m. and decided to "stay on the island and return inland later with another group of friends." Cole wrote that she deactivated her Facebook and that she fears for the safety of her children.

"No one in our family is trying in any way to impede with the investigation by law enforcement or to otherwise hamper the family and law enforcement's quest for answers," Cole wrote, adding that her son "cooperated fully" with the sheriff's investigation. ____ Kelety reported from Phoenix. Associated Press journalist Sophie Bates in Jackson, Mississippi, contributed.

AP Exclusive: Trump's immigration crackdown has detained more than 50 military spouses and parents

By JACK BROOK, SAFIYAH RIDDLE and AARON KESSLER Associated Press/Report for America

President Donald Trump's administration has detained dozens of parents and spouses of active-duty U.S. troops as it rolls back immigration protections for military families to pursue its mass deportation agenda, an Associated Press investigation found.

More than 50 parents and spouses of active-duty service members have been detained since Trump took office for a second term, and at least six have been deported and one self-deported, the AP found in the first accounting of such detentions, which the government does not track. At least eight immediate family members of U.S. service members remain in federal immigration custody.

Parents and spouses of people in the military have generally been shielded from deportation under bipartisan consensus for decades. But the AP found they're now routinely being detained for months as they try to adjust their legal status through the policies available to service members' close relatives and even as the military continues to recruit by advertising immigration benefits for enlistees' families. Experts warn that the reversal could undermine military preparedness even as the U.S. is at war in Iran. It's left military members without emotional support and caretakers for their children, delayed deployments and forced some to take leave.

"How can I even focus on my military career because I have to worry about how my wife is doing?" said Army Sgt. Hedar Leonel Turcios Juarez, who was stationed in Fort Bliss, Texas, when his wife was detained outside a Walmart in front of their 6-year-old daughter in July.

A handful of detentions of service members' spouses have prompted public backlash and led to intervention by Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin to secure their release.

The Department of Homeland Security has said it does not compile data on these cases. The AP obtained information by analyzing thousands of federal court records compiled by Habeas Dockets, a project run by the Immigration Justice Transparency Initiative; by reviewing existing media coverage; and by verifying information with family members and attorneys. The actual number is likely much higher than the 52 cases AP found.

The AP asked for comment from DHS on each case, including the individuals' immigration and criminal history. The agency did not provide specific information about the majority of cases but noted that at least seven people had been removed from the U.S. before, at least eight had removal orders and at least two had drunken-driving or drug-related convictions.

"DHS and ICE value the contributions of all those who have served in the U.S. military," DHS said in a statement. "U.S. military service alone does not automatically grant lawful immigration status, or exempt aliens from the consequences of violating U.S. immigration laws."

The Pentagon declined to comment on the AP's findings.

Service members are losing their safety net

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Wendy Gbeve, 30, said she hasn't had a good night's sleep since her father, Luis Alberto Ramirez Zavala, was detained by immigration officials last month. Gbeve was there when he was arrested at a routine interview with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in Missouri about his pending application for legal status.

She spent hours refreshing the USCIS page to track where the government was taking her father: from

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a county jail in Missouri to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facility in Texas. Finally, roughly two weeks after he was detained, she found out he had been deported to his native Mexico.

"It's the most frustrating, helpless feeling," Gbeve said.

Gbeve said ICE still hasn't informed her family why her father was removed so quickly. Ramirez Zavala spent most of his life in the U.S. working as a ranch hand in rural Illinois.

Ramirez Zavala's wife of 30 years, a legal permanent resident, is considering returning to Mexico to be with her husband. For Gbeve, whose husband is also in the Air Force, that would leave no one to watch their children, ages 2 and 4, if both were deployed.

"That would be our entire safety net," she said.

Military members have had to take leave or delay a deployment

Some service members have been left caring for children alone.

Army Staff Sgt. Alexis Jaramillo, an aviation operations specialist who has served for more than a decade, said he would normally be involved in training soldiers at Fort Polk, Louisiana. Instead, he is on administrative leave, caring for his 5-year-old stepson, Noah, after his Brazilian wife, Maisa Lopes Eliaser, was detained in early July.

It happened during what the family thought was a routine appointment at a USCIS office in Alabama. Eliaser arrived in the U.S. on a tourist visa in 2019, and the couple was trying to change her status.

Immigration officials asked Jaramillo and his stepson to leave the room. Minutes later, they were told that Eliaser had been detained. The next time they saw her was inside a detention facility.

"It is really overwhelming because I need to take care of my kid by myself. No one is here to help me out," Jaramillo said.

At least one active-duty soldier halted her imminent deployment after her husband was detained by immigration officers, leaving no one to care for their then-5-year-old son, court records show. A judge eventually ordered the husband released.

Trump's policy is a reversal even from his first administration

A new policy, implemented in April 2025, states that "military service alone does not exempt aliens from the consequences of violating U.S. immigration laws."

Experts in military immigration law said this marks a stark shift from previous administrations across the political spectrum, including Trump's first administration.

Dan Gividen, who served as ICE's deputy chief counsel from 2016 to 2019 under Trump, represents a soldier's father who has been in ICE custody for more than eight months. He said that during his time as an ICE prosecutor, immigration authorities rarely detained service members' immediate family members unless they had committed violent crimes.

"We would not place them into removal proceedings, period. That's insane," Gividen said. "The fact that they're doing it now is just outrageous."

ICE previously generally canceled past removal orders and allowed parents or spouses of troops to adjust their legal status, said Margaret Stock, an immigration attorney and retired lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve. She said that's because the government wanted to ensure troops focused on their duties.

"It's the same thing that happens if you don't provide healthcare to the troops, or you don't provide housing to the troops," she said. If soldiers are preoccupied with detained or deported family, "they're not concentrating on their job anymore."

Even some congressional Republicans who are otherwise largely supportive of Trump's aggressive immigration crackdown have pushed for the release of service members' relatives.

"The immigration system is failing the honorable and good Americans," Florida Republican Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar said at a news conference in July advocating for the release of the wife of retired Staff Sgt. Wilmer Trujillo, who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. DHS said she illegally reentered the U.S. after being deported in 2005. Her attorney says they are seeking to rescind the removal order because she was not provided proper notice of the hearing that led to it.

Although DHS said it does not have data on active-duty troops, it has released figures for former service members, who also qualify for immigration benefits along with their immediate families. From Jan.

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20, 2025, through Jan. 26, 2026, immigration authorities detained 125 military veterans — placing 34 into removal proceedings — and arrested more than 150 immediate family members, DHS said in a letter to several Democratic senators.

Anh Dung Cong Tran, known as “Tony,” had both a father and son who served in the military. Tran came to the U.S. in 1990 through a program for children of American military personnel born in Vietnam. Tran, 56, was deported in July, having lived in the U.S. for decades with regular check-ins with immigration authorities after an assault conviction soon after his arrival.

His son Antonio Tran said his father persuaded him to enlist in the military in 2022. “He has a totally different view on America now,” said Tran, who was discharged as an Army specialist in March after a serious injury.

“Whatever your family have done for this country, to keep this country safe, to give the people, Americans, the freedom to walk around and to sleep safe at night, well, we don’t care about that,” Tony Tran told the AP in a video call from Vietnam.

Benefits for service members include what’s known as parole-in-place

Military recruiters tout immigration benefits for troops’ families as a selling point to enlist.

One of the military’s most highly advertised immigration benefits is “military parole-in-place,” which allows the spouses, children and parents of active-duty service members and veterans to obtain legal immigration status from within the country. Not everyone qualifies: Those who overstayed visas or who already applied for legal status at the border, for example.

The policy was implemented under Republican President George W. Bush during the U.S. war with Iraq in 2007 and codified under Democratic President Barack Obama. DHS agencies can grant it on a case-by-case basis.

Under Trump, the average time it takes to receive military parole-in-place has more than doubled to 12 months, according to USCIS data. That leaves military families more vulnerable to being placed in ICE custody.

Congressional Democrats and organizations that help military families facing deportation, including Repatriate Our Patriots, said that the AP’s findings were alarming.

