

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 1 of 67

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [3- Help Wanted Ad](#)
- [4- Groton Area sweeps Ipswich in home volleyball matchup](#)
- [6- South Dakota Department of Revenue Reports \\$1.4 million in Tax Collections from 2026 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally](#)
- [7- Homecoming Royalty](#)
- [8- Prairie Doc® Marks 25 Years of Trusted Health Education](#)
- [9- SD SearchLight: South Dakota utility regulator candidates clash over AI data center pause](#)
- [10- SD SearchLight: Underground experiment in South Dakota's Black Hills reports 'compelling hint of dark matter'](#)
- [11- SD SearchLight: A summer of recalls exposes holes in the nation's food safety net](#)
- [13- SD SearchLight: 9 justices on the Supreme Court or 13? Numbers battle revived in Congress](#)
- [15- SD SearchLight: USPS whistleblower predicts 'catastrophic' effect on elections under Trump vote-by-mail order](#)
- [16- SD SearchLight: US House clears spending stopgap backed by Trump that averts government shutdown](#)
- [18- Weather Pages](#)
- [23- Daily Devotional](#)
- [24- Subscription Form](#)
- [25- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [26- News from the Associated Press](#)

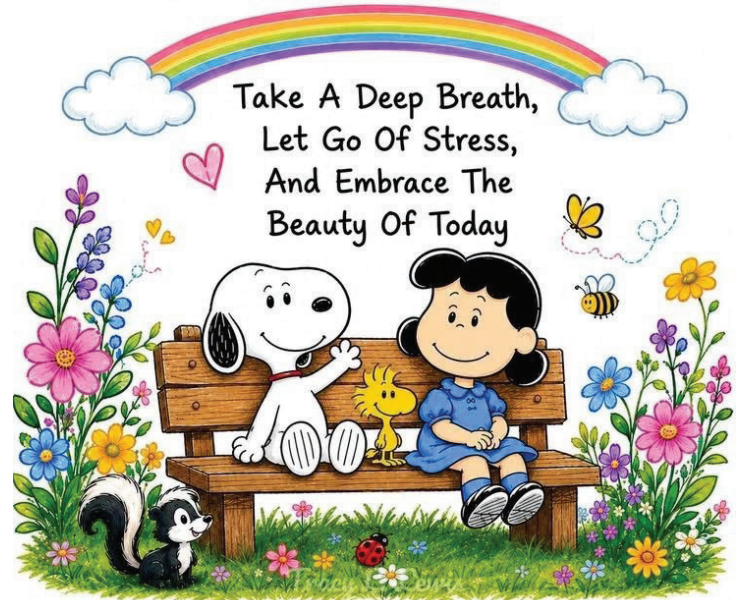
Community Calendar

Wednesday, Sept 2

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, green beans, fruit, breadstick.
School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.
School Lunch: Pancake on stick, tri tater.
Groton Chamber meeting, noon, City Hall
Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

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

GOOD MORNING



Thursday, Sept. 3

Senior Menu: Ranch chicken breast, mashed potatoes with gravy, winter blend, fruit, whole wheat bread

School Breakfast: Cheese breakfast bake.

School Lunch: Turkey gravy, whipped potatoes.

Cross Country at Redfield, 10 a.m.

Volleyball at Sisseton: 8th at 4 p.m. and 7th at 5 p.m. at Practice Facility; C at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow at Ben Reifel Gym.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Sixth Grade football hosts Aberdeen, 6 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 4

Senior Menu: Baked fish, baked potato, peas, fruit, whole wheat bread.

No School

Football hosts Flandreau, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 5

JH VB tournament at Northwestern, 9 a.m.

Pickleball at Elementary Gym, 9:30 a.m.

Soccer at West Central (Girls at noon, boys at 2 p.m.)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 2 of 67

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.

USPS Whistleblower Claims

A whistleblower warned Congress yesterday that a rushed US Postal Service system stemming from President Donald Trump's effort to impose new federal requirements on mail voting could prevent legitimate ballots from reaching voters ahead of November's midterm elections.

The system, temporarily blocked by a federal judge, would require election officials to upload voter information and ballot bar codes to a federal portal before ballots are mailed, giving USPS a new role in verifying who may receive them—a process traditionally handled by state and local officials. The whistleblower alleges USPS built the system in roughly three months, despite such projects typically taking roughly a year. A single bar code failing a sample check could cause an entire batch to be rejected and returned to election officials. Roughly 30% of Americans voted by mail in 2024.

Explore the 160-year history of voting by mail, beginning with Civil War soldiers casting ballots from the battlefield.

A Glimmer of Dark?

Hundreds of physicists are poring over a finding that may signal the first-ever detection of dark matter—or is otherwise difficult to explain using any known particle. They published their findings yesterday in the hope of gathering input from scientists across the world.

Dark matter accounts for about 85% of the matter in the universe. We cannot see or touch it, but its existence is considered necessary to explain how galaxies rotate, among other phenomena. To detect dark matter, scientists filled a tank with liquid xenon and placed it a mile underground. The goal was to minimize, isolate, and identify particles passing through. Visible particles would predictably release light and electrons; however, there is one case—recorded in June 2023—where a particle released energy on a scale suggesting its mass is more than 200 times that of a proton.

Researchers say there is a 0.5% chance the recording could be explained by other known physical properties. Go deeper with one potential dark matter candidate: supersymmetric particles.

 **Humankind:** A 17-year-old artist whose mother died of cancer now comforts grieving families with free portraits of their deceased loved ones.

Russian Drones in Germany

The German government accused Russia yesterday of directing three drones to Leipzig/Halle Airport in the eastern town of Schkeuditz last month. Germany's second-largest cargo airport serves as a key logistics hub for shipments bound for Ukraine.

On Aug. 4, an airport employee found a drone carrying military-grade explosives near a Ukrainian cargo plane parked in a secure area. A second drone hit a different cargo plane approaching the airport. A third landed in a nearby field. None of the drones detonated. Germany's investigation revealed elements of the attack were consistent with hybrid operations Russia has employed against Ukraine. In response, the government announced yesterday that it is tightening restrictions on Russians entering the country, terminating the lease of a Russian cultural center in Berlin, and closing its last Russian consulate. The Kremlin denies responsibility.

Germany did not call for NATO action in response to the attack.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 3 of 67

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Los Angeles Rams owner Stan Kroenke announces he will purchase the Los Angeles Angels, reportedly at a record \$4B valuation; deal is expected to close early next year.

Federal judge dismisses harassment and discrimination lawsuit against Lizzo's production company from her former wardrobe stylist.

Miley Cyrus changes stage name to "Miley" ahead of 10th studio album.

Jonathan Bailey drops out of West End production of "Sunday in the Park with George" weeks after his "Wicked" costar Ariana Grande also dropped out.

Science & Technology

Waymo expands its autonomous vehicle services to San Diego, Denver, and Tampa, Florida; Amazon plans to test its Zoox robotaxi in Houston and San Diego with human supervisors.

New map of the brain region responsible for movement control, decision-making, and habit-forming could lead to more efficient drugs for Huntington's disease, addiction, schizophrenia, and other disorders.

Reheating clay pottery can offer researchers a new way to identify counterfeits; the approach reveals a time stamp left behind by Earth's magnetic field when a piece was originally fired.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close down (S&P 500 -0.7%, Dow -0.8%, Nasdaq -1.0%) as rising bond yields and oil prices weigh on stocks.

Camera maker GoPro to merge with Starman Optical in \$285M deal, expanding into AI, defense, and aerospace; GoPro shares jump 40% on the news.

Shein shares drop 9% after the Chinese e-commerce giant debuts on Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

Dell shares rise 8% in after-hours trading after reporting better-than-expected earnings, fueled by demand for AI servers.

Politics & World Affairs

US launches new round of strikes against Iran, with President Donald Trump accusing Iran of planting more sea mines in the Strait of Hormuz; Jordan says it intercepted 10 ballistic missiles as of this writing.

Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA) heads off primary challenge from Rep. Seth Moulton (D, MA-6).

House votes 370-48 to pass bill extending funding by three months in effort to avoid federal government shutdown Oct. 1; the bill already passed the Senate and heads to President Donald Trump's desk for signature.

Judge orders jurors deadlocked in Lindsay Clancy case to return to deliberations.

EMPLOYMENT

Wanted full or part time help for harvest. Someone who can drive combine, semi or tractor. Housing available. Near Aberdeen call 605-380-4898. (0819.0909pd).
=====

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 4 of 67

Groton Area sweeps Ipswich in home volleyball matchup

Groton Area completed a clean sweep of Ipswich Tuesday night in Groton, winning the varsity match in three sets while also taking both the junior varsity and C matches.

The Groton Area varsity won by scores of 25-14, 25-13 and 25-20, bouncing back after a challenging weekend against Class AA competition in Huron.

The opening set was tied four times and featured two lead changes before Groton took control. With the Tigers leading 11-10, Groton rattled off eight straight points to build a 19-10 advantage and went on to win, 25-14.

The second set followed a similar pattern. It was tied four times with three lead changes before Groton put together a nine-point run that pushed the lead to 22-12. Groton closed out the set, 25-13.

Ipswich turned the tables early in the third set, jumping out to an 8-0 advantage and later leading 9-2. Ipswich still held a 16-8 lead before Groton began working its way back into the set.

A six-point run helped Groton close the gap before the Tigers tied the set at 18-18 and moved in front, 19-18. Groton finished off the comeback with a 25-20 victory.

Groton Area coach Chelsea Hanson said falling behind by eight points wasn't part of the plan, but she liked the way her team responded.

"I was proud of the way they came back," Hanson said. "Until we could get it within two or three, we needed to play really, really clean and not make any stupid errors. Once we cut the gap to about two or three, then we went back to being super aggressive. I thought they finished the game really well."

Tevan Hanson led Groton's attack with 13 kills while also recording two ace serves, two assisted blocks and 12 digs. Taryn Traphagen had seven kills, while Elizabeth Cole finished with four kills and four assisted blocks.

Sydney Locke served five aces and collected 18 digs. McKenna Tietz had an ace serve, 13 digs and one assist, while Tori Schuster added two ace serves.

Libby Althoff directed the offense with 23 assists while adding two kills and three digs. Abby Fjeldheim had two kills, and Kella Tracy recorded two assisted blocks.

Groton played without Chesney Weber, who Hanson said was not feeling well enough to attend Tuesday's match.

Hanson said the team's depth has allowed Groton to adjust when players are unavailable.

"We've known that all year," Hanson said. "We've been able to run different lineups. Between Libby Althoff and Tori Schuster, both can step in and set for us, and they do a really good job. Although we love to have Chesney here, when she's not here we've been able to make different lineups and do different things."

Hanson said Groton struggled at times with its passing, particularly during the first two sets, making it difficult to consistently get the ball to the middle hitters.

"We were really out of system and just not passing very well in that first and second set," Hanson said. "Naturally, our outsides were taking a lot of really tough swings. Between Kella, Tevan and Abby, they had to take a lot of out-of-system balls, and those are hard balls to score on. I was glad to see our passing clean up so we could get Taryn and Libby going in the middle."

Jalyssa Hutson and Ellie Nehlich each had five kills for Ipswich. Kaylynn Oban served three aces and had eight digs, while Sophie Knittle added eight digs.

Kirra Gellhauf finished with 11 assists and Adelyn Pollock had nine. Nehlich also recorded two assisted blocks.

Tuesday's victory followed a demanding weekend tournament in Huron in which Groton lost to Brandon Valley, Huron and Brookings before defeating Sturgis.

Hanson said playing that caliber of competition was exactly what Groton wanted when putting together this year's schedule.

"We set up our season knowing we would be playing a really competitive schedule," Hanson said. "We were one bad call away from taking a set off the third-best team in Class AA. Even to not win the game, it was really nice for us to go out and compete with a team as talented as Brandon Valley."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 5 of 67

Hanson said the goal isn't necessarily to pile up victories against weaker opponents and build the best possible power-point standing. Instead, she wants Groton prepared to play strong competition when the postseason arrives.

"Last year, we were 21-5 going into the SoDak16," Hanson said. "This year, I would rather lose more games and play better competition and be .500 than beat teams we should beat every single night and then get to the game that matters and not know how to compete.

"We just want to play whoever we have to play and give ourselves the best opportunity to compete against who we face at the end."

Groton also won the junior varsity match in two sets.

The opening set went beyond regulation and was tied 11 times with six lead changes before Groton pulled out a 29-27 victory.

The second set was tied six times with five lead changes before Groton put together a six-point run to take control and win, 25-17.

Kinley Sandness led Groton with seven kills and three ace serves. Abby Fjeldheim had four ace serves, Tori Schuster had five and Brooklyn Spanier finished with three kills and three aces.

Brynlee Dunker added three kills, while Makenna Krause had an ace serve and Neely Althoff had two.

Darcy Yost led Ipswich with four kills and a block, while Sophie Knittle served four aces.

Groton completed the sweep with a 25-13, 25-10 victory in the C match.

Charli Jacobsen served seven aces and had two kills for Groton. Brynlee Dunker added three kills, two ace serves and a block, while Rylee Stoltenburg had three kills.

Mya Moody finished with three aces and a kill, Arianna Dinger had an ace and a kill, Maycee Moody had one kill and Sophia Fliehs served one ace.

Yost led Ipswich with three kills and an ace, while Aubree Crissman had two kills and an ace.

Groton Area will travel to Sisseton Thursday.

Hanson said Sisseton traditionally presents challenges with its size and a difficult road environment, but she believes the demanding opening portion of Groton's schedule has already tested her team.

"We've already faced so much adversity as a team, and these girls are handling it so well," Hanson said.