“It’s the job of the military to ensure that families are being taken care of — and this is not the way you take care of families,” said California Rep. Gil Cisneros, a former undersecretary of defense for personnel who introduced legislation this year aimed at making it harder to deny parole to troops’ relatives. “This administration just doesn’t care, and they are not thinking about people who are putting their lives on the line for the country and to defend our nation.”

Recruiters are still promoting immigration benefits

The AP found that troops’ immediate family members have repeatedly been detained by ICE while applying for parole-in-place or seeking to adjust their status, including during immigration appointments.

Marine Cpl. Jose Manuel Vilchis-Valle’s mother, Ursula Borja Valle, was detained at an appointment in August 2025 and deported to Mexico within a week. She had lived in the U.S. since the 1990s without a known criminal record. Her son was attempting to help her clear up a decades-old removal order through the immigration benefits that military recruiters had used to help persuade him to enlist.

“They basically told me that if you serve, and if you served honorably, you can help your parents,” said Vilchis-Valle, 23, who was honorably discharged shortly after his mother was deported. “In a perfect world, I wished, because of my service, they could have pardoned her.”

In other cases, ICE has detained people who had already been granted protection, with the agency later arguing in court filings that their parole status had been revoked.

In June 2025, the Marine Corps officially stopped advertising enlistment as a way to protect immigrant family members, in response to inquiries from the AP. But recruiters for the Army and the National Guard still promote it.

“For some service members, enlisting isn’t just about serving their country,” read an Instagram post published in late July by an official Army recruiter based in California. “It’s also about doing everything

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they can to help protect their parents who sacrificed everything for them.”

Recruiters are expected to highlight the benefits of service to attract applicants and military parole-in-place remains in effect, Army spokesperson Christopher Surridge said.

The National Guard said it does not track detentions of its troops’ relatives or which recruiters advertise immigration benefits and referred additional comment to DHS.

A soldier who helped patrol the border grapples with his father’s detention

For U.S. Army Specialist Romero Ralios, his father’s detention has left him remorseful about his deployment last year to the Joint Task Force Southern Border, where he spent nine months supporting U.S. Customs and Border Patrol.

His father, Sebastian Ralios Tino, a Guatemalan landscaper with no known criminal record, was detained this summer. He lived in the U.S. for nearly two decades without legal status.

Ralios’ commanding officer, Capt. Mohamed Elmaola, told the AP he wanted to speak up because Ralios is a “phenomenal soldier” whose father should receive due process.

“It’s very hard to communicate and to have credibility as a leader when your own subordinates are unable to get support,” Elmaola said. “Considering he enlisted his time and his life into supporting and defending the United States Constitution, it is the right thing to do to support soldiers and their families.”

Romero Ralios struggles to sleep at night due to the stress and wishes he had not been involved in immigration enforcement, even though he was just following orders.

“It was karma. I should’ve known,” Ralios told the AP. “All those families I broke. I have regrets.”

15 states now linked to iceberg lettuce cyclospora outbreak, CDC says

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Parasitic illness cases in 15 states have been linked to iceberg lettuce, U.S. health officials said Wednesday.

Cyclospora cases have been reported in at least 47 states this year, and investigators have continued to probe how many could be linked to a common contaminated source.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the number of states tied to the deadly outbreak had grown from nine to 15. Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire and North Carolina were added to a list that previously included Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Investigators initially narrowed in on lettuce served at Taco Bell. Federal officials subsequently said they are focused on Taylor Farms as the source of the lettuce in the outbreak, and the company has recalled iceberg lettuce grown in central Mexico.

There are several reasons cyclospora outbreaks can be hard to investigate and contain, said Dr. Juan Luis Marquez, medical director of the Washtenaw County and Livingston County health departments in Michigan.

It can take weeks between when someone is exposed to the parasite and when they come down with symptoms; it’s harder to analyze the parasite in laboratories; and it’s a lot of work to interview everyone who is sick and clearly identify common exposures, said Marquez, an adjunct public health professor at the University of Michigan.

Also, “there have been staffing cuts at all levels of public health — federal, local, state — so there are less resources and capacity generally available,” Marquez said in a statement.

Cyclospora is a microscopic, spherical parasite that commonly causes watery diarrhea “with frequent and sometimes explosive bowel movements,” according to the CDC. Outbreaks tend to occur most often in the late spring and summer.

The heat-loving parasite infects the bowels and spreads through feces. The illness, called cyclosporiasis, is less common than foodborne illnesses caused by other germs, including salmonella and E. coli. Many cyclospora cases are never linked to a specific food or other source.

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The worst year in the U.S. for infections was 2019, when about 4,700 illnesses were reported nationally. This year has far surpassed that. Michigan alone has reported more than 12,000 — including two deaths. Adding in the other states that have reported cases, the national total stands at over 25,000.

The FDA says it is tracking five separate ongoing cyclospora outbreaks. The 15-state outbreak is by far the largest. No products have been linked to the other outbreaks, including one that has sickened 115 people.

US stocks hold near records on hopes of an agreement with Iran

By DAMIAN J. TROISE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks meandered to a mixed finish on Wall Street Wednesday and remained close to their records, while oil prices held steady.

The uncertain trading on Wall Street followed two days of big gains that gave the week and August a strong start. Several big technology companies slumped, though, ultimately weighing down the market.

The S&P 500 fell 12.97 points, or 0.2%, to close at 7,723.55. The index spent most of the day higher after surging to a record on Tuesday.

"The coiled spring investors have been waiting for has finally released, with the S&P 500 Index surging to record highs for the first time in two months," said Mark Hackett, chief market strategist at Nationwide, in a report.

The Dow Jones industrial Average rose 263.24 points, or 0.5%, to 54,349.12, reaching another record.

The Nasdaq fell 221.55 points, or 0.8%, to 26,363.44. The index was weighed down by big technology companies losing ground, including a 4% drop for Google's parent company, Alphabet, and a 1.1% drop for Microsoft.

The market has been generally rising as companies head into the closing stretch of their latest round of earnings reports with sharp overall gains. Three-quarters of the companies within the S&P 500 have reported results so far, and Wall Street expects profit growth of 50% when they are all finished.

The Walt Disney Co. rose 3.6% after easily beating Wall Street's profit forecasts, helped by a \$1 billion box office haul from "Toy Story 5" and theme park revenue.

Booking Holdings jumped 6.6% after reporting that strong travel demand drove profit and revenue growth during its most recent quarter.

Elon Musk's SpaceX fell 13.6% following the release late Tuesday of its first quarterly report as a public company, which showed that it sharply boosted spending on artificial intelligence. The company did help give semiconductor giant Nvidia a 3.4% boost after announcing it would exclusively use that company's chips for its artificial intelligence technology.

That announcement weighed on Advanced Micro Devices, which fell 7%. Musk had previously said that SpaceX and his electric vehicle company, Tesla, would use chips from both Advanced Micro Devices and Nvidia.

Treasury yields slipped in the bond market. The yield on the 10-year Treasury slipped to 4.61% from 4.63% from late Tuesday.

European markets were mixed.

Strong corporate profits and expectations for more growth ahead have been steering stocks higher. Wall Street has also been worried about stock prices becoming unjustifiably high, especially within the technology sector and for companies focused on artificial intelligence. Profit growth, especially for some of the big chipmakers, like Nvidia, could help justify some of the big investments those companies are making in AI.

AI-focused companies, with their big market values, have been behind many of the big market swings and most of Wall Street's gains.

"The market appears to be moving from rewarding companies for AI spending to assessing the revenue and earnings that these investments can generate," said Brian Therien, analyst, investment strategy, at Edward Jones, in a report.

Uncertainty about the direction of the U.S. war with Iran continues hanging over the market. President Donald Trump said a deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz could come as early as Wednesday. But there

have been many stops and starts during the five-month old conflict that has stifled the global supply of oil and rattled energy markets.

The price of Brent crude, the international standard, fell 0.1% to \$79.45 a barrel. Oil prices have been swinging for months and were as high as \$102 per barrel at one point during the conflict, jolting already stubbornly high inflation. Higher oil prices pushed gasoline prices higher and increased shipping costs for a wide range of products.

Inflation concerns have been hanging over markets and the Federal Reserve. The central bank has been holding its key benchmark rate steady as it monitors the costs and the impact on the economy. Wall Street expects the central bank to raise rates at least once before the end of 2026. Household spending remains resilient, despite the stress from higher costs on everything from gas to groceries.

The jobs market has been one of the stronger areas of the economy, though growth has been slowing. Wall Street will get another update on Friday with the monthly employment report for July.

Man arrested at Trump's California golf course faces illegal weapons charges

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A California man who was arrested at President Donald Trump's Los Angeles-area golf course was pretending to be part of the security detail preparing for Trump's visit and had a stash of illegal weapons in his car and home, authorities said.

Jeanine John Taele, 38, was due in court Wednesday on a federal weapons charge but the hearing was cancelled. He is being held at a downtown LA jail on state charges, according to booking records and not yet in federal custody, said a spokesperson for the U.S. attorney's office.

Taele was arrested Sunday at Trump National Golf Club in Rancho Palos Verdes, two days before Trump visited for a fundraising dinner.

Taele was first seen on the property Friday, walking throughout the course wearing an earpiece and taking photos and videos of federal agents' activities as they conducted a security assessment, according to a federal criminal complaint.

Taele drove away but then returned to the course Sunday. He approached federal agents and said he was employed by the State Department and was there for a security detail. Taele said he had a loaded weapon in his vehicle and was arrested after it was searched, according to federal officials. Authorities also found a 16-round magazine with ammunition in his pocket.

He already appeared in court on state weapons charges and a second-degree robbery charge for an unrelated incident.

Taele is charged federally with possession of an unregistered short-barreled rifle that was found at this home, authorities said. The complaint alleges the firearm is an illegally modified AR-style rifle with a barrel that was cut down to 10 inches (25 centimeters) from 14 inches (35 centimeters).

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said a search of his pickup truck in the club parking lot turned up a loaded 9mm pistol, binoculars and a badge that read "security protection agent," according to federal prosecutors.

Law enforcement searched his home in the nearby city of Downey on Monday and found a rifle and other firearms, magazines and ammunition, body armor and notebooks with "concerning statements," federal authorities said. No details about the statements were released.

"Mr. Taele's troubling behavior at the President's public golf course merely days before the President was expected to arrive raised serious red flags for law enforcement," Patrick Grandy, the assistant director in charge of the FBI's Los Angeles office, said in a statement. "There is no room for error, particularly in light of previous attempts on President Trump's life."

In brief remarks about Taele's arrest to Fox News on Tuesday, Trump said "only consequential presidents" are targeted, "and I am definitely consequential," which he said brought him "a little solace."

Taele was a corporal in the U.S. Marines who was deployed to Iraq in 2008 and Afghanistan in 2010 and worked as a warehouse clerk, according to the U.S. Marine Corps. He earned numerous commendations,

including an award for good conduct, during his service from 2008 to 2016.

State records show Taele is a licensed security guard, with his most recent license issued in February of this year and expiring in 2028. Records also show several cancelled or suspended permits to carry a firearm as a security guard. State officials did not immediately respond to a request for more details about those permits.

The Los Angeles County public defender's office, which is representing Taele in the state criminal case, did not immediately return an email seeking comment Wednesday. Family members could not immediately be reached for comment.

Last year a jury found a man guilty of trying to assassinate Trump at the president's Florida country club. And while a candidate in 2024, Trump narrowly escaped an assassination attempt by a shooter on a roof at a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.

Senate confirms Dr. Erica Schwartz as CDC director, bringing new leadership to troubled agency

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Senate on Wednesday confirmed Dr. Erica Schwartz as director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, placing her in charge of a public health agency beleaguered by political meddling and low morale.

Schwartz was confirmed in a 51-44 vote. The 54-year-old becomes the 22nd leader of the Atlanta-based CDC, which is charged with protecting Americans from preventable health threats, and the agency's first confirmed director in nearly a year. Her resume includes medical and law degrees, a stint as deputy surgeon general, and a leadership position at the U.S. Coast Guard.

Schwartz's nomination appeared to be on shaky ground after a hearing before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee last month. The chairman, Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., and others questioned whether she would be willing to stand up to Republican President Donald Trump's health secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., if he ordered CDC to do something unsupported by science and good public health practice.

But weeks later, Cassidy said he had spoken with Schwartz after that hearing and with others who knew her, and said he had gained confidence in her.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services officials did not immediately respond to questions about when Schwartz will start the job or her salary.

The CDC has been in turmoil since Trump returned to office last year.

Largely due to layoffs and resignations, the agency has lost 3,000-plus employees, more than one-quarter of its workforce. Morale has plummeted as a succession of mostly temporary leaders has come and gone. The front office has been staffed by political appointees with little or no training in medicine or public health.

"Now, Dr. Schwartz needs to prove that her leadership will serve science and not the whims of politicians. CDC needs a Director who will protect public health workers, defend evidence-based guidance, and refuse any directive that would undermine public safety," said the National Public Health Coalition, an organization of former and current CDC workers, in a statement Wednesday.

When Schwartz was nominated in April, public health experts were cautiously optimistic, citing her background. They also noted that Schwartz was the choice of Trump and not Kennedy, who is a leading voice in the anti-vaccine movement before he was tapped to oversee the CDC and other federal health agencies.

Schwartz was the third Trump nominee for CDC director in the past 18 months.

The first was a former Florida congressman, Dr. David Weldon. His Senate hearing in March 2025 was canceled an hour before it was to begin. Weldon said at the time that he had been told not enough senators were willing to vote for him.

The White House then moved on to Susan Monarez, who had been serving as the CDC's acting director. Monarez was confirmed by the Senate, but ousted from the job in less than a month. Trump administra-

tion officials said she was not aligned with the president's agenda, so they terminated her.

Since then, there have been a series of HHS officials as acting CDC directors.

"With all the turmoil of the past two years, the CDC desperately needs stability, experienced leadership and a steadfast commitment to science," said Dr. Georges Benjamin of the American Public Health Association, in a statement Wednesday.

The CDC position was one of several leadership vacancies among federal health agencies, including the U.S. surgeon general and the commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration.

Preakness shifting back to three weeks and a day after the Kentucky Derby, to be run on a Sunday

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writer

A big change is coming to horse racing's Triple Crown, with the Preakness Stakes moving to three weeks and a day after the Kentucky Derby and being run on Sunday for the first time.

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore and the Maryland Jockey Club announced the decision Wednesday. No Triple Crown race has ever taken place on a Sunday in the century-plus-old history of the series.

The shift marks a major change on the horse racing calendar, following significant debate and speculation. Except for 2020 during the pandemic, the Preakness has been on the third Saturday in May, two weeks after the Kentucky Derby, since 1950.

Maryland Jockey Club CEO Bill Knauf acknowledged the tradition while also calling this the time to move the Preakness back.

"It's been discussed for a very long time (and) we recognized the different trends and training methods recently," Knauf told The Associated Press. "We entered the discussion maybe even saying, 'Hey, is two weeks the right amount? I think the week was the right placement. It still gives an incredible test for a horse and a champion to go through that, even at three weeks.'"

The aim is to get more Derby horses to participate in the second leg of the Triple Crown. For decades, it was normalcy but has become increasingly rare in recent years.

Two consecutive and three of the past five Derby winners have bypassed the Preakness to aim for the final jewel, the Belmont Stakes in June. Of the 95 horses who ran in the Derby dating to 2022, just 13 have gone to the Preakness (13.7%) with just one winner in that group.

"We are going to move it back to be able to ensure that the winner of the Kentucky Derby will then be prepared to compete in the second leg of the Triple Crown," Moore said at a news conference in Annapolis. "By moving the day, you're then providing additional time and space for our horses and the people who compete in the Derby to be able to then now compete to be able to be part of that Triple Crown."

For at least next year, it has the chance to produce the opposite effect, with the Belmont scheduled for June 5, as announced Monday. Going from a three-week to a 13-day gap between the Preakness and Belmont could force owners and trainers to choose between them, given that modern 3-year-old thoroughbreds typically get significantly more time off.

Knauf said it was a decision made for the long-term future of the Preakness.