"They don't panic. They don't get down on each other. They don't get down on themselves.

"It's early in the season. We'll be fine."

Varsity match sponsors on GDILIVE.COM are: Agtegra, Avantara-Groton, Bierman Farm Service, BK Custom Ts, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Farmers Union Insurance, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, Heartland Energy, Jacobson Electric, John Sieh Agency, Jungle Lanes & Cafe, Locke Electric, Malpert Insurance, Poet, Rix Farms / R&M Farms, S & S Lumber, Spanier Harvesting and The Meat House of Andover.

Farmers Union Insurance sponsored the C and JV matches.

South Dakota Department of Revenue Reports \$1.4 million in Tax Collections from 2026 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally

PIERRE, S.D.— The South Dakota Department of Revenue estimates tax collections from the 2026 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally at \$1,404,408, an 11% decrease from last year's total of \$1,581,736. The lower collections reflect a slowdown in overall rally traffic, which contributed to reduced vendor activity and lower taxable sales. The total includes state sales tax, state tourism tax, municipal sales tax, and municipal gross receipts tax.

State sales tax remained the largest share of collections at \$796,998, down from \$901,513 in 2025. The 2026 rally also generated \$275,598 in state tourism tax and \$331,812 in municipal taxes. The decline in traffic was mirrored by a drop in vendor participation, with 822 temporary vendors operating during the rally, 30% fewer than in 2025.

In the Northern Black Hills, including Sturgis and surrounding communities in Meade and Lawrence counties, 661 vendors generated \$930,740 in tax revenue, representing a 20% decrease from last year. In contrast, the Southern Black Hills, Rapid City, Custer, Hill City, and Keystone saw 161 vendors generate \$473,668 in tax collections, a 15% increase from 2025.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 7 of 67



Homecoming Royalty

Front row left to right: McKenna Tietz, Ashlynn Warrington, Taryn Traphagen, Emerlee Jones, and Avery Crank

Back row left to right: Gavin Kroll, Blake Lord, Brody Lord, Dylan McGannon and Zander Harry

Coronation will be at 7:30 on September 14, 2026, in the Groton Gymnasium. (Courtesy photo Brenda Madsen)



Andrew Ellsworth, MD; Kelly Evans-Hullinger, MD; Jill Kruse, DO; Debra Johnston, MD
Prairie Doc® Marks 25 Years of Trusted Health Education

As the fall season approaches, one of the nation's most enduring and trusted health resources is preparing to mark a significant milestone. "On Call with the Prairie Doc®" will launch its 25th season of programming next Thursday, September 10, at 7:00 p.m. Central Time.

For a quarter-century, the Prairie Doc team has been dedicated to a simple but vital mission: "Science you can verify, doctors you can trust." Since its inception, the program has provided high-quality, reliable medical information, helping residents make informed decisions about their well-being in an era often cluttered with conflicting health news.

To kick off this historic season, the premiere episode on September 10 will be a special "Ask Anything" program. In a true celebration of the show's legacy and mission, all four Prairie Doc hosts—Dr. Debra Johnston, Dr. Andrew Ellsworth, Dr. Kelly Evans-Hullinger, and Dr. Jill Kruse—will be in the studio to tackle questions from viewers.

"We are incredibly proud to continue our tradition of delivering science-based, accessible health education," says Ashley Ragsdale, Executive Director of Prairie Doc Programming. "Our programming has become a vital resource for individuals, and entering our 25th season is a testament to the dedication of our hosts, guests, and the community that continues to tune in."

Viewers are encouraged to participate in the season premiere. You can submit questions live during the broadcast by calling 1-888-376-6225, emailing ask@prairiedoc.org, or messaging the Prairie Doc Facebook page. The show also features a weekly quiz for viewers.

In addition to the weekly television program on SDPB, Facebook and YouTube, Prairie Doc continues to expand its reach through its weekly radio program on SDPB Radio, podcasts, and a widely read Prairie Doc Perspective newspaper column.

As the program embarks on its 25th year, the mission remains as relevant as ever: to enhance health and diminish suffering through respectful, compassionate, and evidence-based information. Tune in on September 10 at 7:00 p.m. to help kick off a quarter-century of "science you can verify, doctors you can trust."



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

South Dakota utility regulator candidates clash over AI data center pause

Democrat calls for moratorium that Republican labels 'reckless and pandering'

BY JOSHUA HAIAR

A South Dakota Democratic Public Utilities Commission candidate is calling for a one-year ban on new artificial intelligence data centers in the state, while his Republican opponent calls the proposal "reckless and pandering" and says new state laws regulating the industry are sufficient.

Frank Kloucek, a farmer from rural Scotland, South Dakota, and a Democratic former 22-year state lawmaker, proposed the moratorium. He said large data centers require large investments in electrical infrastructure — from generation to transmission — and South Dakotans should not subsidize their development through higher energy bills.

"Slow down, get the facts, protect the ratepayers and make sure South Dakota is in control of its own future," Kloucek said.

State lawmakers passed, and Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden signed, two data center bills into law earlier this year.

One allows the Public Utilities Commission to assess data center companies the cost of regulatory reviews related to their projects. The other requires local water providers to determine whether the water use of large data centers — for cooling of spaces filled with heat-emitting servers — is compatible with the local water supply. It also requires electrical providers to establish separate terms and conditions for large data centers and to require reimbursement for all costs fairly attributed to data centers. Additionally, the law prohibits the state from overriding local ordinances limiting, prohibiting or otherwise regulating data centers.

Lawmakers rejected other proposals that would have incentivized data centers, such as a proposed sales tax exemption for data center equipment and software purchases. Lawmakers also rejected moratoriums on data center development.

Don Haggar, of Sioux Falls, who previously served five years in the Legislature, is the Republican nominee for the Public Utilities Commission. He said in a statement sent to South Dakota Searchlight that the new state laws are "the right foundation for how these decisions should be made going forward, case by case, on their unique merits."

Haggar said the regulatory role of commissioners means "every case that comes before us deserves a fair, unbiased hearing, not a verdict decided in advance, and not a rubber stamp either."

"It's reckless and pandering to propose what my opponent has just done," Haggar said in the statement.

Kloucek said the new state laws "lack any teeth." The law regulating water and electricity use does not add any penalties for violations. Kloucek said a one-year moratorium would give the state more time to study the issue before any new projects move ahead.

South Dakota has small data centers but none of the large centers, known as hyper-scale, that have proliferated elsewhere. Proponents of data center development said during the legislative session that the state is missing out on high-paying jobs and millions in additional property tax revenue, while putting America at risk of falling behind foreign competitors. On Monday, President Donald Trump said on social media, "The only reason that communities throughout the U.S.A. should not want Data Centers is if they want to end up being backward and poor."

Meanwhile, 23 Democratic candidates for the South Dakota Legislature have signed a pledge to implement public protections, greater transparency and local control in data center development, while opposing

tax incentives. The laws approved earlier this year received bipartisan support.

Haggar and Kloucek are seeking the Public Utilities Commission seat being vacated by Republican Commissioner Gary Hanson, who is not seeking reelection. The commission has three positions, one of which is up for election this year. The election is Nov. 3, and advance voting starts Sept. 18.

The last Democrat on the commission was Steve Kolbeck, who served from 2006 to 2011. He's now a Republican state senator but is not running for reelection to the Legislature this year.

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

Underground experiment in South Dakota's Black Hills reports 'compelling hint of dark matter' BY SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF

An experiment deep underground in South Dakota's Black Hills has reported its "most compelling hint of dark matter" to date.

A news release Tuesday from the LUX-ZEPLIN experiment announced the recording of a single particle interaction that researchers have difficulty explaining with known background signals from normal matter. The result does not yet meet the statistical threshold required to claim a discovery, the news release said.

"With only one event, we don't want to get ahead of ourselves. We are not claiming to have seen dark matter," said Rick Gaitskell, a professor at Brown University and the spokesperson for the experiment, in the news release. "But we have seen something interesting that we want to share with the scientific community for their input."

Scientists have been trying to understand dark matter for the better part of a century. The invisible substance makes up roughly 85% of mass in the universe but has never been directly detected.

The experiment is an international collaboration of 250 scientists and engineers from 39 institutions. The detector is managed by the U.S. Department of Energy's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and operates nearly 1 mile below ground at the Sanford Underground Research Facility, in the former Homestake gold mine in the city of Lead. The facility is managed by the South Dakota Science and Technology Authority, which was created by the South Dakota Legislature and consists of members appointed by South Dakota's governor.

The experiment uses a detector filled with 10 metric tons of ultrapure liquid xenon. Researchers look for signature flashes of light from energy deposited in the detector. The collaboration uses multiple methods to prevent or account for particle interactions caused by normal matter, including the mile of rock that shields the detector.

The new results were presented in a scientific talk at the 2026 TeV Particle Astrophysics conference in Japan. The paper will be released on the online repository arXiv and submitted to the journal Physical Review Letters. With additional data, researchers can test whether the finding continues to grow in significance or fades away, the news release said.

The experiment, which has been described as costing \$60 million, is supported by the U.S. Department of Energy, the Science & Technology Facilities Council of the United Kingdom, the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology, the Swiss National Science Foundation, the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Dark Matter Particle Physics, and the Institute for Basic Science, Korea.

A summer of recalls exposes holes in the nation's food safety net

The Trump administration has cut staff, funding at agencies that track foodborne illnesses

BY ANNA CLAIRE VOLLERS

Jalapenos. Frozen berries. Beef. Alfalfa sprouts.

A summer of food recalls, including the record-shattering cyclosporiasis outbreak tied to iceberg lettuce that has sickened thousands, has raised many Americans' fears of contracting a foodborne illness.

The recalls have focused attention on the Trump administration's decision to cut funding and staff at several public health agencies, and prompted questions about whether those changes have made consumers more vulnerable.

In fact, this year's tally of food recalls is roughly in line with the numbers in recent years. About 48 million people each year get sick from a foodborne illness. But experts worry that the scope, severity and scale of outbreaks and their associated food recalls are growing.

While the United States sees some cyclosporiasis cases every year, this year's outbreak has crushed records: Since May, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed more than 17,000 cases, with another nearly 12,000 reported cases still under investigation. The outbreak has resulted in at least 922 hospitalizations and two deaths.

Federal officials have blamed this year's multistate outbreak on processed iceberg lettuce from central Mexico. The lettuce was brought to the U.S. by Taylor Farms, a distributor that supplies foods to thousands of restaurants and grocery stores, including Target, Taco Bell, Whole Foods, Kroger, Walmart, Costco and Jack in the Box.

The CDC and the Food and Drug Administration are investigating at least six other clusters for which a source hasn't yet been confirmed.

Cuts at the CDC and FDA haven't necessarily increased consumers' chances of food contamination or outbreaks, said Jennifer McEntire, a food microbiologist and the founder of a food safety consulting firm. However, McIntire said, "I do think the cuts may have influenced the way outbreaks unfold."

"I think there are valid questions around the timing of the response, the time it took for agencies to recognize the outbreak and to start to investigate it, get boots on the ground in Mexico," she said.

Darin Detwiler, a food safety expert and professor emeritus at Northeastern University, noted that the U.S. is seeing more recalls affecting multiple states, rather than a small area. He added that more recalls are being tied to a problem earlier in the food chain — such as contaminated irrigation water at a large lettuce farm rather than, say, improperly stored deli meat at a sandwich shop — which can spread the pathogen to a far higher number of people and make it harder to track and contain.

"We're seeing so many people impacted, so many states impacted, and the recalls are dragging on for a long time," Detwiler. "There's ambiguity or lack of transparency over who's even behind a recall."

The White House dismissed concerns about the federal government's ability to handle outbreaks.

"The Trump Administration has never cut FDA food inspectors or other frontline personnel for domestic disease response," White House spokesperson Allison Schuster told Stateline in an email. "President Trump's top priority is the health and safety of the American people, and the federal government remains capable of robustly addressing any future outbreaks."

Fewer staff, less funding

Last year, the Trump administration laid off thousands of employees at federal public health agencies including the CDC, which tracks and responds to disease outbreaks, and the FDA, which oversees and regulates food safety.

While some of the layoffs were reversed through lawsuits or by Congress, the nation's health public agencies remain at diminished capacity. The CDC workforce has been reduced by 28% since December 2024, the month before Trump took office, according to a Stateline analysis of data from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Employee numbers at the FDA are down 23% during the same period.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 12 of 67

Last year, U.S. inspections of foreign food facilities, such as the Mexican farming operation linked to the cyclospora outbreak, plummeted to historic lows following those staffing cuts. The FDA suspended a quality control program for food testing. And the parasite surveillance staff at the CDC, which responds to outbreaks, was downsized last year by the Department of Government Efficiency from 11 people to three.

Sandra Eskin, a food safety expert who worked in the office of food safety at the U.S. Department of Agriculture during the Biden administration, likened federal public health cuts to the game Jenga, where players construct a tower of wooden blocks and then remove the blocks one at a time while trying not to make the tower fall.

"I think that's what we're seeing," said Eskin, who now leads a public health nonprofit called Stop Food-borne Illness, which advocates for stronger food safety policies. "Whether it's cuts in staff, cuts in funding that trickle down to the states, or late responses to outbreaks — these are all pieces of wood in that game where you start pulling them out and then the whole thing collapses."

The federal government also has delayed requiring companies to comply with new food safety rules, included in a law enacted more than a decade ago, that would help regulators track where food comes from and where it's going during outbreaks.

Detwiler and other experts say the new rules could have helped speed the government's sluggish response to the cyclospora outbreak investigation after Taylor Farms initially tried delaying the recall.