Hall of Famer Bob Baffert, who with American Pharoah in 2015 and Justify in 2018 is the only trainer to win the Triple Crown since Affirmed in 1978, said in a social media post Monday that if he has the right horse from the Kentucky Derby, he will continue to go to the Preakness annually. That was in response to the unveiling of a new championship series of races at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Belmont Park on Long Island and Saratoga Race Course in upstate New York and does not — for now — include the Preakness.

Future changes to the schedule are always possible beyond 2027. The shift does put the Preakness on the Sunday of Memorial Day Weekend beginning in 2028 and running through '31.

"We believe this creates tremendous excitement for our local economy and businesses," Knauf said. "Baltimore will become the place to be on Memorial Day weekends, as the spotlight of the racing world descends on Pimlico."

The change comes with an extension of the media rights agreement with NBC Sports through 2032.

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The Preakness — as well as the Black-Eyed Susan Stakes for fillies on the third Saturday in May — will air on NBC and Peacock for the next six years.

NBC Sports President of Acquisitions of Partnerships Jon Miller said at the news conference that the network as far back as 10 years ago broached the idea of pushing the Preakness back at least a week, but previous ownership was not interested.

"It's a success factor for everybody by moving it to the eight days later," Miller said. "The idea of doing it Saturday-Sunday, quite honestly, was to create a weekend celebration and not just have it be a one-day event in the middle of a Triple Crown series."

Moving the Preakness coincides with its return to Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore as part of a \$500 million reconstruction project, after a one-time stop at Laurel Park. Next year, there is expected to be limited capacity, with the full, new Pimlico scheduled to be completed by the spring of 2028.

"It's something business has been a huge champion of," Greater Baltimore Committee President and CEO Mark Anthony Thomas told the AP. "And so people are very enthusiastic around the state's investments."

Ariana Grande's new video sets off talk about body and beauty standards — again

By DEEPTI HAJELA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Talking about beauty can get really ugly — particularly when it comes to public figures.

In an increasingly connected world, there's no shortage of hot takes and judgment. That is evident yet again in recent days in the wake of a new music video from singer Ariana Grande and the release last week of her new album, "Petal," which reignited commentary about her thin appearance.

It also raised the question: Just because we can say anything, does that mean we should? Some saw yet more body-shaming being aimed, no surprise, at a woman in a society that constantly judges them; others said it was simply concern. Some called for respecting her privacy, while others said the influence of celebrities on young fans made it a valid topic.

Grande, 33, has faced attention and commentary throughout her career around her appearance, with the current focus being on the increasing visibility of her body's bone structure, including her sternum and rib cage.

She has pushed back against discourse that she's anything other than healthy, and repeatedly insisted that she doesn't think commenting on people's bodies is acceptable. Her representative told People magazine that she would be stepping back from public life after her current tour finishes due to the "endless, ongoing public scrutiny."

Even in the video, a nearly seven-minute indictment of the harsh process of assessment and judgment that leads to fame and celebrity, Grande hits on the subject of being constantly sized up. "I don't need someone to save me," she sings. "I'm not a victim."

The way we talk in situations about body image matters because the impact can transcend a one-off comment or snap judgment about celebrities we'll never meet, says Johanna Kandel, founder and CEO of the National Alliance for Eating Disorders.

"I would just check our intentions behind it," Kandel said. "What is the purpose of it? ... What is the intent versus the impact of it?"

Judging famous women by appearances is nothing new

Aggressive scrutiny of people in the spotlight is nothing new, nor is the reality that women's appearances are heavily judged — even though the past decade has brought concerted efforts to promote ideas of body acceptance at all sizes.

These days, effective weight loss-inducing medications — their use driven by celebrities — have joined the larger cultural conversation. They're shifting the ground once again around ideas of thinness, beauty and health, with some concerned that a slew of images of noticeably skinnier famous faces could have a troubling impact on those struggling with body image issues or eating disorders.

Judgment and criticism on one side, coupled with calls to stop saying anything about Grande's body on

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the other, can make nuanced conversations about beauty and health difficult, says Allison Butler, a senior lecturer in communication at University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

"We limit both the complexity of the folks that we are directing our attention to, as well as our own complex understandings of ourselves," said Butler, author of "The Judgment of Gender: How Women are Centered and Silenced in Pop Culture."

Fundamentally, many experts say, it's no one's place to pass judgment on someone's body, celebrity or otherwise.

"With celebrities, I encourage people to resist the urge to speculate altogether. Public conversations about celebrity bodies often reinforce the idea that our bodies are open for public discussion, and that's a message young people are listening to," Rachel Goldman, a psychologist and clinical assistant professor at NYU's Grossman School of Medicine, said via email.

"We also have to remember that comments about someone's appearance (whether they're meant as compliments or criticisms) can reinforce the idea that our value is tied to how we look," she said.

That doesn't mean ignoring the reality that people struggle with disordered eating in varied ways. Kandel references her own experience.

"When I was first approached about my eating disorder, it was (from) a place of concern, but it was like, 'You look like Skeletor,'" she said, and not "Hey, what's going on? I'm really worried about you."

To Kandel, ignoring such issues is less effective than thinking hard about how we address them. "It can't be a conversation that we evade," she said, "but it's more of bringing it to the curiosity and the compassion as opposed to the criticism."

It can be difficult to talk to children about these issues

For parents talking with children, Goldman suggests shifting the conversation away from judging bodies to talking about the messages society is sending. Also crucial: reminding them that appearance isn't an indicator of health and well-being.

"Ultimately, we want young people to understand that their body is just one part of who they are. Their worth isn't determined by their size or shape, and neither is anyone else's," she said.

That's what Jennifer Hill tries to do. The 56-year-old pediatric nurse from Broomall, Pennsylvania, says her 16-year-old daughter, a cheerleader and runner, hates when she gets comments on her body.

"I will talk to her and if someone has mentioned something to her, I'm like, 'You know what? Everybody's different, everybody's born different, their bodies are created different,'" Hill said.

Though she says things have improved since her youth in the 1980s, when she recalls people being unafraid to offer the harshest comments, she still sees it as a struggle. Plus, she said, social media has added pressure. She also sees it in her work life, where she has worked with young people with emotional struggles or eating disorders. Her advice: Listen.

"You don't want to come out and say, 'You know, you're really overweight,'" she said. "You have to tread lightly."

It's about guiding them and their thinking, not just telling them what to do, Hill said. "Communication is key ... I think having open conversation and letting them do a lot of the talking and not so much you."

As for Grande, she spoke to fans in recent days, making a statement from the stage Monday night that she read from her phone. She said she knows fans are worried that "negativity was ruining things" for her, but said the opposite is true.

"Multiple things can be true at the same time. Boundaries need to be set," she said. "Human beings can need a break sometimes. And also, this can be and will continue to be the greatest experience of my professional and creative life."

Her fans — many of them young women — erupted in cheers.

No evidence? No problem. Trump pushes ahead on false claims that Reflecting Pool was vandalized

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jeanine Pirro this week found out there is a trade-off between loyalty to President Donald Trump and being loyal to reality.

The U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia — a fierce defender and decades-long friend — openly refuted Trump's claims of vandalism regarding one of his treasured construction projects in the nation's capital, admitting in court filings that damage to the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool was due to shoddy workmanship.

The moment comes as the Republican president is struggling to convince Americans that they should believe what he is telling them about the economy, his agenda and his war on Iran before pivotal midterm elections in the fall — and reveals the inherent challenges for his team in delivering hard truths he does not want to hear. Trump has historically engaged in exaggeration, but this was a moment in which he wanted a U.S. citizen, Olympic canoeist David Hearn, to be indicted, tried and possibly imprisoned for the act of touching a chunk of sealant in the already damaged pool.

The White House said that Trump was not aware ahead of time that Pirro's office would drop the charges.

Trump says he told Pirro he was "not happy" about her decision and that a video backed him up even though it is not clear from the footage shot at a distance that any property destruction occurred. "Well I just think she was totally wrong," Trump told reporters Tuesday night. "And everybody saw the vandalism."

By publicly rebuking Pirro, Trump sent a message to other administration officials that he is not to be contradicted, regardless of what the facts show.