Last year, the Trump administration also drastically scaled back FoodNet, an early warning surveillance system that required tracking of infections caused by eight different foodborne pathogens. The federal-state collaboration is now only required to track two pathogens: salmonella and Shiga toxin-producing E.coli. The other six pathogens, including cyclospora, were made optional.

The CDC says the change was made because other surveillance systems monitor those pathogens. But McEntire and other food safety experts want them reinstated on FoodNet.

State impacts

Infectious outbreaks like cyclosporiasis are typically investigated by state and local health departments, which largely rely on federal dollars distributed through the FDA and CDC. Public health has been chronically underfunded for decades under several administrations, experts say.

But the Trump administration since last year has terminated \$5.78 billion in CDC grants — funds that were appropriated by Congress but had not yet been spent.

Michigan, at the center of the cyclosporiasis outbreak with the highest number of cases and clusters, is one of 23 states (plus the District of Columbia) that successfully sued the Trump administration in June 2025 over federal funding cuts.

Changes to federal funding last year affected public health infrastructure across Michigan, a representative from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services told Stateline. During the cyclosporiasis outbreak, the state used its own resources to bolster local responses.

"While we are able to support this investigation on a local level, sustained investment in public health capacity is essential to ensuring Michigan can respond effectively to future regional and statewide public health threats," said department spokesperson Lynn Sutfin.

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

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

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

9 justices on the Supreme Court or 13? Numbers battle revived in Congress

BY ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — As public opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court flags amid decisions that have roiled the nation, Democrats renewed calls ahead of the midterms to expand the high court, while House Republicans are considering a constitutional amendment this week that proposes to cap the number at nine.

Just Monday, the court gave the green light to President Donald Trump's ballroom expansion and is expected to issue a major ruling soon on Trump's vote-by-mail order that could throw the midterm elections into chaos.

Over the weekend, Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-S.C., said, "I think that we are in a position now that calls for some significant actions taken by the Congress.

"And we ought to expand — and 13 is a pretty good number. A baker's dozen would be a good number to have on the court," the 17-term House Democrat said on NBC News' "Meet the Press with Kristen Welker."

Clyburn said conservatives on the court, specifically naming Justice Clarence Thomas, have decided to "take the country back" in time.

In late April, the Supreme Court's conservative super majority struck down a protection in the Voting Rights Act that assured the vote of majority Black congressional districts could not be diluted.

In June, the court upheld the Constitution's 14th Amendment guaranteeing birthright citizenship, but the decision was not unanimous. Four justices dissented, arguing that there are some exceptions for certain babies born to immigrants on U.S. soil, depending on their parents' immigration status.

Clyburn is not the only Democrat to call for court expansion. Former Vice President Kamala Harris, a likely 2028 presidential hopeful, also advocated for a 13-justice high court during July 31 comments at the National Urban League meeting in Nashville, Tennessee.

Other high-profile Democrats have said in recent weeks and months they want to see change at the Supreme Court, including House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., Sen. Raphael Warnock, D-Ga., Sen. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., and Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro.

As for public opinion, Pew Research found that just over half of Americans have an unfavorable view of the Supreme Court, according to survey results published July 30, a near historic low.

A Gallup poll published July 28 found confidence in the Supreme Court at a record low of 33%.

Constitutional amendment

While many Democrats' answer to the dissatisfaction is to add more justices, the House is poised to vote as soon as this week on a Republican resolution to propose a constitutional amendment that would codify the number of justices at nine.

House Republican leadership is expected to bring the resolution to the floor under a suspension of rules, meaning that a two-thirds majority would be required to pass it.

The resolution would also have to pass the Senate to begin the seven-year clock for three-fifths of states, or 38, to ratify it.

Johnson fears 'political palooza'

House Speaker Mike Johnson told reporters on Capitol Hill Tuesday that he expects the resolution to hit the floor Wednesday.

Johnson accused the Democratic Socialists of America, whom he referred to as the "communist socialists in the Democrat party who are taking the party over," of wanting "to pack the U.S. Supreme Court."

"We're gonna make sure that doesn't happen," the Louisiana Republican said.

"There's a couple of Democrats here in the House who have suggested that they're not on board with the Democratic Socialists of America, just a few. They're gonna get a chance to show us tomorrow. ... Nine justices has worked well."

Johnson added expanding the court risks turning into "a political palooza."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 14 of 67

His office did not respond to a States Newsroom request for comment on whether he believes the resolution would succeed or if leadership has put the bill on the floor calendar to send a message ahead of the November midterm elections in which control of the House is at stake.

Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Ariz., introduced the resolution in January 2025. The resolution was referred to the House calendar on July 6 of this year. Biggs won the GOP primary for Arizona governor in July.

Biggs argued in early June that his resolution would protect the court from people "threatening to pack this iconic American institution to ensure favorable outcomes for their causes."

"This action will protect the Court's legitimacy, preserve the checks and balances that safeguard our cherished freedoms, and ensure every American's rights remain secure – no matter who holds political power," he said in a statement after the House Committee on the Judiciary advanced the legislation.

Rep. Derrick Schmidt, R-Kansas, signed on as a cosponsor in early June, and Rep. Rick Allen, R-Ga., on July 16. Both men are in solidly Republican districts, according to the Cook Political Report with Amy Walter.

'Magical thinking'

Not all think that expanding the Supreme Court or restricting its size to nine justices will fix what many see as serious flaws.

Gabe Roth, executive director of the nonprofit Fix the Court, said both ideas are "pretty cynical positions."

"I think it just is part of this magical thinking that all of a sudden we're going to have 13 justices and everything is going to be okay in the federal judiciary. That voting rights will come back, abortion rights will come back, and that's not how cases reach the court," said Roth, whose organization advocates for "non-ideological fixes."

On the "keep nine" side, Roth said there's a belief that the court now has a "perfect construct."

"It's not," he said, adding "I don't see why keep nine is a good idea other than to try to rile up the base." Instead Roth wants to see term limits gradually phased in over time.

"Every democracy that's younger than ours has term limits or age limits for their apex court justices. Forty-nine out of 50 states have term limits, age limits, or retention elections for their apex courts," he told States Newsroom in an interview Tuesday.

The Supreme Court lacks term limits "because King George was firing colonial judges, and so some monarch's mental decrepitude shouldn't be a reason for maintaining something 250 years later," Roth said, referring to Great Britain's King George III at-will firing of judges in the colonies.

Founders of the United States wrote into the Constitution several guardrails against influencing the court, including giving judges lifetime appointments, according to the American Bar Association.

Roth supports legislation introduced last year by Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., that would limit a justice's Supreme Court service to 18 years, and would give each president a chance to nominate one justice during their first and third years in office.

That means the number of justices could fluctuate at times, depending on retirements or deaths.

"It's basically like you add a new justice every two years, and you know, if there are 10 or 11 justices for 10 or 15 years, so be it," he said.

Democrats "came to the number four because that would give Democrats a 7-6 majority. It's not like they're pulling four out of thin air," he said, referring to advocates who want 13 justices.

The system would be "fair" and "regularized," Roth added.

"So we don't have a system where Trump gets three (nominations) in one term, and then Jimmy Carter got zero in his one term."

Eight cosponsors, all Democrats, joined Khanna's legislation. They include Reps. Don Beyer, D-Va., Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich, Sean Casten, D-Ill., Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., Daniel Goldman, D-N.Y., Juan Vargas, D-Calif., Summer Lee, D-Pa., and Yassamin Ansari, D-Ariz.

Both Rep. Hank Johnson, D-Ga., and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., have sponsored other legislation to create term limits for Supreme Court justices.

Johnson's bill, first introduced in 2023, has 86 Democratic cosponsors.

Sens. Cory Booker, D-N.J., Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and Alex Padilla, D-Calif., joined Whitehouse to reintroduce their term limits bill in July.

Jennifer Shutt contributed to this report.

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

USPS whistleblower predicts 'catastrophic' effect on elections under Trump vote-by-mail order

BY JACOB FISCHLER

The U.S. Postal Service rushed the development of electronic tools to comply with a Trump administration policy placing new restrictions on mail-in voting, and defied a court order to stop work on the system, according to an explosive whistleblower complaint published Tuesday by Democratic U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal.

The unnamed whistleblower predicted the result could be "foreseeable catastrophic disruption to our coming nationwide elections based on the reckless pursuit of readying a new, insufficiently tested, poorly planned mail-in ballot screening system."

The system contains several massive flaws and, with virtually no time to spare before the November elections, USPS officials kept on developing an online verification system in violation of a Massachusetts judge's injunction, the whistleblower said.

The system's verification standard is "a zero percent failure rate," meaning that any batch of ballots that contain any single ballot with an error would result in an entire batch being rejected, the whistleblower said.

The verification system itself is suspect due to a hurried and untested development of an online portal that states were to use to upload voter and ballot information for verification by federal officials, the whistleblower said.

Up against a tight timeline ahead of the midterm elections, the agency also continued to develop an online tool related to the regulation, despite the federal court order to pause the work, according to the whistleblower.

No specific USPS officials were named as responsible for directing the work to continue in defiance of the courts. USPS did not immediately return a request for comment from States Newsroom.

States were expected to begin using the system as soon as Tuesday, according to the whistleblower.

Potential for millions of missing ballots

The allegations from the whistleblower, a federal official whose exact role is not specified, were detailed in a report by Whistleblower Aid, a nonprofit legal group that is representing the whistleblower.

Blumenthal, of Connecticut, attached the report to a letter to U.S. Postmaster General David Steiner.

"The apparently sloppy and rushed manner in which the Federal Ballot Mail Portal and supporting IT systems are being built poses significant risk," the report said. "Potentially millions of American voters may not receive their mail-in ballot this election cycle in a timely manner, or at all."

The new policy, which President Donald Trump initiated in a March executive order, has been the subject of intense legal fighting over the past few weeks that continues with an appeal now sitting at the 1st Circuit Court of Appeals. Democratic state officials and voting rights groups have said the regulation would likely disenfranchise voters.

Blumenthal said the USPS should reject the policy entirely.

"We urge you to abandon this ill-conceived, unconscionable plan and ensure that all Americans can exercise their constitutional right to vote, including by mail, without interference by USPS," he wrote.

'Problems at every stage'

In a final rule published Aug. 21, the Postal Service said states would use a to-be-developed online portal to upload information about the envelopes being used for mail ballots and the voters who received them. USPS would also use the portal to verify that all ballots and voters complied with the requirements set out in the new rule.

But the project was beset with several challenges, in part spurred by the unrealistic timeline for develop-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 16 of 67

ment, the whistleblower said.

The whistleblower's disclosure "identifies problems at every stage of USPS's development of the Portal, demonstrating deeply flawed plans for implementation," Blumenthal wrote.

A project of the portal's size and importance would normally "take nine months to a year or more" to finish, according to the whistleblower's disclosure. Smaller current Postal Service IT projects have been given eight-month timelines, according to the whistleblower.

USPS began developing the mail ballot portal in June, just three months before it was to be introduced and less than five months before Election Day, according to the disclosure.

Individual elements of the tool have not been sufficiently tested, "rendering meaningful testing of the project impossible," the whistleblower said.

"The Whistleblower believes that there has been insufficient internal testing of the system," the disclosure said. "Such testing is critical to determine whether it will work on September 1, when states could be expected to start using it."

Software developers on the project have "considerable concern" that the project skipped "standard principles of testing and debugging new software before launch," the whistleblower said.

One faulty barcode

The IT problems heighten the danger of another major issue: a policy of rejecting entire batches of ballots based on a faulty barcode on a single ballot.

According to the whistleblower, "the administration has hidden the high likelihood" that standard raises for major disruptions in ballot delivery.

"As presently designed, if even one bar code on one single ballot in a bulk-mailing of 10,000 ballots fails to properly scan during the verification process, the entire batch is rejected and sent back to the state — effectively stopping the ballots from being mailed to voters," the report said.

A misread barcode could result from something as simple as a voter's changed name after marriage or a move of address, Blumenthal said.

Court order

The whistleblower said the USPS paused work for about a month after Judge Indira Talwani in the U.S. District Court of Massachusetts issued an injunction against Trump's executive order, finding, in part, that it likely violated the U.S. Constitution's provision granting states the power to administer elections.

But USPS officials then ordered work to resume on the project, in defiance of the judicial order that remained in effect, the whistleblower said.

The whistleblower added that the agency ignored another temporary restraining order Talwani, who was appointed by former President Barack Obama, issued last week and upheld Monday, and continued to work on the project.

In his letter to Steiner, Blumenthal asked if that was true and posed several other questions stemming from the whistleblower's report, and asked for a response by Friday.

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

US House clears spending stopgap backed by Trump that averts government shutdown

BY JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House approved a short-term government funding bill Tuesday that would avoid a shutdown this fall once President Donald Trump signs it.

The 370-48 vote showed neither Republicans nor Democrats want a repeat of the funding lapse that took place last year when disagreement over enhanced Affordable Care Act tax credits led to a historic 43-day shutdown.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 17 of 67

The stopgap spending bill, which the Senate approved in early August, would provide mostly flat funding for federal departments and agencies to keep up and running from the start of the new fiscal year on Oct. 1 through Dec. 11.

The short-term funding patch is supposed to give Congress more time to reach bipartisan agreement on the dozen annual appropriations bills. Absent that, lawmakers can pass a series of stopgap spending bills or force another government shutdown.

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Tom Cole, R-Okla., said during floor debate the bill doesn't include any "poison pills" or "partisan riders."

"The bill before us is a clean, narrowly tailored continuing resolution that keeps the government open and operating. Nothing more. Nothing less," he said. "It gives the nation and our constituents certainty."

The measure, Cole said, would "allow Congress time to get past the November elections and allow us time to assess and move forward with further appropriations measures in November and December."

Connecticut Democratic Rep. Rosa DeLauro, ranking member on the committee, said the bill doesn't include any additional funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and would block the administration from moving any of the money to the Border Patrol.

Republicans in Congress approved a \$70 billion package earlier this year intended to fund ICE and the Border Patrol for the next three years. That funding was on top of the roughly \$170 billion for immigration enforcement included in the GOP's "big, beautiful" law.

"We will not support a single cent in further funding without substantial reforms to protect our communities from abuse," DeLauro said during debate.

The stopgap spending bill, she said, "is in no way a substitute for the full-year funding process. It is merely a means to complete this important work while averting a lapse in government funding."

Senate action

Senators voted 96-0 to approve the spending measure in early August after making changes to a bill the House passed in late July.

The White House indicated last month that Trump plans to sign the bill when it reaches his desk, writing in a Statement of Administration Policy that the president "strongly opposes another futile Government shutdown."

"Every Member of Congress should support passage of this CR to keep the Government open as discussions on full-year appropriations continue," it said.

The current version of the legislation "closes the loophole that would have allowed the Trump administration to transfer funding for other programs to Border Patrol" and "extends authorizations of important health, veterans, infrastructure, and other programs," according to a summary from Senate Appropriations Committee ranking member Patty Murray, D-Wash.

Rule on grantmaking blocked

The bill also blocks the White House budget office from moving forward during the next few months with a rule that would give political appointees more influence over grants.

Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Susan Collins, R-Maine, wrote in a letter released in early July that "rule would impose new, burdensome requirements on award recipients that would harm small and rural communities, undermine scientific and biomedical research, and conflict with Congress' control over the federal funding process."

Democrats in Congress also oppose the proposed rule, arguing it "will make it impossible for grant recipients to faithfully carry out the funding priorities that Congress establishes in statute, and would turn federal grants into a new cudgel for the President to unilaterally advance his partisan agenda and punish political rivals."

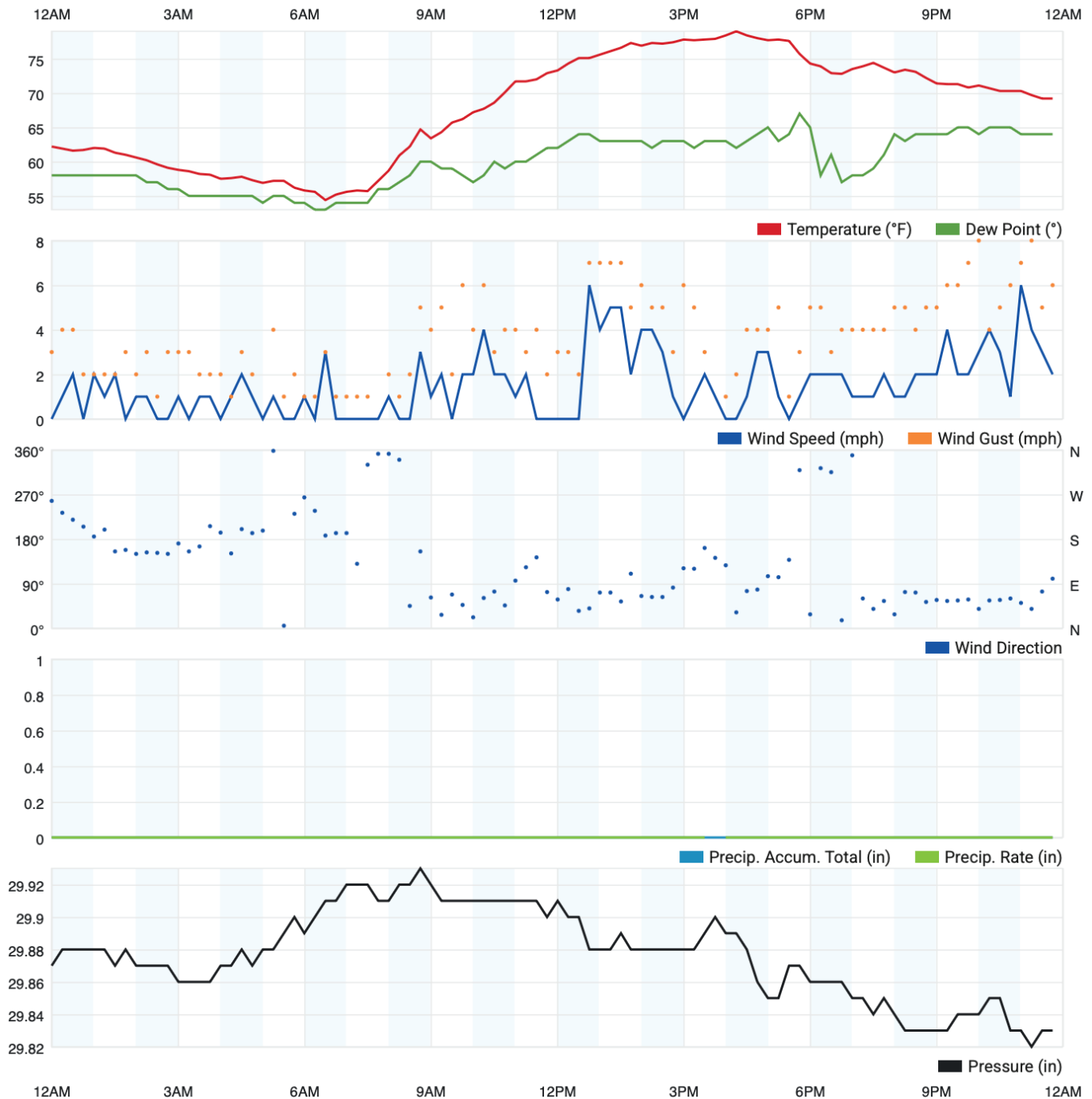
Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 18 of 67

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

September 1, 2026



Broton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 19 of 67

Today



High: 83 °F

Slight Chance
Showers then
Sunny

Tonight



Low: 64 °F

Partly Cloudy

Thursday



High: 89 °F

Mostly Sunny

Thursday
Night



Low: 63 °F

Mostly Clear

Friday



High: 93 °F

Hot

Wednesday Night



Lows 61 to 66°

Isolated light thundershowers possible
(10-20%) tonight, mainly across northeast
SD and west central MN.

Thursday



84 to 96°

Friday



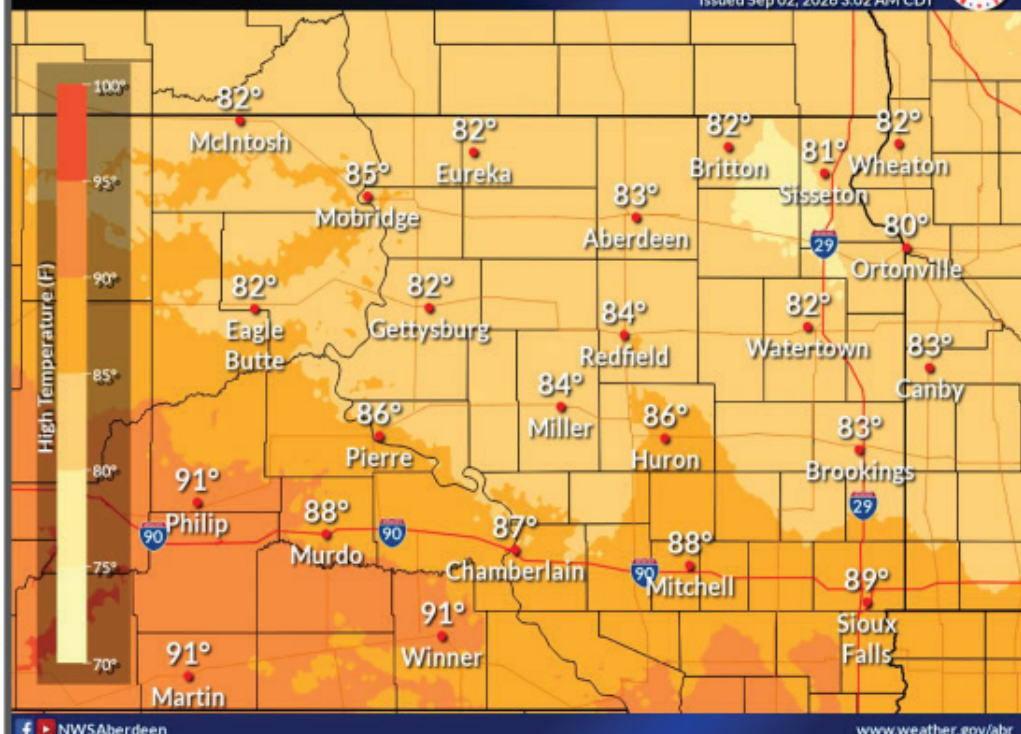
87 to 98°

- 15-30% storms west central MN Thursday night
- Warmer than normal temps persist into Saturday and Sunday

 **NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE**
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Forecast High Temperatures For 9/2/2026

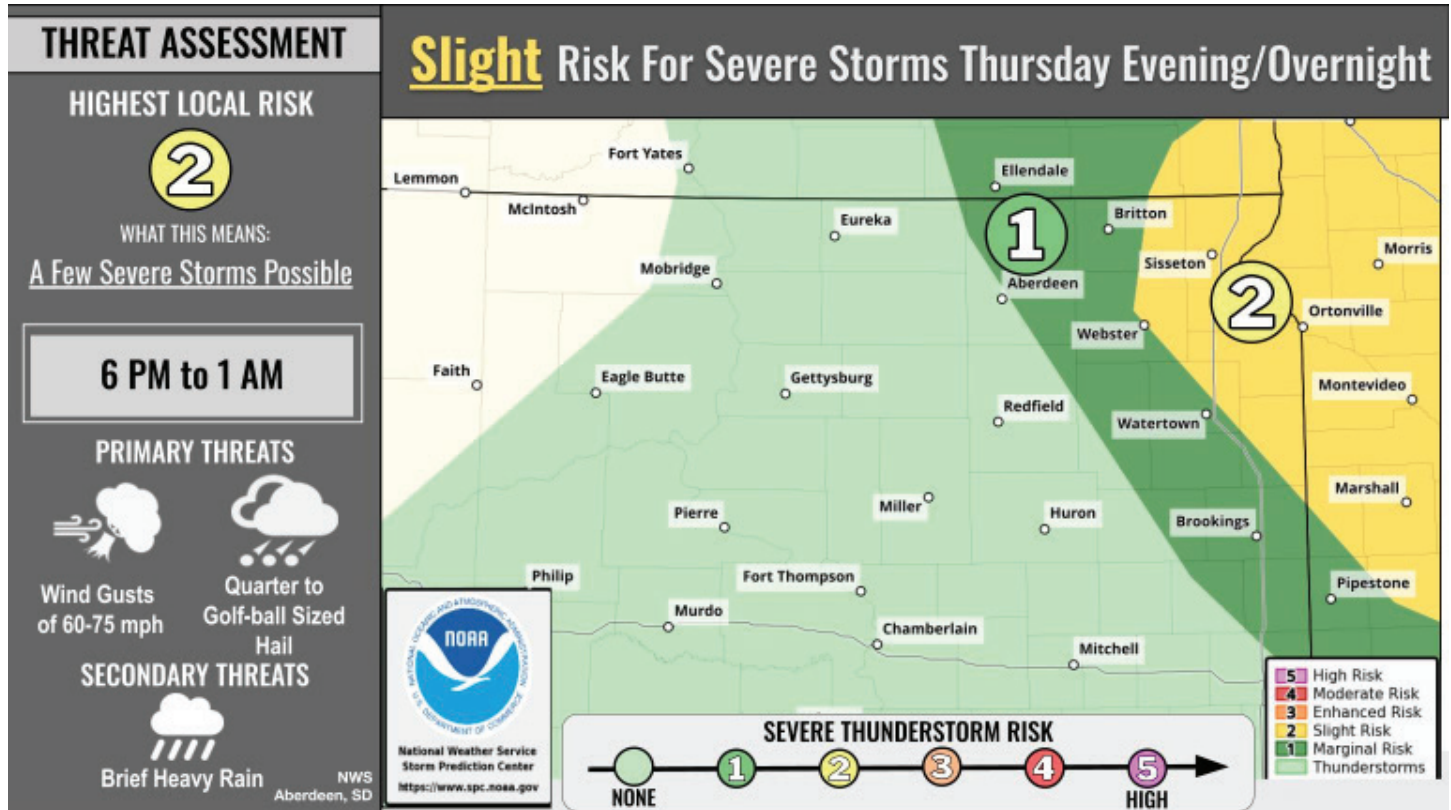
Weather Forecast Office
Aberdeen, SD
Issued Sep 02, 2026 3:02 AM CDT



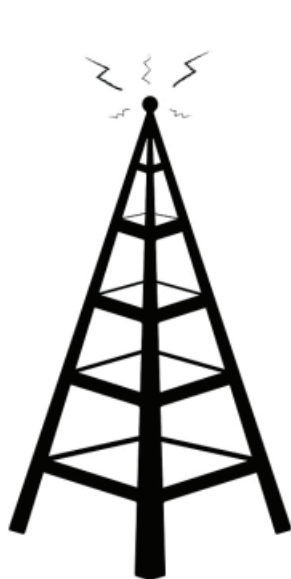
There are some lower probability chances for precipitation over the next few days. After this morning's showers and weak thunderstorms end, the next chance (less than 20 percent) for precipitation is later tonight. The bigger weather story right now is the continued warmer than normal temperatures over the region; expected to persist into the upcoming Labor Day holiday weekend.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 20 of 67



There could be a few strong to severe thunderstorms developing over or glancing the far northeast corner of South Dakota into west central Minnesota Thursday night. Right now, that area is under a slight risk (level 2 out of 5) for severe thunderstorms; including 1-2 inch hail and 60-75 mph damaging thunderstorm wind gusts.