"He just blows it up like a keg of dynamite — it's a form of intimidating employees to be in group-think," said Rice University professor Douglas Brinkley, a presidential historian. "If you work for me, you triple down." Never disagree with the boss, even in a small fractional way.

Some Republicans have blamed Trump's choices on 'bad advice' from staff

Trump has faced withering criticism for launching the war with Iran without fully laying out the rationale for the public or considering that country's ability to withstand intense bombing. Trump snubbed a housing bill to address the affordability problems that voters say are their biggest concern, letting it become law without his signature.

Some Republican lawmakers have suggested that Trump is being sheltered from facts or chalk up his choices to poor staff work. During Trump's second term, Republican senators including Ted Cruz of Texas and Thom Tillis of North Carolina have said Trump was receiving "bad advice," a subtle critique of the president that shifts blame onto the aides who are supposed to be providing him with credible information.

The latest blow-up "reflects a president who is struggling to shape the narrative as his national approval ratings remain extremely low," said Julian Zelizer, a political history professor at Princeton University. "The more controversy that he faces — over Iran, the Epstein files, inflation and more — the less control he has and the stronger the chances that he will be forced to confront reality."

The president continues to dwell on the 2020 election that he falsely claims to have won. He likes to boast that America is booming with an unverifiable \$19.2 trillion in investments from foreign countries, even as economic growth has been meager over the prior three months. He posted a Jesus-like picture of himself on social media and said after a backlash that he thought it depicted him as a medical doctor.

The White House did not respond to questions about how aides brief the president and whether officials feel comfortable providing information that could contradict his public statements.

Pirro had been faithful to Trump's wishes, until now

Until now, Pirro, a former judge in Westchester County, New York, and TV show host, has largely been faithful to Trump's wishes. Her office sent a subpoena in January to the Federal Reserve regarding the congressional testimony by the central bank's then-chair, Jerome Powell, about a \$2.5 billion renovation of its headquarters.

Pirro defended her decision to threaten Powell, who said the threat of a criminal indictment was really a

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pretext to pressure the Fed into slashing its benchmark interest rates in accordance with Trump's wishes.

"This office makes decisions based on the merits, nothing more and nothing less," Pirro posted on X. "We agree with the chairman of the Federal Reserve that no one is above the law, and that is why we expect his full cooperation."

Her actions temporarily slowed efforts in the Senate to confirm Kevin Warsh as the next Fed chair. The Department of Justice dropped the investigation in April, roughly a month after a federal prosecutor said in a closed-door court hearing that the government had not found any evidence of a crime.

On the reflecting pool, Pirro pursued the investigation despite what defense lawyers say was abundant evidence from the outset that the damage at the pool was the result of preexisting problems that had nothing to do with Hearn. A new court filing from Hearn's team disputes the department's contention that it only recently learned its case was flawed and urges a judge to not only dismiss it but to foreclose the possibility of ever resurrecting it.

"From day one, the case against Mr. Hearn was motivated by political considerations and devoid of adequate factual support," defense lawyers wrote. "Those political pressures have not dissipated in the mere four weeks since the government saw fit to obtain the indictment."

Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche declined to discuss internal Justice Department conversations related to the case.

He deflected on the question of whether or not he supported the decision, acknowledging on one hand that Trump has "every right to be extraordinarily frustrated with damage done to our national monuments in this city and elsewhere" while simultaneously praising Pirro for what he asserted was "an unprecedented effort" to improve safety in the nation's capital.

"When you look at the D.C. U.S. Attorney's body of work over the past year and a half and where we are in this city compared to where we were, they are doing a phenomenal job," Blanche said. "Now does that mean that every case goes exactly the way that President Trump wants or I want or U.S. Attorney Pirro wants? Of course not, it doesn't."

Pirro blamed others for giving Trump bad advice

What makes the reflecting pool incident different was that the administration contradicted claims of property damage made repeatedly by the president.

On Friday, the government moved to dismiss the criminal case and said any damage to the pool was caused by the bungled work of the contractor and "the rush to complete the project prior to events associated with the America 250 celebration in the weeks surrounding Independence Day 2026."

Interior Secretary Doug Burgum has supported Trump's claims that vandals damaged the pool. That suggests that the conflict around this issue could continue to simmer.

While Trump and many of his supporters are able to exist within their own information bubble, the administration had basically declared in court that the president was wrong. That was different from a judicial ruling or news report fact-checking him, said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, a professor of communication at the University of Pennsylvania.

"It's difficult to discredit that by saying these are anti-Trump forces," she said.

Russian barrage in Ukraine's capital region kills 17 as air defenses fall short

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian attacks on Kyiv and its surrounding region killed 17 people and wounded dozens, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Wednesday, as Ukraine's depleted air defenses failed to stop any of Moscow's incoming missiles overnight.

The barrage, which lasted about two hours, was the latest in a series of large-scale Russian missile strikes that have become almost routine this summer. Moscow is exploiting Ukraine's critical shortage of interceptors for the U.S.-made Patriot systems, the sole air defense weapon in its arsenal able to shoot down ballistic missiles.

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Zelenskyy has pleaded with other countries, especially the U.S., to send more of the ammunition made scarcer by the Iran war. Failing that, he wants to make Patriot ammunition in Ukraine or win permission from Elon Musk to use his Starlink satellite communications system to guide strikes inside Russia that can hit its missile launchers.

It's unclear how many interceptors Ukraine has left. Zelenskyy said after a Russian attack Friday night that air defenses shot down only one ballistic missile "solely because there are no missiles for the Patriots." Supplies of defensive missiles for Ukraine in the first half of this year fell to one-third of the 2025 level, Zelenskyy said.

"Ballistic interceptors are what could have saved the lives of those killed today," Zelenskyy said Wednesday on social media. "It is very important for our partners to understand that delays in supplying them, or a reluctance to hand over anti-ballistic systems, lead directly to such horrific casualties and destruction."

The targets hit in the barrage included a brewery, a warehouse for construction material, and a mail sorting office that had nothing to do with the war, Zelenskyy said. But Russia's Defense Ministry said the businesses had military ties.

Thursday was set as an official day of mourning for the 17 people killed, said Tymur Tkachenko, head of Kyiv's regional military administration. In addition to the dead, at least 44 people were injured.

Ukraine retaliates with long-range drones

With U.S.-led peace efforts apparently stalled, Ukraine has stepped up its deep strikes on key Russian targets such as oil refineries to try to compel Russian President Vladimir Putin to negotiate. Zelenskyy has accepted an unconditional ceasefire demanded by U.S. President Donald Trump but Putin has refused.

In its latest attack on facilities for Russia's biggest online retailer Wildberries, Ukrainian drones hit a warehouse in the Tula region south of Moscow, the company and the region's governor said.

Ukraine has struck over a dozen Wildberries facilities in under three weeks, saying the company provides goods that can be used by the military. Kyiv is also keen to unsettle the Russian public with high-profile attacks.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its forces downed 475 Ukrainian drones overnight over 16 Russian regions, as well as in illegally annexed Crimea and the waters of the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea.

Russia says it struck war-related targets

Russia fired 24 ballistic missiles, four other missiles identified as either hypersonic Zircon or supersonic Onik cruise missiles, and 115 drones, many of them jet-powered and harder to stop due to their speed, Ukrainian authorities said.

The Russian Defense Ministry said it struck transport, logistics and distribution centers involved in war-related activity, four of which were in Kyiv.

"The enemy is attacking everything indiscriminately — retail warehouses, food storage facilities, logistics hubs, enterprises, building materials warehouses," Zelenskyy adviser Serhii Beskrestnov, said on Facebook.

It was not immediately possible to independently reconcile the different Russian and Ukrainian accounts of the military value of the targets.

Kyiv warehouse worker Mykhailo Hukov said an air raid warning that included a ballistic missile threat sounded just after midnight.

"So everyone started running," he told The Associated Press. "I turned everyone around so they wouldn't go back inside for their backpacks."

In an underground shelter minutes later, they heard "very loud explosions."

Ukraine's largest private postal operator, Nova Poshta, said a Russian cluster munition destroyed one of its sorting centers in Kyiv.

The Russian Defense Ministry said the center was "storing and distributing dual-use goods, including those used in the production of long- and medium-range uncrewed aerial vehicles, as well as robotic systems and electronic warfare systems." It claimed that two other logistics centers in the Kyiv region stored drones or components for drones.