NOAA Weather Radio Outage

What & Where

The **NOAA Weather Radio WXM41** located in **South Shore, SD**, that covers portions of Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Traverse Counties in Minnesota, and Codington, Grant, and Roberts Counties in South Dakota.

When

Until Further Notice

Other Alerting Methods

- Additional transmitters that cover portions of this area remain available: Appleton 162.550MHz, Kensington (162.400 MHz).
- AM/FM radio, TV, social media, www.weather.gov/abr, cell phone apps etc. remain functional



<https://www.weather.gov/nwr/Maps>



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 21 of 67

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 79 °F at 4:15 PM

Low Temp: 54 °F at 6:27 AM

Wind: 9 mph at 1:05 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 104 in 1913

Record Low: 35 in 1896

Average High: 80

Average Low: 52

Average Precip in Sept.: 0.14

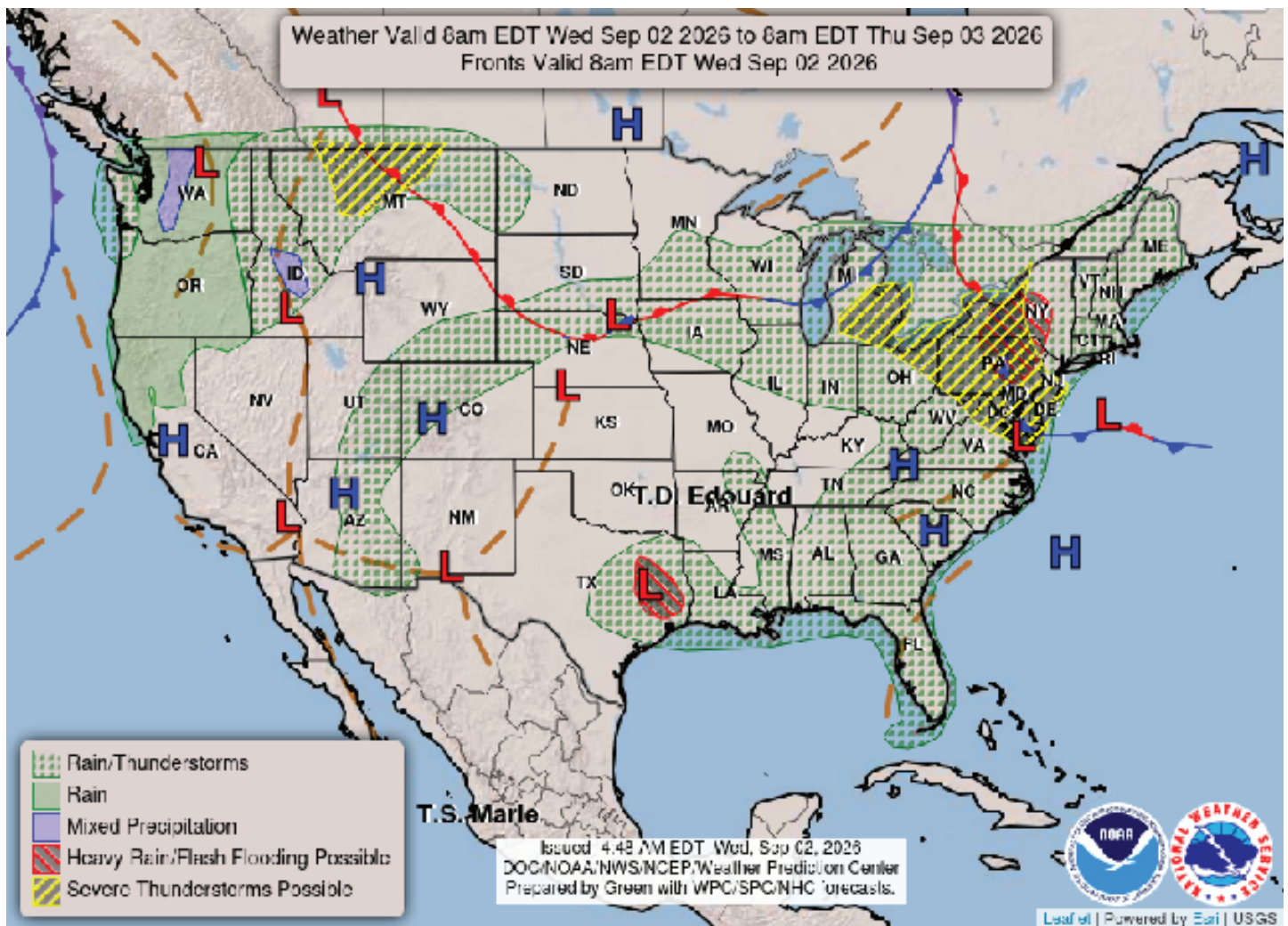
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 16.48

Precip Year to Date: 20.06

Sunset Tonight: 8:09 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:56 am



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 22 of 67

Today in Weather History

September 2, 1962: From 315 to 445 pm, hail fell in and around the Mobridge area. The hail ranged from 1 1/2 to 4 inches in diameter. The ground was covered up to 3 inches deep with drifts of 2-3 feet. At this time, the storm was one of the worst in recent history for damage.

September 2, 1983: A tornado touched down in the late afternoon 3 miles west and 1 mile south of Polo in Hand County damaging buildings, machinery, and trees. The roof of a hog house was torn off, and the north side of the building was destroyed. A barn was pulled several inches off of its foundation, and numerous trees were destroyed. At a nearby farm, two outbuildings were damaged, with two cows injured along with two calves killed.

September 2, 1985: Intense thunderstorms moved from south-central South Dakota to northeast South Dakota during the evening. Winds gusted to 60 to 70 mph over the area. Southwest of Presho, three small buildings were destroyed, and barns were damaged. Power lines and other property were damaged near Vayland, Miller, Wessington, Wolsey, Kimball, White Lake, Armour, and Castlewood. Large hail caused considerable damage to crops.

1775: The 1775 Newfoundland hurricane, also known as the Independence Hurricane, was a storm that hit the Colony of Newfoundland. It is believed to have killed at least 4,000 people, making it one of the deadliest Atlantic hurricanes of all time. The death toll in Virginia and North Carolina was 163 lives.

1882: Possibly the first photograph of a lightning strike was taken on this day by William Jennings in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

1887: The U.S. Army Signal Service station in Greenville, SC reported a minimum temperature of 50°F. This observation at Greenville still stands as the record low for the day. Additional stations across the state recorded low temps in the low 50's.

1935: The 1935 Labor Day Hurricane was the strongest and most intense hurricane to make landfall in the United States and the Atlantic Basin in recorded history. The death toll from this hurricane is between 400 to 600 individuals.

1950 — The temperature at Mecca, CA, soared to 126 degrees to establish a U.S. record for the month of September. The low that morning was 89 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1985 — After teasing residents along the Gulf of Mexico for two days, Hurricane Elena finally came ashore at Biloxi MS. The hurricane, packing winds of 127 mph, caused more than a billion dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Late evening thunderstorms in the Northern Plains Region produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Jordan MT, and a ""hot flash"" at Redig SD. The temperature at Redig rose from 66 degrees at 10 PM to 86 degrees at 11 PM as thunderstorm winds gusted to 36 mph. Nine cities in the Upper Ohio Valley, the Tennessee Valley and the Central Gulf Coast States reported record low temperatures for the date, including Elkins WV with a reading of 38 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Unseasonably hot weather prevailed in the northwestern U.S. Afternoon highs of 98 degrees at Olympia WA, 98 degrees at Seattle WA, 105 degrees at Portland OR, and 110 degrees at Medford OR, established records for the month of September. Quillayute WA equalled their September record with an afternoon high of 97 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Eight cities in the Gulf Coast Region reported record high temperatures for the date as readings soared into the upper 90s. Houston TX and Port Arthur TX hit 99 degrees. Late evening thunderstorms, developing ahead of a cold front, produced wind gusts to 63 mph at Dickinson ND, and golf ball size hail in North Dakota and Nebraska. Winds along the cold front itself gusted to 62 mph at Buffalo SD. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2002: An F3 tornado destroyed much of the downtown area of Ladysmith, Wisconsin. Overall damage was estimated at \$20 million, but there were no fatalities.



Bringing Others to Jesus

When we answer the call to discipleship, we can't help but share the good news with others.

John 1:35-42: 35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples,
36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"
37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.
38 And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?"
39 He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.
40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.
41 He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ).
42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

When the disciple Andrew asked Jesus, "Rabbi ... where are You staying?" (John 1:38), he revealed he was hoping to spend time with the Messiah and learn from Him. That desire for sweet fellowship with the Lord wasn't something Andrew kept to himself. His devotion to Christ naturally deepened his desire to share that joy with others—and he did so at every opportunity.

We find evidence of his mindset throughout the Gospels. Immediately after meeting Jesus, Andrew found his brother Simon and brought him to the Savior (John 1:41-42). Later, when a great multitude was hungry, he came across a boy who was willing to share his lunch. Andrew connected him with the Lord by means of the five loaves and two fish (John 6:8-9). And when some Greeks wanted to meet Christ, Andrew and Philip made the introductions (John 12:20-22). The disciple's actions show he clearly saw the importance and the blessing of knowing the Messiah.

When Andrew answered the call to discipleship, Jesus said he would be catching men instead of fish (Matthew 4:18-19). As followers of Christ, we also have this same wondrous goal. Though our personalities, circles of influence, and opportunities to do so may vary, we're each blessed with the chance to bring others to Jesus.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 24 of 67

The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.2% Sales Tax

- ☐ Black & White.....\$52.00/year
- ☐ Colored\$80.00/year
- ☐ Colored\$49.00/6 months
- ☐ E-Weekly*\$35.00/year

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- ☐ 1 Month\$16.00
- ☐ 3 Months.....\$28.00
- ☐ 6 Months.....\$38.00
- ☐ 9 Months.....\$52.00
- ☐ 12 Months\$60.00

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____

Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul

Pay with Venmo: @paperpaul Phone Number to Confirm: 7460



WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.01.26

16 37 45 55 58 4

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 22 Mins 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.01.26

1 22 51 61 63 17

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$177,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 7 Mins 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.31.26

8 22 27 30 34 4

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$3,400,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 22 Mins 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.29.26

11 17 22 28 29

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$42,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 37 Mins 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.31.26

4 26 28 44 67 20

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 6 Mins 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.31.26

11 17 25 37 49 10

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$146,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 6 Mins 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 26 of 67

News from the Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Aberdeen Christian def. Waverly-South Shore, 20-25, 25-12, 25-11, 25-11
Aberdeen Roncalli def. Miller, 25-23, 21-25, 25-17, 25-17
Alcester-Hudson def. Scotland, 25-19, 22-25, 25-13, 25-8
Baltic def. Beresford, 25-10, 25-18, 25-16
Bennett County def. New Underwood, 25-7, 25-18, 25-22
Bison def. Faith, 25-22, 26-24, 25-20
Bon Homme def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 23-25, 25-16, 25-15, 25-16
Bridgewater-Emery def. Howard, 25-11, 25-15, 25-12
Burke def. Winner, 15-25, 25-19, 25-14, 25-14
Castlewood def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-15, 16-25, 25-18, 25-18
Chadron, Neb. def. Hot Springs, 23-25, 25-14, 25-20, 25-13
Chamberlain def. Gregory, 25-15, 25-22, 25-13
Chester def. McCook Central-Montrose, 25-8, 25-11, 25-17
Colman-Egan def. Arlington, 25-17, 25-12, 25-12
Dakota Valley def. Tri-Valley, 25-27, 25-16, 25-21, 19-25, 15-4
Dell Rapids St Mary's def. Garretson, 25-21, 25-13, 22-25, 25-7
Dell Rapids def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 25-8, 25-18, 25-16
Deuel def. Milbank, 25-17, 25-14, 25-15
Dupree def. McLaughlin, 25-16, 25-9, 16-25, 25-12
Estelline-Hendricks def. Sisseton, 25-6, 25-7, 25-8
Ethan def. Kimball-White Lake, 25-14, 26-24, 25-19
Faulkton def. Sully Buttes, 25-23, 25-10, 25-15
Florence-Henry def. Flandreau, 20-25, 17-25, 25-18, 25-22, 15-11
Gayville-Volin High School def. Canistota, 25-6, 25-10, 25-7
Gettysburg def. Lower Brule, 25-16, 25-21, 25-16
Groton def. Ipswich, 25-14, 25-13, 25-20
Hamlin def. Great Plains Lutheran, 25-12, 25-23, 25-14
Hankinson, N.D. def. Tiospa Zina, 25-11, 25-14, 25-8
Harrisburg def. Mitchell, 25-15, 25-12, 25-10
Highmore-Harrold def. James Valley Christian School, 25-27, 23-25, 25-18, 25-23, 15-13
Hitchcock-Tulare def. Redfield, 25-16, 25-17, 25-22
Huron def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-10, 25-20, 25-27, 15-25, 15-6
Irene-Wakonda def. Freeman, 23-25, 25-18, 16-25, 25-21, 17-15
Jones County def. Wall, 25-14, 25-20, 25-11
Lakota Tech def. Pine Ridge, 25-18, 25-15, 25-10
Langford def. Leola-Frederick High School, 25-21, 25-10, 25-15
Lennox def. Vermillion, 25-23, 25-14, 26-24
Lyman def. White River, 18-25, 22-25, 25-21, 25-17, 15-11
Madison def. Canton, 20-25, 25-19, 23-25, 25-16, 15-5
Marshall, Minn. def. Watertown, 25-10, 25-14, 25-22
Mobridge-Pollock def. Herried-Selby, 25-21, 25-12, 25-16
North Central def. South Border, N.D., 25-17, 25-10, 25-13
Parkston def. Avon, 25-18, 16-25, 25-23, 16-25, 15-13
Rapid City Stevens def. Rapid City Central, 25-17, 25-14, 25-13
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket def. Hanson, 25-20, 27-25, 25-17

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 27 of 67

Sioux Falls Christian def. Sioux Center, Iowa, 26-24, 25-19, 25-19
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Brandon Valley, 25-23, 25-21, 29-27
Sioux Falls Washington def. Yankton, 25-10, 25-19, 25-23
Sioux Valley def. Parker/Marion, 25-21, 25-15, 25-21
Spearfish def. Hill City, 25-10, 25-20, 25-7
St Thomas More def. Sturgis Brown High School, 25-20, 25-15, 25-17
Sunshine Bible Academy def. Mitchell Christian, 25-21, 25-19, 20-25, 25-20
Tripp-Delmont-Armour def. Menno, 25-22, 25-20, 25-7
Wagner def. Mt. Vernon/Plankinton, 25-18, 25-17, 25-18
Warner def. Webster, 25-9, 25-14, 25-9
Wessington Springs def. Iroquois-Lake Preston, 22-25, 25-22, 25-14, 25-21
West Central def. Tea, 25-12, 25-20, 20-25, 23-25, 15-12
Wolsey-Wessington def. DeSmet, 25-12, 25-18, 25-15

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Will the pursuit of playoff berths at the top of college football cost FCS teams? Not so far

By ERIC OLSON AP College Football Writer

Overmatched FCS teams going into FBS stadiums to take a beating and leave with a half-million dollars is an annual rite of September, and there is no sign of a slowdown in the scheduling of so-called money games as the prospect of an expanded College Football Playoff looms.

This week alone, there will be 48 games pitting a team from the second-tier Championship Subdivision against a Bowl Subdivision program and 37 more will be played next week. In all, a total of 127 FCS-FBS games are set for 2026 and 57 will involve Power Four conference teams.

The expectation in some quarters was that the market for these games would tighten: The move from eight to nine league games across the major conferences, the requirement in the ACC, Big 12 and SEC that each of its teams play at least one Power Four nonconference opponent each year and a potential playoff expansion to 16 or 24 teams could make strength of schedule critical to teams eager to land in the CFP.

"There's been a lot of discussion about whether an expanded 24-team FBS playoff could reduce opportunities for FCS schools to schedule FBS opponents," said North Dakota athletic director Bill Chaves, whose school visits Nebraska on Sept. 19. "I have been scheduling these games for 20 years at the FCS level, and one thing I've learned is that the landscape is always changing. We're not overly concerned. We'll adapt, go with the flow, and continue to position our program for success regardless of how scheduling evolves."

Pay days and limited success

College football matchmaker Dave Brown, founder of the Gridiron scheduling software firm, said economics win out in scheduling. Power Four teams are paying an average of \$525,000 to opponents from the FCS this year — a significant amount for athletic departments on shoestring budgets — versus \$1.3 million to opponents from the Group of Six. FCS schools make around \$250,000 when they play a Group of Six team.

The height of FCS glory was Appalachian State's 34-32 upset of then-No. 5 Michigan in 2007, seven years before App State joined the FBS. Mostly, the games turn into beat-downs. The FCS was 4-122 against the FBS last year and, according to FearTheFCS.com, has a .134 winning percentage in such matchups (497-3,708) since Division I football split into the FBS (then I-A) and FCS (I-AA) in 1978.

Mercyhurst, in its third and final year of moving to Division I, will make a combined \$1 million for playing road games this month against Group of Six teams New Mexico State, New Mexico and Western Kentucky. The athletic department has gone through growing pains in the D1 transition, and athletic director Joe Spano said he plans to schedule two or three FBS opponents each year.

All programs say they need the money

UT Martin will play back-to-back games at West Virginia (\$500,000) and Memphis (\$350,000), and athletic

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 28 of 67

director Kurt McGuffin plans to schedule two FBS opponents per year now that the NCAA is allowing FCS programs to play 12-game schedules every year.

"If you play two of those a year, that's quite a bit of money and there are some things I can get done, maybe pay to replace our turf in our stadium," said McGuffin, who has signed contracts for games at Iowa and Alabama in 2028 for a combined \$1 million.

McGuffin said he foresees a limited impact from CFP expansion and the strength-of-schedule issue. McGuffin said Power Four teams at the top of their conferences probably would continue to schedule an FCS game most years because it makes financial sense and shouldn't cost them a bid. Middle-of-the-pack power conference teams hoping to compete for one of the final at-large bids might think twice, he said.

Western Carolina athletic director Kyle Pifer said potential power conference realignment and the possibility of power conferences going to 10-game league schedules are the biggest threat to FCS-FBS matchups. The Catamounts have games against FBS teams scheduled five of the next six years, including a 2031 game at Georgia for \$650,000.

"I don't think Georgia is going to leave the SEC, necessarily, but if there's something else that moves and I have to cancel a game we have scheduled four years out or something like that, that's more of a concern I have with these money games," Pifer said. "Right now, people are still open to scheduling us and we've been fortunate to have some good partners out there that have sent us contracts and we've agreed to the deal. Today I'm not as concerned as maybe I will in two or three years."

Campbell has at least three power-conference opponents lined up, starting Sept. 12 at Florida. The Camels visit Wake Forest in 2027 and North Carolina State in 2029 and are working to finalize a deal with Duke for 2028.

"If ultimately the strength of schedule becomes even more important because of the possible playoff expansion, it's possible some of those games will become less common," Campbell athletic director Hannah Bazemore said. "For us, we're paying attention, but we're not panicking. Right now we're talking about the possibilities and what-ifs."

Iran fires on its Gulf neighbors after US military strikes Iran after a monthlong lull

By DAVID RISING and BEN FINLEY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — An Iranian drone attack sparked a blaze in Kuwait City and Bahrain intercepted incoming drones, as Tehran fired on U.S. allies in the Gulf early Wednesday following a night of American bombardment that Iranian officials say included a deadly strike on a wedding party.

The latest violence has ended a monthlong lull in fighting between the U.S. and Iran and raised new questions about how to end a war that has led to a spike in oil prices, roiled the global economy and is posing increasing political problems for U.S. President Donald Trump's Republican Party ahead of November midterm elections.

Fighting between the U.S. and Iran has increased since the weekend after the American military hit Iranian rocket launchers on an island in the Strait of Hormuz, saying Iran was planning to use them to shoot mines into the waterway. Iran retaliated by firing missiles at American bases in Jordan, which were all intercepted.

U.S. allies in the region fend off Iranian attacks

Iran also fired drones at Kuwait late Tuesday that were intercepted. On Monday, the United Arab Emirates said it had intercepted an incoming Iranian drone over its waters.

Bahrain, which hosts an important U.S. naval base, said its air defense systems intercepted incoming fire from Iran early Wednesday, accusing Iran of "attacks targeting civilians" in a statement issued by its military.

Also on Wednesday, Kuwait's government communications center said a fire broke out at a residential complex in the capital after it was hit by an Iranian drone at dawn. It said the blaze had been contained and there were no casualties.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 29 of 67

Elsewhere in the region, in Iraq where Iranian-backed proxy forces are active, Kurdistan's Counter-Terrorism Directorate said it had intercepted 10 drones laden with explosives in the Irbil area. Iranian television reported that American bases in Irbil had been targeted.

Israel's military also said that Iran-backed Hezbollah fired two explosive drones at its soldiers in southern Lebanon but there were no casualties.

The U.S. Central Command said Tuesday's strikes focused on Iranian military targets including air defense sites, radar systems and maritime assets.

Casualties in Iran include people at a wedding party

One U.S. strike hit a home hosting a wedding, according to Iranian media. At least five people were killed, including a child, and at least 68 were wounded, Iranian officials said.

Images from Iran's semiofficial Tasnim news agency showed several hospitalized children being treated for injuries.

Footage from the Iranian Red Crescent showed rescue workers entering a damaged home in the wake of the strike, with debris scattered all around. It showed a hole in the roof of one house in a neighborhood of densely packed homes.

"Make no mistake: these crimes will not go unpunished," Ebrahim Azizi, chairperson of the Iranian parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said on X.

The U.S. military said it was aware of the report but that it "never targets civilians."

The Strait of Hormuz remains largely shut down

During last month's lull in fighting, the U.S. ramped up economic pressure on Iran, which is suffering from soaring inflation, negative growth and a collapsing currency, as Washington sought to win concessions to fully open the Strait of Hormuz to international shipping traffic.

About a fifth of the world's traded oil was shipped through the key waterway before Israel and the U.S. attacked Iran on Feb. 28 and Iran largely shut it down. Despite many pronouncements from Washington that the strait is open, only a handful of ships are making the passage each day and Iran has regularly attacked vessels.

On Wednesday, Saudi shipping company Bahri said two Filipino sailors were killed in an attack late Monday as their vessel transited the strait.

Since the fighting resumed, the price of Brent crude oil, the international standard, climbed above \$95, up more than 30% from the start of the war.

In launching its latest attacks, U.S. Central Command said it was responding to Tehran trying to hit commercial ships and American forces in the Middle East.

Trump offered an additional explanation, telling Fox News in a phone call that U.S. forces struck radar systems that Iran had been trying to rebuild.

"We waited until it was almost built and then we hit it," he said.

Late Tuesday, Trump said he would not force Iran to the bargaining table.

"I couldn't care less if they sign a worthless, to them, agreement. I like our position now much better, with almost total control of the Hormuz Strait, and their economy totally collapsing. They are just playing out the inevitable. When are the Iranian people going to rise up and fight?" Trump wrote on social media.

Earlier, Trump had appeared to pivot toward trying to bend Iran to his will through economic sanctions. He warned that if Iran retaliated for the new strikes, "they will be hit again at a much harder and higher level."

Explosion near German train station injures 2

BERLIN (AP) — An explosion near a German train station followed by the discovery of a suspicious object caused police to temporarily close the transport hub in the southern city of Augsburg on Wednesday morning.

Later in the morning, police said the suspicious object had been identified as harmless and that the train station was reopened again at 10 a.m. and trains starting running again.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 30 of 67

"We can give the all-clear — the object we found in front of the main train station was harmless, and we have reopened the station," police spokesperson Timo Kufner told The Associated Press. "The train are running again, too."

An unidentified object exploded in a passageway near the station at around 3:15 a.m., according to officials, causing minor injuries to two people. The people injured were a 17-year-old girl and an 18-year-old man, both of whom are Ukrainian citizens, the German news agency dpa reported.

Later, another second suspicious object that did not explode was discovered right at the main train station, Kufner said, leading to the shutdown of the train station at 8:30 in the morning.

Explosives experts from the Bavarian state criminal police office were investigating at the scene.

"It's still too early to say anything about a possible motive for the overnight explosion, but we are investigating," said Kufner.

Road traffic and public transportation in the vicinity of the station were disrupted in the early morning hours but later traffic was running normally again, police said.

Augsburg is a city of 308,000 residents in Bavaria, about 78 kilometers (48 miles) northwest of Munich.

Congo's Ebola outbreak shows no signs of slowing as deaths top 3,000

BUNIA, Congo (AP) — Congo's Ebola outbreak has killed more than 3,000 people out of over 6,100 confirmed cases, the latest government data showed Wednesday, as the disease is spreading at an unprecedented speed, faster than efforts to track and slow it.

Data from Congo's Ministry of Health showed the outbreak has recorded 6,186 confirmed cases, including 3,007 deaths since it was declared in mid-May. It remains the fastest-growing outbreak of Ebola ever.

The disease has continued to spread rapidly for several reasons, including conflict in the eastern region of the country where the outbreak is concentrated, attacks on health workers, miners constantly on the move, and inadequate health infrastructure.

The resumption of school in the middle of the outbreak has also raised concerns about transmission in classrooms.

The World Health Organization said the outbreak is on track to exceed the deadliest on record, West Africa's regional outbreak between 2014 and 2016, which killed 11,000 people.

There is no vaccine or approved treatment for the rare Bundibugyo virus that has sparked the current outbreak. The government is distributing the Ervebo vaccine, which has helped combat previous Ebola disease outbreaks and which the WHO said could offer some protection. The virus has spread to six provinces.

EU's Kallas calls alleged Russian drone plot 'state sponsored terrorism' as Europe mulls a response

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union's top diplomat said Wednesday that an attempted attack on a German airport blamed on Russia appears to be "state sponsored terrorism," as EU countries weighed their response.

The German government on Tuesday blamed Russia for the attempted attack at Leipzig/Halle Airport on Aug. 4 using a drone laden with explosives and announced it would shut down a Russian consulate among other measures.

The drone was found near a Ukrainian cargo plane and the device was defused. The airport is a major international freight hub and is used for providing support to Ukraine. German officials said at the time that the incident posed a new level of danger.

"It is clear that it has all the hallmarks of state sponsored terrorism. The question is: what do we do about this?" EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas told reporters before chairing a meeting of the bloc's defense ministers in Ireland.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 31 of 67

Moscow has been widely accused by Western officials of running a campaign of sabotage and disruption with the aim of undermining support for Ukraine and destabilizing European nations.

Russian President Vladimir Putin dismissed Berlin's allegations, instead claiming that Germany's government wants to distract from its own failings and dissatisfaction among voters with "the need to counter an aggressive Russia." He said that any proof being offered "has been planted."