Separately, Russia said its forces hit three bulk carriers on the Black Sea south of Odesa that it claimed were transporting Ukrainian weapons and military equipment. Ukrainian officials didn't comment on that.

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claim.

Truck drivers make a narrow escape

Ivan Braga, a 46-year-old truck driver from Moldova who was in Kyiv during the attack, said he and a colleague ran from their vehicle when it was struck by shrapnel in a blast wave.

"We didn't even have time to grab our documents or anything else," Braga told AP. "I couldn't believe it. I'd already been in Kyiv and had heard explosions before, but nothing like today."

One of the companies that came under heavy fire was Epicentr, one of Ukraine's largest retail and construction chains. It said in a statement on Facebook that "in minutes, Russian missiles destroyed what the company had built over decades." One employee was killed and three others were wounded.

According to the Russian Defense Ministry, the Epicentr logistics center handled order processing, sorting, storing, and delivery of dual-use goods and components for drone production.

Russian drone factory chief badly hurt in a car blast

The director of a factory that makes drones for the Russian military was seriously injured when his car exploded in the Ural Mountains city of Yekaterinburg, news reports said Wednesday.

Vladimir Tkachuk was hospitalized after the explosion late Tuesday just outside the city 1,400 kilometers (about 870 miles) east of Moscow, the state Tass and RIA Novosti agencies said.

His factory, Uraldronzavod, manufactured the Upyr, a cheap and simple drone that was popular with troops for the protection it offers against jamming.

Russian officials made no comment, but authorities previously have blamed Ukraine for a string of bombings and other attacks targeting military officials.

4 stabbed in central London in what police believe was a mental health incident

LONDON (AP) — London police said Wednesday that a woman was arrested after four people were stabbed in Covent Garden, a central area of the capital that is popular with visitors.

The Metropolitan Police said early indications suggest it was a mental health-related incident and that scissors were recovered at the scene. Police said four men aged 34, 39, 42 and 52 were found with stab wounds and a 47-year-old woman was arrested on suspicion of possession of an offensive weapon and assault.

The injured were taken to a trauma center following the incident Wednesday afternoon on Endell Street. Two were discharged and two remained with injuries that were not believed to be life-threatening.

"While still at an early stage of the investigation, we would like to reassure the community that we currently believe this to be an isolated, mental health-related incident," Chief Superintendent Jason Stewart said.

A manager of a fish and chip shop near the scene said random people were stabbed.

"I didn't see any scissors, but I heard it was with small scissors," Arjan Gjorga said, adding that "the police responded immediately."

Takeaways from AP's review of military families detained under Trump's immigration crackdown

By JACK BROOK, SAFIYAH RIDDLE and AARON KESSLER Associated Press/Report for America

An Associated Press investigation found that President Donald Trump's administration has detained dozens of parents and spouses of active-duty U.S. military service members as it rolls back immigration protections for their families to pursue its mass deportation agenda.

The immediate family members of U.S. troops have generally not been targets of immigration enforcement. But the AP found they're now routinely being detained for months as they try to adjust their legal status through policies available to service members' close relatives, even as the military recruits by advertising these benefits.

Experts warn that detaining troops' family members undermines military preparedness even as the U.S. is

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at war in Iran. Military members whose spouses and parents have been placed in detention lose emotional support networks and caretakers for their children, delaying deployments and forcing some to take leave.

Here are the main takeaways from the AP's reporting:

More than 50 parents and spouses of service members have been detained

The AP found that at least 52 parents and spouses of active-duty service members have been detained by immigration officers since Trump took office for a second term, and at least six have been deported and one self-deported. At least eight immediate family members of U.S. service members remain in federal immigration custody.

The AP's review is the first accounting of such detentions, and it's likely an undercount. The government does not track such data.

The AP obtained information by analyzing thousands of federal court records compiled by Habeas Docket, a project run by the Immigration Justice Transparency Initiative; by reviewing existing media coverage; and by verifying information with family members and attorneys.

"DHS and ICE value the contributions of all those who have served in the U.S. military," DHS said in a statement. "U.S. military service alone does not automatically grant lawful immigration status, or exempt aliens from the consequences of violating U.S. immigration laws."

The Pentagon declined to comment.

Military service members lose their safety nets

Army Staff Sgt. Alexis Jaramillo had to take administrative leave from his job training soldiers at Fort Polk, Louisiana, to care for his 5-year-old stepson, Noah, after his Brazilian wife, Maisa Lopes Eliaser, was detained in early July.

"It is really overwhelming because I need to take care of my kid by myself. No one is here to help me out," Jaramillo said.

Other military service members who spoke with the AP echoed these sentiments. At least one soldier had to delay deployment to care for her 5-year-old son after her husband was detained by ICE, court records show.

Detention of military families is a reversal even from Trump's first administration

A new policy, implemented in April 2025, states that "military service alone does not exempt aliens from the consequences of violating U.S. immigration laws."

Dan Gividen, who served as ICE's deputy chief counsel from 2016 to 2019 under Trump, represents a soldier's father who has been in ICE custody for more than eight months. He said that during his time as an ICE prosecutor, immigration authorities rarely detained service members' immediate family members unless they had committed violent crimes.

"We would not place them into removal proceedings, period. That's insane," Gividen said. "The fact that they're doing it now is just outrageous."

Military families are being detained despite eligibility for immigration benefits

One of the military's most highly advertised immigration benefits is "military parole-in-place," which allows the spouses, children and parents of active-duty service members and veterans to obtain legal immigration status from within the U.S.

The policy was implemented under Republican President George W. Bush during the U.S. war with Iraq in 2007 and codified under Democratic President Barack Obama. But DHS agencies have discretion over whether to grant it on a case-by-case basis.

The AP found that family members of troops are being held in detention despite having pending military parole-in-place applications and some were detained while appearing at appointments to adjust their legal status.

The military still uses immigration benefits as a recruitment strategy

Recruiters for the Army and the National Guard still promote enlistment as a way to protect family members from immigration enforcement.

Recruiters are expected to highlight the benefits of service to attract applicants, Army spokesperson

Christopher Surridge said.

The National Guard said it does not track detentions of its troops' relatives or which recruiters advertise immigration benefits and referred additional comment to DHS.

Cpl. Jose Manuel Vilchis-Valle said recruiters used these benefits to help convince him to enlist. But his mother was detained at an appointment in August 2025 and deported to Mexico within a week even as she was trying to adjust her legal status.

"They basically told me that if you serve, and if you served honorably, you can help your parents," said Vilchis-Valle, 23, who was honorably discharged shortly after his mother was deported. "In a perfect world, I wished, because of my service, they could have pardoned her."

Gene-edited beagles may offer a future option for people with dog allergies

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Matt Walker couldn't pet a dog without sneezing — until he and other scientists used a gene editing technique to produce a hypoallergenic beagle named Bailey.

Now, he can feed Bailey spoons of peanut butter while she lies on his lap and play fetch with her in Central Park. His allergies didn't go away: Bailey's saliva and hair no longer contain a key allergy-causing protein.

"The feeling right now is sort of a mix of relief and awe and gratitude that it worked," said Walker, a geneticist. His company, Kindred Companion Sciences, created Bailey and her twin Alfie using a Nobel Prize-winning technique called CRISPR.

It'll take years before the millions who suffer from dog-related allergies can walk into a pet store and buy a pooch like Alfie or Bailey.

Scientists have to monitor the long-term health effects of the genetic tweak, and find ways to commercialize the approach to make it affordable. And experts not involved with the effort say it could hurt shelter and rescue animals waiting to be adopted.

"It opens the door to a lot more people being able to own pets. On the negative side, it may discourage people from trying to use strays and unwanted animals that are not engineered to be allergy-free," said bioethicist Arthur Caplan with New York University's Grossman School of Medicine.

Researchers have tried to create hypoallergenic pets before, mostly using cloning. But this led to sicker pups that were too genetically similar. Two years ago, researchers used CRISPR to reduce levels of an allergy-causing protein in a cat named Alsik. But it's not yet clear whether this technique is safe to be tested on other cats.