The EU had already been planning to impose sanctions on more people over Russia's war on Ukraine and has "in the pipeline 1,600 listings for the military complex of Russia, and maybe there are more to be added," Kallas said.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot said the failed attack was part of "a long-term plan led by the Kremlin to destabilize the European Union, its democratic processes, but obviously also its support for Ukraine."

Barrot said France has summoned Russia's envoy in Paris to "protest strongly."

"We won't allow an act of such gravity without consequences," he said, adding that France wants to impose more sanctions on shadow fleet ships illicitly transporting oil to fuel the Kremlin's war on Ukraine.

The nature of the attempted attack and its attribution to Russia appear to warrant a new approach from the EU and perhaps NATO, but the member nations remain cautious about being dragged into open conflict with the nuclear armed country.

Germany insisted that it was "not at war" but had become a "daily target" of Russia's hybrid campaign.

The EU has slapped almost two dozen packages of sanctions against Russia over its war on Ukraine, targeting roughly 3,000 people and entities, including President Vladimir Putin, several oligarchs who back him and scores of Russian lawmakers.

Russian banks and financial institutions have been hit, as well as hundreds of ships that make up a shadow fleet illicitly shipping oil to fuel Putin's war effort, and many companies, notably energy firms and drone manufacturers.

The measures mostly concern asset freezes and travel bans. People and companies in countries considered backers of Russia are also on the EU list, including from Belarus, China, Iran and North Korea.

British Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband also attended the EU meeting, along with officials from Ukraine, Canada, Norway, Switzerland and Iceland.

"We see an attempt by Russia to divide us in Europe and to deter us from our support for Ukraine," Miliband told reporters.

"This attempt will fail. It will fail because we will stand up to Russian aggression. We will stand shoulder to shoulder with our friends in Ukraine," he said, for "as long as it takes for them to prevail in this conflict."

The failed attack in Germany is one of several worrying incidents or acts of sabotage reported across Europe recently, including a fire at a major drone making factory in Poland, with Russia suspected in many cases. There have also been drone incursions in Estonia and Latvia resulting from Russia's war in Ukraine.

Spain has publicly accused Russia, along with Israel, of using disinformation to incite migrants to cross from Morocco into its Ceuta exclave in northern Africa.

Sen. Ed Markey, 80, wins Mass. Democratic primary over opponent who called for generational change

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI Associated Press

U.S. Sen. Ed Markey secured the Democratic nomination in Massachusetts' Senate primary Tuesday, once again fending off a push for generational change as he seeks a third term.

Markey, 80, defeated U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton, 47, who had attempted to argue that it was time to do away with the "status quo" in his pursuit to oust the octogenarian.

Yet Markey successfully pointed to Moulton's more moderate positions to argue that it was Moulton — not the older incumbent — who was out of touch with the state's voters. Perhaps no other issue defined the race more than transgender rights, and Markey repeatedly hit Moulton for previously saying he would not want his daughters to play against transgender athletes.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 32 of 67

"Massachusetts needs a senator who stands up and fights back, a senator who never forgets who they are fighting for," Markey said during his victory speech. "That has been the mission of my life, and it always will be."

In heavily Democratic Massachusetts, the primary is considered the most critical election hurdle, where Democratic winners are expected to prevail in the general election in November. Markey will face Republican John Deaton, who lost to Sen. Elizabeth Warren by about 20 points in 2024 and was unopposed in his primary Tuesday.

Markey has been a fixture in Massachusetts politics since the 1970s, prompting Moulton to make his "status quo" arguments on the campaign trail and to question Markey's accomplishments during his lengthy time in office.

"Generational change isn't about compromising, to do the small things better," Markey said Tuesday. "It's about fighting to do the big things best."

In a concession speech, Moulton said he would now support Markey.

"Challenging the establishment and calling for a new generation of leadership isn't easy. But it is necessary," Moulton told supporters. "We started conversations that needed to happen."

"We didn't achieve our goal tonight, but I am confident others will be inspired to buck the system when they're told to wait their turn," he added.

The Senate race was not the only generational challenge for Democrats on the ballot. Similar dynamics played out in several congressional races, but ultimately, the older incumbents won Tuesday. In the 8th Congressional District, longtime incumbent Rep. Stephen Lynch defeated Patrick Roath. And in the 1st Congressional District of western Massachusetts, Rep. Richard Neal defeated public school teacher Jeremie Whalen to advance to the general election.

Moulton's comments on transgender children were an issue

During the campaign Markey repeatedly pointed out that Moulton, in 2024, raised eyebrows among some in the party for saying he did not want his daughters playing sports against transgender girls.

Critics said he was echoing President Donald Trump's talking points against allowing transgender athletes in girls' and women's sports.

Moulton later apologized for his remarks, saying it was not his intention to hurt the transgender community and stressing his support for other transgender rights bills.

"If you're in the trans community or you're a trans kid feeling the weight of the Trump administration and the Supreme Court, you matter," Moulton said during an August debate. "You're valued, and I will always have your back."

Moulton, who enlisted in the Marines after the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, and served four tours of duty in Iraq, was first elected to Massachusetts' 6th Congressional District in 2014. He launched a 2020 presidential campaign but dropped it after a few months.

Markey was elected to the Senate in 2013. Before that he represented Massachusetts' 7th Congressional District from 1976 to 2013.

Markey notably fended off a challenge in 2020 from Rep. Joe Kennedy III, a younger rival from one of the nation's most famous political families. Markey did so by aligning himself with the liberal wing of the Democratic Party.

Antoine Hilaire, a 76-year-old Democrat who voted for Markey in Brockton on Tuesday, said being older can be a positive because it offers people experience and wisdom.

"If the older one is doing the better job, I don't know," he said. "He's doing a good job. It's not a big, big, big problem."

Longtime Democratic House incumbents also defeated younger challengers

Lynch, 71, has held the 8th District seat in south Boston since 2001. He won Tuesday's primary against Roath, a 39-year-old lawyer who contended that it is time to end "wait-your-turn" politics. Lynch stressed the value of experience inside Congress.

Lynch has fended off other youth challenges in the past, but Roath's campaign hoped for a boost of

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 33 of 67

excitement after longtime Democratic incumbent U.S. Rep. John Larson was defeated by former Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin in August in neighboring Connecticut. Like Roath, Bronin called for the need for generational change while running against an establishment politician.

In the 1st District Democratic primary in western Massachusetts, Neal, 77, bested Whalen, 39.

Neal, known as the dean of the New England House delegation, was first elected in 1988. Whalen ran to the left of Neal, calling for Medicare for All and questioning whether Neal has done enough to oppose Trump's agenda.

Whalen was endorsed by Our Revolution, a progressive organization founded by Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

Some missing tourists make contact as Nepal flood death toll tops 1,100

By SHRISTI KAFLE Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Some tourists previously reported missing in Nepal have made contact with authorities, officials said Wednesday, as search efforts continued following catastrophic floods that killed at least 1,118 people and left more than 3,900 missing.

Nepal's Foreign Ministry said 324 foreign nationals had been rescued so far, while about 590 from 39 countries remained missing a week after the Aug. 26 floods.

Missing tourists make contact

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Wednesday that the number of Australians missing in the disaster had fallen from 43 to 38 after five were confirmed safe overnight.

"Amidst all of this tragedy, we are seeing some positive news. Today, another five Australians have been confirmed safe," Albanese told reporters in Palau, where he is attending a regional summit.

"We hope, of course, for positive news further, and we're doing everything we can to work with authorities," Albanese added.

Sunil Sharma, a spokesperson for the Nepal Tourism Board, said at least five other foreign tourists who were previously reported missing had contacted authorities by email or telephone in recent days.

China builds access road for rescue crews

On the Chinese side, rescue crews completed a makeshift road to the disaster site at Gyirong Port on the Nepal border, state broadcaster CCTV reported Wednesday.

Crews have been clearing access for heavy machinery to be used in the search at the border crossing complex, which was washed away by the floods. The road leading to the crossing was destroyed and buried under water, mud and rocks.

China separately reported 16 deaths and 546 people missing as of Sunday.

The disaster began Aug. 26 in the Himalayas, when a glacial collapse sent rock, ice and meltwater into valleys below, triggering powerful floods downstream. The surge entered rivers flowing through Tibet and Nepal, causing them to rise rapidly. Floodwaters swept away homes, buildings, roads and bridges, carrying mud and rocks downstream.

Some survivors find shelter in Kathmandu

Some flood survivors are fleeing the devastation to seek shelter in Nepal's capital Kathmandu.

Around 400 survivors, mostly from the town of Timure about 110 kilometers (65 miles) west of Kathmandu, have been staying at the Yellow Gumba monastery, grieving lost family members and homes while relying on one another for support. The shelter is being organized by locals and relatives, with relief supplies coming from individuals and charity organizations.

Among those at the monastery is 21-year-old Riya Tamang, who fled with her 10-month-old baby as floodwaters approached.

"I was the last one to leave the house. It was so difficult to escape," she said.

Tamang lost her grandparents in the disaster. Her husband, who works as a cook in Gyirong town on the Chinese side of the border, also survived, and the couple now stays in touch through video calls.

Oil giant Chevron is expected to announce it will expand operations in Venezuela, US official says

By AAMER MADHANI and COLLIN BINKLEY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Oil giant Chevron is planning to expand its operations in Venezuela, a U.S. official said Tuesday, just days after President Donald Trump announced an ambitious deal to develop the nation's oil reserves and give the Pentagon a stake in the profits.

The official, who briefed reporters on the expected announcement, said the company's officials and Energy Secretary Chris Wright are expected to visit Venezuela on Wednesday where the new investment will be formally unveiled. The official spoke on condition of anonymity under ground rules set by the White House for the call.

Chevron is the second-largest U.S. oil company and the only one with a major presence in Venezuela. Chevron did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The announcement comes after the White House confirmed on Monday it is partnering with North American Blue Energy Partners (NABEP) as part of President Donald Trump's push to tap into Venezuela's oil industry.

The sweeping agreement has been met with skepticism from analysts who say it will take years to revive Venezuela's production. They have questioned whether Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodríguez has the legal authority to give the company 100-year rights over 17 oil fields with reserves of 65 billion barrels — and whether future Venezuelan or American administrations would overturn the agreement.

US official says private operator was vetted ahead of deal

NABEP, owned by Venezuelan businessman Alejandro Betancourt, is already the second largest operator in Venezuela. The deal with the U.S. government would create a new company, where the Pentagon would take a 35% ownership stake, and the State Department would have the right to buy 20% of the oil produced at cost.

The U.S. administration sought to defend its decision to partner with Betancourt, who has faced criminal investigations for alleged money laundering in Spain and Switzerland, according to multiple media reports. No formal charges were ever filed. The official said that Betancourt was vetted and the administration found that "no U.S. laws were violated."

At the same time, the official described Betancourt as the only viable partner available for the job, saying that "you have to work with the factors that you have in place."

The U.S. government is not investing money in the new company, the official told reporters, but its backing will help the company attract investment to ramp up production.

Analysts say that the deal seems certain to face legal challenges and potentially questions of legitimacy. The Trump administration negotiated the agreement with Rodríguez, who took power after the January military operation to capture Nicolás Maduro and spirit him to the United States to face federal narcoterrorism and drug trafficking charges.

The Venezuelan Constitution states that contracts of this kind with foreign governments must also be approved by the National Assembly, which did not occur.

But the official said that agreement is a partnership with North American Blue Energy Partners, a private entity which is headquartered in Barbados and has its primary regional office and operations in Caracas, Venezuela.

Deal being pitched as a step toward stability, democracy for Venezuelans

The Trump administration wants elections to happen as quickly as feasible, but is aiming to maintain stability as it helps Venezuela transition following decades of autocratic rule, the official said.

The official argued that maintaining stability during such transitions "almost invariably requires you to work with elements of the existing structure, even as you are creating a new one."

The Pentagon's role in the deal comes through its Office of Strategic Capital, which was created under

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 35 of 67

former President Joe Biden to invest in technology needed for national security.

A second U.S. official speaking on condition of anonymity described the Venezuela agreement as "a very standard deal" and said the office has made several similar ones since Trump returned to office.

Trump says other companies are readying for business

Trump has had his eyes on Venezuela's oil since Maduro's capture, and his aides call it a path away from reliance on oil from the Middle East. Trump has been pressing to get U.S. businesses to restore a presence in the country. President Hugo Chávez completed the nationalization of Venezuela's oil industry in 2007, leading major players like Exxon and ConocoPhillips to leave Caracas.

Talking to reporters at the White House on Monday, Trump suggested that other oil companies were readying for business in Venezuela. "We have Exxon going in, we have Chevron going in. We have our big oil companies going in," he said. Trump in January said he was inclined to leave Exxon out of Venezuela after CEO Darren Woods called the country "uninvestable."

A spokesman for Exxon said Tuesday, "Nothing has changed" on the company's position regarding Venezuela.

Chevron has been the only major American oil company actively operating in Venezuela since the nationalization.

Trump was scheduled to meet with a group of large and small oil refiners on Tuesday to discuss ways to increase America's capacity to refine oil into gasoline.

The White House has said that increasing the number of refineries and expanding the capacity at existing facilities would eventually reduce prices for consumers. The administration also sees the need for more refineries to process oil from Venezuela.

Global warming will exceed limit, UN says in a report that maps path to get back below danger zone

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

In a strategic retreat in the fight against climate change, the United Nations has acknowledged that Earth has lost its chance to prevent some of the worst of global warming's harms. So now the world must figure out how to get temperatures below the danger zone and back to safety, officials say.