Dogs that shed less, like poodles, are often thought of as hypoallergenic. But these pups still produce allergy-causing proteins that end up in their saliva, hair and dander, so they can still make people sniffly.

To create Alfie and Bailey, scientists started in the lab. They edited the genetic code inside dog skin cells, switching off the main gene responsible for producing allergy-causing proteins. Then they transferred the edited genetic code into eggs that went into a beagle surrogate that gave birth to two healthy female pups in September 2024. Scientists tested their saliva and fur and didn't find signs of the allergy-causing protein.

They also performed an allergy test, pricking Walker's skin with extracts from Alfie and Bailey's saliva and dander. His skin reacted to samples from a poodle and goldendoodle, but not from the beagles.

The research, published Wednesday in the CRISPR Journal, is the first time such an approach has been tried successfully in dogs.

Walker says all dogs have the same allergy-causing gene that was edited in Alfie and Bailey. Kindred Companion Sciences hopes to test the technique on other dogs and service animals to see if they can breed an allergy-free line of pups beyond beagles.

Future research should test the gene-edited hypoallergenic dogs on more people with pet allergies to be sure they can soothe symptoms across a broader swath of the human population, said Dr. Jeff SoRelle, a pathologist at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

Since the switched-off gene is the main — but not the only — allergy-causing culprit in dogs that was tested, “we don’t exactly know just how effective or broadly useful this could be for stopping dog allergy in humans,” said SoRelle, who had no role in the study.

Bailey lives with Walker in New York, and Alfie lives in Florida with another Kindred scientist. The edit made to their genes is rare but does occur naturally in some dogs, so Walker said it’s unlikely to have any negative effects on the pups. But it will still be important to monitor them at routine vet visits and make sure they stay healthy.

Walker has had Bailey for a little over a year and says she’s become a member of the family.

Despite being a lifelong dog lover, his allergies kept him away from pups growing up. Even breeds that were supposed to be more hypoallergenic, like his family’s goldendoodle, gave him itchy eyes and painful rashes.

But he and Bailey can play tug-of-war together in his living room, and she snuggles at his feet to comfort him when he’s sick.

“It feels just amazing to get to have a dog,” Walker said.

Moroccan families seek missing loved ones after the migrant surge to Spain’s Ceuta

By AKRAM OUBACHIR Associated Press

FNIDEQ, Morocco (AP) — Mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and friends gather along the Moroccan side of the border with the Spanish territory of Ceuta, scanning for familiar faces.

Each returning migrant is met with the question: Have you seen my son? My daughter? My brother?

Authorities say all but a few thousand of the 72,000 migrants who crossed into Ceuta in recent days have since returned to Morocco. Some families were relieved to welcome them home. Others were disappointed that the migration attempt failed.

Other families still wait desperately for news.

Families hold up photos of the missing

The surge to Ceuta was largely driven by poverty and fueled by online rumors that the border was open, triggering a crisis resonating across Europe. More than 80 people died on both sides of the border, according to authorities, as people swam or climbed fences in the attempt.

Nearly all of the migrants who survived were expelled by Spanish authorities or returned voluntarily after seeing they were unwelcome. Many of those who made it back borrowed phones from strangers to reassure anxious relatives because they had lost or abandoned their phones in the journey.

As the first migrants trickled back to Morocco, an Associated Press reporter watched families hold up printed photographs of missing relatives, stopping returnees one by one in hopes that someone might recognize a face.

The migrants studied each picture, offering what reassurance they could, often saying only that they hoped the missing person was safe.

“I have been looking for my son for five days now,” said Ibtissam Chari, whose son Rayan crossed with friends after hearing that the border had opened. “He called me when he arrived, and since then I haven’t heard anything from him.”

Another woman stood silently facing the border. She said she has heard nothing from her 12-year-old son, who crossed into Ceuta with his older brother. Only the older one has returned.

“I have nothing else to do but come here and wait,” said the woman, who spoke on condition of anonymity to protect her children. “I spend all my days here. I will come back tomorrow again.”

Facebook groups that helped the crossing seek the missing

An estimated 1,000 of the few thousand migrants estimated to remain in Ceuta are minors. Spanish security forces are not authorized by law to expel them, and their fate is uncertain.

It remains unclear whether all of the dead have been found or returned to Morocco. Local newspapers and a source at the morgue in Tetouan, the largest Moroccan city near Ceuta, said the facility had re-

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ceived more than a dozen bodies. Journalists were not allowed to enter. The source spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to journalists.

Meanwhile, Moroccan authorities have welded shut the small opening in the border fence that had been opened to allow many returning migrants to re-enter the country.

Facebook groups that had circulated videos showing where to swim and tracking Spanish and Moroccan patrols have now taken on a different purpose. Families post photos there of missing relatives, hoping someone has seen them.

"If anyone has seen this girl in Ceuta or Castillejos, please let us know. Her family is going crazy," one user, Hiba Nakaax, wrote in the Facebook group Fnideq Bab Sebta.

Some parents hope their children try again for Europe

Migration has long been woven into the aspirations of many young Moroccans. Poverty and youth unemployment remain high, particularly in inland regions that have not shared in the economic gains seen along parts of the coast.

For many, Europe represents the possibility of work, stability and a different future. Last year's youth-led Gen Z protests in Morocco reflected growing frustration over inequality and the quality of public services.

Some parents knew their children intended to make the journey.

After returning from Ceuta, 26-year-old Othmane El Merzoug was barefoot and hungry and desperate to communicate with his family. He asked to borrow an AP reporter's phone to call his father in the Moroccan city of Salé.

"Dad, I've returned from Ceuta. They didn't allow me to stay," he said over speakerphone. His father promised to send money to get him home.

A traumatized 17-year-old from Taounate, Mohamed Chakor, also asked to borrow a phone to call his father, who asked for help in finding other ways to reach Europe.

Record heat wave impacts people and animals in Japan and Korean Peninsula

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Fans fainting at a baseball park. Lions dying at a zoo. A woman taking shelter in a car found dead. A doctor advising people to eat dog meat to promote stamina.

The scenes caused by a record heat wave in Northeast Asia illustrate how extreme temperatures have gripped South Korea, North Korea and Japan.

In most of South Korea, a major heat wave advisory was in place Wednesday as temperatures in densely populated greater Seoul, home to 20 million people, and adjacent areas soared as high as 39 degrees Celsius (102.2 degrees Fahrenheit).

North Korean authorities have issued a heat wave advisory in many areas and called for people to take safety steps to avoid heat-related health problems.

Japan's anti-disaster agency reported more than 18,000 people with heat stroke symptoms were transported to hospitals during the week of July 20 to 26.

South Korea heat is a 'national disaster'

Since mid-May in South Korea, about 2,220 people have been diagnosed with heat-related illnesses and 19 have died, according to a report from Interior and Safety Ministry. About 17,140 livestock, such as chickens, ducks and pigs, and about 160,000 farmed fishes also have died.

On Sunday, the southeastern city of Yangsan saw temperatures reaching 42.5 Celsius (108.5 Fahrenheit), the highest figure recorded since weather observation began in Korea in 1904.

In a Cabinet meeting Tuesday, President Lee Jae Myung instructed officials to view the ongoing heat wave as "a national disaster" and make all-out efforts to protect lives.

On Tuesday night, a spectator in his 20s collapsed while watching a baseball game between SSG Landers and LG Twins at a stadium in Incheon city, west of Seoul. Emergency personnel administered CPR and

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transported him to a hospital, halting the game for about 10 minutes.

Another fan in his 20s fell unconscious and received treatment at the stadium after the game, according to the Korea Baseball Organization, which announced Wednesday that all 10 games scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday were canceled and would be rescheduled.

North Korean hospital official recommends cooling food

Min Son Yong, deputy director of the internal medicine department at Pyongyang General Hospital, told North Korea's main Rodong Sinmun newspaper on Sunday that people should eat dog meat and fish porridge to supplement protein to beat the heat.

Euphemistically known as "dangogi," or sweet meat, dog meat has long been considered a stamina food in North Korea and is traditionally eaten during the hottest time of the year.

Min also recommended watermelons, cucumbers, tomatoes, mung beans and ginger to cool down, the newspaper reported.

Dog meat also has been eaten in China, Vietnam and African countries, as well as in South Korea, which plans to formally ban slaughtering, breeding or selling dog meat for human consumption beginning next year.

Humans and animals suffer in Japan heat

Japan's Environment Ministry issued a heat stroke alert for most of the western and southern Japan on Wednesday. While temperatures in the Tokyo region temporarily fell this week, intense heat continued to hit southern Japan.

In the southwestern city of Kumamoto, relief and cleanup work continued following a magnitude 7.1 earthquake on July 28 that killed 38 people, including a woman in her 70s who developed heat stroke while taking shelter in a car. More than 43,000 households were still without water on Wednesday.

Three lions have died at a Tokyo zoo, with a number of their animal peers developing apparent heat-stroke symptoms.

Tama Zoological Park said, Mugi, a 3-year-old female lion, developed a loss of appetite on July 19 and was unable to stand the following day. Suspecting heat problem, zoo keepers provided ventilation and a water sprinkler to cool her down. The lion eventually died on July 28 despite treatment with subcutaneous fluid, liver tonics and vitamins, the zoo said.

Two other female lions, Ichigo, 11, and Luena, 15, also died within a few days, the zoo said.

Autopsies showed dehydration and multiple organ failure in all three animals and officials say they believe heat was the cause of the health problems.

Fauci's decision to invoke the Fifth Amendment tees up a legal debate and a contempt vote

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Dr. Anthony Fauci's decision to invoke the Fifth Amendment before Congress will be put to the test this week as a Republican-led committee prepares to vote to hold him in contempt and refer the matter to the Justice Department.

A contempt finding could open the door to an investigation into whether Fauci had a valid constitutional right against self-incrimination when he refused to answer dozens of questions from lawmakers at a committee hearing last week focused on his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Republican senators including Rand Paul of Kentucky, who subpoenaed Fauci and has called a contempt vote for Thursday, insist that a pardon the doctor received early last year from Democratic President Joe Biden left him ineligible for Fifth Amendment protections. A Senate resolution released Tuesday asserts that Paul found Fauci's privilege claims "unsupported."

But some legal experts say Fauci had reasons to invoke the Fifth Amendment, given the threat of potential state prosecutions and questions from President Donald Trump's administration about the validity of Biden's pardons. Any testimony from Fauci could have also prompted false-statement investigations like the ones the current Justice Department has repeatedly initiated against the Republican president's

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perceived adversaries.

No matter what happens, the episode raises fresh and complicated questions about Congress' ability to compel testimony from previously pardoned witnesses — and the outcome could resonate beyond Fauci.

"This is an important case because I think a lot of people anticipate that President Trump is going to issue similar pardons to many people in his administration who will end up being called before Congress, and the precedent here is important," said Mark Osler, a St. Thomas University law professor and pardon power expert.

Paul's committee is moving to transmit the contempt referral from his Republican-led committee directly to the Justice Department. Whether the Justice Department would act on the referral is unclear.

Fauci's pardon protects him for past, not future, acts

Fauci, a longtime National Institutes of Health scientist and the nation's top infectious-disease expert, left the federal government in 2022 after more than five decades. He was among a group of perceived adversaries of Trump to be pardoned by Biden in one of the Democrat's final acts in office. The clemency covered acts from 2014 to the date in January 2025 when the pardon was issued.

Republicans on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee say the pardon lifted the specter of criminal prosecution and left Fauci without a valid basis to invoke the Fifth Amendment — a bedrock constitutional protection found in the Bill of Rights but one typically available only to those who have a reasonable basis to believe they risk being charged over their testimony.

While a blanket pardon theoretically removes a threat of prosecution, Fauci made clear he thought he had a good-faith basis to fear criminal charges. He invoked his Fifth Amendment rights more than 100 times.

Before the hearing, Fauci said that Paul, the committee chairman, had an "obvious obsession with calling for my prosecution." The purpose of his forced appearance "is to get me to say something, anything, that could vindicate his repeated public pledges that I end up, in his words, quote, behind bars, unquote," Fauci said.

In the run-up to the hearing, Paul made dozens of Fauci-related posts on X, including ones teasing that he was going to confront the doctor for having earlier given false testimony — something Fauci has denied.

"I think his invoking the Fifth makes sense because he was invited into a situation where everyone in the country understood that Rand Paul was trying to set him up for a criminal prosecution," said Michael Gerhardt, a University of North Carolina law professor. "In that circumstance, one of the smartest things to do would be to make yourself a very small target and say as little as possible, and that's obviously what he did."

In announcing the contempt vote, Paul noted on X that "Fauci refused to answer a single question, even though he knew he couldn't be charged for crimes" during the decade covered by his pardon. Fauci's deflections encompassed even seemingly harmless questions, such as the color of the tie he was wearing — a reflection of an apparent belief that it was safer to refuse any testimony.

There are factors that could tilt in favor of Fauci's strategy, including the fact that his pardon would not protect him from potential state prosecutions or from a federal prosecution related to any testimony that investigators deemed false. That may not be an idle concern given the number of false-statement investigations prosecutors have opened against Trump's political opponents.

Trump's administration also has repeatedly called into question the validity of the Biden pardons, given Biden's frequent use of an autopen for official business. Legal experts say the pardons are valid.

"The question is do you have a reasonable fear of prosecution, and Fauci's argument would be — yes, I received a pardon, yes, I believe that pardon covers and prevents prosecution but there have been statements from lots of people including Trump and other administration officials ... raising questions about the validity of that pardon," said Ross Garber, a lawyer and expert in political investigations who has represented multiple clients who have invoked the Fifth Amendment.

"That," he added, "is potentially a very viable argument."

Paul has discussed trying to fast-track a contempt referral

Paul said in an interview with Fox News Channel last week that he did not think "there's any rule" requiring that a contempt referral from a committee go through the entire Senate. His committee is instead

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working to send the referral straight to the Justice Department.

The contempt resolution states that the president of the Senate, Vice President JD Vance, "shall certify" the committee's referral and the accompanying report to the U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia.

That fast-tracking of the process avoids the need for a vote in the full 100-member Senate, where Republicans likely lack the 60 votes required to move a contempt referral to passage.

Today in History: August 6, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Thursday, Aug. 6, the 218th day of 2026. There are 147 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On August 6, 1945, during World War II, the U.S. B-29 Superfortress Enola Gay dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, resulting in an estimated 140,000 deaths.

Also on this date:

In 1806, Emperor Francis II abdicated, marking the end of the Holy Roman Empire after nearly a thousand years.

In 1825, Upper Peru became the autonomous republic of Bolivia.

In 1890, at Auburn Prison in Auburn, New York, William Kemmler became the first person to be executed via the electric chair.

In 1926, Gertrude Ederle became the first woman to swim across the English Channel.

In 1942, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands became the first reigning queen to address a joint session of Congress, telling lawmakers that despite Nazi occupation, her people's motto remained, "No surrender."

In 1962, Jamaica gained independence from the United Kingdom after 300 years of British rule.

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, prohibiting racial discrimination in voting.

In 1991, the World Wide Web made its public debut as a means of accessing webpages over the internet.

In 2011, insurgents shot down a U.S. military helicopter during fighting in eastern Afghanistan, killing 30 Americans; seven Afghan commandos also died.

In 2025, a U.S. Army sergeant shot and wounded five fellow soldiers at Fort Stewart in Georgia before being tackled by other troops. Quornelius Radford was later sentenced to life in military prison with the possibility of parole after being convicted of attempted murder at a court-martial.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-director Peter Bonerz is 88. Actor Dorian Harewood is 76. Actor Leland Orser is 66. Actor Michelle Yeoh is 65. Basketball Hall of Famer David Robinson is 61. Movie writer-director M. Night Shyamalan (SHAH'-mah-lahn) is 56. Singer Geri Halliwell Horner is 54. Actor Vera Farmiga is 53. Actor Soleil (soh-LAY') Moon Frye is 50. Actor Leslie Odom Jr. is 45. Soccer coach and former player Robin van Persie is 43. Actor Ty Simpkins is 25. Singer Nessa Barrett is 24.