Earth is soon going to exceed the safe temperature threshold agreed upon by the world in the 2015 Paris climate accord because of warming from the burning of coal, oil and gas, according to a bleak first-of-its-kind report issued by the United Nations Environment Programme Wednesday.

Instead of giving up, scientists and U.N. officials recommend trying to limit excessive warming and then bring the temperature back down to the agreed-upon threshold. But it still will mean decades of increased weather-related disasters, rising seas, extinctions and melting ice and glaciers.

"Humanity is speeding past the limit to avoid climate catastrophe," United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said.

After a period of over-the-limit warming, the new strategy envisions getting back below the limit by ending fossil fuel use and developing some kind of way to suck industries' carbon dioxide out of the air.

"It's a reality check. We have to live with this warmer world," said report co-author Richard Betts, a climate scientist at the University of Exeter. "But there's still a lot we can do to limit warming."

Passing the longtime warming threshold

After the Paris climate accord, the United Nations ordered its climate science arm to study different warming limits. A goal of 1.5 Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) above mid-19th century temperatures became generally accepted after the scientists found dramatic impacts that affect people and the planet at 2 degrees Celsius (3.8 degrees Fahrenheit) but not at 1.5 degrees.

The world is now at 1.4 C (2.5 F) above pre-industrial levels, some scientists have calculated. The measure is based on a 20-year average, rather than a single year's temperatures.

Despite experts saying there's no way to limit warming to 1.5 degrees, U.N. officials long maintained the 1.5 window was still open. Wednesday's report finally admitted that the world will cross the 1.5 threshold

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 36 of 67

"in the next few years."

The report said the most optimistic scenario has warming peaking at 1.8 C (3.2 F) around mid-century if countries pursue ambitious climate goals, but that governments' current policies should push temperatures to 2.6 C (4.7 F) above pre-industrial levels by 2100.

So instead of preventing warming of 1.5 degrees, now the U.N. said it wants policymakers to "prepare for and navigate a future" in which the globe crosses that limit and then corrects course and cools temperatures. The report envisions that global temperatures will pass 1.5 "within the next few years," follow a hump-shaped path of more warming, peak, then gradually cool to below the 1.5 mark, ideally by the end of the century. The report and experts call it "overshoot."

"Let's be very clear, 1.5 target is still the goal. But now we need to approach it differently from above," said UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen.

The 1.5 limit is not "some magical climate cliff" where it's just game over, said University of Victoria climate scientist Andrew Weaver, who wasn't part of the study. "Every tenth of a degree we avoid still means less damage."

Limiting how high temperatures go past threshold is key

It's most important to first limit the new peak temperature and then reduce the amount of time above 1.5 degrees, Andersen said.

But the world likely will be in that overshoot period for "many, many decades," Betts said.

Every five years of delay in reducing emissions adds at least a tenth of a degree to peak warming, said report co-author Joeri Rogelj, a climate scientist at Imperial College London.

"If we act now we can limit overshoot," the report said. "Not a safe world, but safer than remaining above" 1.5 degrees for the long term.

"This is among the bleakest U.N. climate reports I have read. It carries the unmistakable tone of desperation, frustration and urgency — but not resignation," Weaver said.

Climate scientist Bill Hare, CEO of Climate Analytics, said that "although UNEP does a good job of describing the hole we've dug ourselves into, it does a poor job of showing us that there's a way out."

Adapting to a deadlier, hungrier, thirstier world

Governments need to increase efforts to adapt to worsening warming, which hits the poor hardest, "because some impacts simply cannot be avoided," Andersen said.

The report calls this phase "coping and containment."

During this overshoot period, more people will die or get sick because of the worsening climate change and its extreme weather, the report said. Food production will drop, people will go hungry, water shortages will worsen, economies will be hurt and species like coral will go extinct, the report said.

Although the triggers behind the recent deadly Nepal flooding that came as part of a Himalayan glacier dislodging are complex, Betts said "unfortunately we do expect to see more of such things and this is exactly why we need to limit peak warming."

The report warns of "tipping points" with irreversible and cascading effects, including the loss of the West Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets, the loss of the Amazon rain forest and the shutdown of the Atlantic Ocean circulation system that keeps much of Europe warm.

"Some locations might become more or less uninsurable or even uninhabitable," the report said.

The last phase in overshoot is cooling the planet by removing carbon dioxide from the air and storing it somewhere. The report said the traditional approach of this is planting more trees, but it says planting trees could, at most, shave a tenth of a degree off global temperatures. So the authors said more novel carbon removal approaches will be needed.

Other scientists called that unreliable and expensive.

"We were unable to stop the runaway train of global emissions to avoid 1.5 C of warming," said Stanford University climate scientist Rob Jackson, who wasn't part of the report. "Now overshoot scenarios require us to stop the train quickly and to back it up. Is it our best hope? Absolutely. Is it likely? Absolutely not."

German companies under pressure to adapt as China challenges them at their own game

By DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writer

MOOSBURG, Germany (AP) — The heart of the German economy is making and exporting the big-ticket, complex goods that make global business run: everything from cars and locomotives to factory machinery, aircraft and construction equipment.

That model for growth is under serious pressure from a new competitor whose exports can often match or approach Germany's in quality and sell for far less: China.

The China shock — as economists call it — is emerging as a key reason for Germany's chronic economic stagnation since the COVID-19 pandemic. The sluggish economy has helped make Chancellor Friedrich Merz's governing coalition unpopular ahead of an election Sunday in the eastern region of Saxony-Anhalt in which the far-right Alternative for Germany has its best chance yet of getting its first state governor.

German companies once reaped fat profits selling to China. But the tables have turned as Beijing supports companies in targeted sectors — often where German companies make competing goods. China's goods cannot find enough buyers in China's currently tepid economy, so they are shipped to foreign markets, including Europe.

Economic stagnation sours the mood ahead of regional elections

The German economy — Europe's biggest — has stagnated for several years, shrinking in 2023 and 2024 and showing only 0.2% growth last year. Although unemployment rate of 4% is lower than the EU average, Germans can see the unsettling headlines about job reductions at companies that have defined the German economy for decades: 50,000 at Volkswagen, with media reports of plans for more, 8,000 buyouts at BMW by the end of next year, a reduction of 13,000 at auto technology firm Bosch by 2030. And inflation has run ahead of wage increases after the pandemic, with last year's real wages only just catching up to where they were in 2019.

Costs must come down "in an environment where the Chinese total market is down by 20%, and Chinese competitors are increasing exports and thereby competitive pressure in Europe," said Volkswagen's finance chief, Arno Antlitz.

Of the world's major economies, Germany has been hit the hardest

Germany's economy relies on exports that are similar to the kind of manufactured goods that Beijing is now targeting for support. Other major economies such as Britain, Italy and France have smaller manufacturing sectors, while U.S. tariffs block many Chinese goods, above all autos.

Germany now buys more from China than it sells in precisely the categories where German companies once dominated: cars, trucks, buses and trains, aircraft, factory machinery and medical devices. "China has already eaten much of German industry's lunch and is preparing to start on dinner," wrote economists Brad Setser and Sander Tordoir.

One answer: If you can't beat them, join them.

Jungheinrich AG, a German maker of forklifts and warehouse vehicles, is partnering with Chinese manufacturer EP Equipment to make AntOn, an entry-level forklift that can match competitors on price. The partnership is taking advantage of EP's large scale and lower production costs in China, and pairing it with Jungheinrich's global sales force and reputation as one of the world's three leading makers of warehouse vehicles.

AntOn's lineup may not quite match the features available in strictly German-made vehicles — but they're good enough and half the price. So AntOn, painted a bright purple color to differentiate it from Jungheinrich's high-end yellow machines, has a simple, robust design with basic levers instead of a joystick, no compartment for a phone or wallet and an uncushioned seat. They sell for much less than typical Jungheinrich machinery, but it's aimed at customers who may not need to run them 24/7.

"The challenge is, there comes a massive wave with Chinese products and Chinese offerings into Europe, but also into the international markets. And the key question is, how do you react?" said Chief Sales Officer Nadine Despineaux at the company's plant in Moosburg near Munich.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 38 of 67

She views the demand for entry-level or “mid-tech” vehicles as a business opportunity to reach new customers and markets. AntOn “is a good combination of German engineering, market access and customer proximity, which we bring to the table, and highly efficient production sites, which we use in China.”

Volkswagen has adopted an “in China, for China” approach, setting up a vehicle development center in Hefei to design vehicles to the local market.

German policymakers are attempting to avoid a repeat of what happened with the country’s solar industry. Germany pioneered solar panel adoption in the early part of this century, but lower-priced Chinese products drove several German manufacturers into bankruptcy. Now, most solar panels in the country are imported from China.

Chinese companies do get help, but must survive ferocious competition at home

Chinese industrial policy means key sectors get many different kinds of support, including easy credit, inexpensive raw materials, cheap land and, in some cases, “made in China” requirements. Chinese workers earn less than those in Europe and economists say China works to keep its currency artificially low, making its goods more competitive overseas.

But China’s export prowess is based on more than government help. Chinese companies face brutal competition on price in a sluggish economy at home, forcing companies to keep costs down while racing to adopt new technology.

China rejects the criticism of its trading partners. A recent Ministry of Commerce report titled “China’s Position on the So-Called Excess Capacity Issue” says discussions surrounding a China shock “falsely” describe China’s industrial development as a threat to Western economies.

From its end, the German government has sought to improve growth by enacting a 500 billion euro (\$579 billion) fund to pay for new infrastructure such as roads, bridges and rail lines. A package proposed in July includes income tax cuts for mid- and lower-income taxpayers and reductions in red tape.

The solution for German companies may be in Brussels

But Setser, the economist and a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, says the trade statistics show that the China shock is a dominant reason for Germany’s economic malaise. And the answer for Germany may be out of the hands of German industry — and the ultimate responsibility of EU trade policy run by the European Commission in Brussels. The Commission has imposed narrowly tailored tariffs, or import taxes, on some Chinese goods such as electric autos and platforms that lift workers at construction sites.

“We do think that Europe needs a tougher trade policy, that it needs to insulate its market from some of the spillovers from China’s own industrial policies,” said Setser. “There has to be a bit more symmetry ... that the rest of the world will not remain open to a China that itself is not open to new imports.”

AP Exclusive: Nurse who saved baby from Pakistan hospital fire wishes she could have saved the rest

By MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Razia Noreen and her colleagues had just checked on the 15 newborns in their care at the hospital nursery in Islamabad and were preparing injections for some of them in an adjacent room when she saw something unusual: flames.

The nurse dropped the syringe and ran into the nursery. She lifted a baby into her arms, and pressed the child against her chest to shield it from the spreading fire at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, where the nursery was already filling with thick smoke.

Eight seconds later — as was captured on dramatic security camera footage — she emerged and handed the newborn to a doctor in a nearby room. Without thinking, she then turned back toward the flames, but it was too late.

“I wanted to save the others,” Noreen told The Associated Press at the hospital staff hostel where she lives. “I did not lose hope,” she said.

But the nursery was rapidly becoming impossible to enter. Noreen and another nurse dropped to the

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 39 of 67

floor, where the smoke was thinner, and tried to crawl through the doorway.

In her first interview with international media — after briefly speaking to local media at the weekend — Noreen described how she could see nothing ahead of her. The smoke choked her, and she began coughing so violently that she struggled to breathe.

Still, she tried to move forward until the flames forced her back.

Within minutes, she learned that the other 14 newborns were dead. She collapsed to the floor in shock, she said.

The baby she carried out was the sole survivor.

A national hero

A 51-second clip of security camera footage from the Aug. 26 fire showed Noreen running into the nursery and emerging with the newborn in her arms. A government inquiry said she was inside the room for just eight seconds and that the conditions in the nursery “deteriorated catastrophically within approximately two minutes.”

Those eight seconds have led many Pakistanis to hail Noreen as a national hero.

The government has announced that she will receive the Sitara-i-Khidmat, or Star of Service, one of Pakistan’s most prestigious civil awards, along with a financial reward.

Hospital and district officials initially said an exploding air-conditioning unit caused the fire, and later the hospital said a blast involving a nebulizer sparked the blaze.

A government inquiry identified serious failures in fire safety and emergency response at the major government hospital. Eight officials have been suspended and disciplinary proceedings initiated against them.

Nurse says it was her ‘duty’

Noreen is a Christian, part of a small religious minority in overwhelmingly Muslim Pakistan. Members of the country’s Christian community have joined Pakistanis across religious lines in praising her bravery.

But Noreen does not describe what she did as an act of heroism. She speaks of it as the instinctive response of a nurse and a mother.

“Can any mother watch a child burning in a fire?” she asked. “No,” she answered. “Mothers do not do favors for their children. It is their duty.”

Her rescue has been celebrated across Pakistan, but Noreen remains consumed by the babies she could not reach.

She said she has barely slept since the fire. When she approaches the nursery, memories of the flames and the children overwhelm her. At times, she said, she feels as if she can still hear their cries and collapses to the ground.

“The deaths of those children have traumatized me,” she said. “It may take me years to recover.”

Noreen said she was still physically ill from the ordeal. She told AP she had a fever of 103 Fahrenheit (39.4 Celsius) but agreed to the interview because she wanted to explain what happened. “Those babies do not let me sleep,” she said.

She said nurses become like mothers when newborns are brought into their care and separated from their own mothers. They feed the babies, administer their medication, and watch over them.

She said she just acted as a mom

Noreen said it took her only a moment to decide to enter the burning nursery. “I quickly decided that I would do my job,” she said. “The mothers had entrusted their babies to us.” “I acted as a mother,” she added. “I did not care about my life.”

Noreen said she was grateful to the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Pakistani people for honoring her.

“But I did not do anything for a reward or money,” she said. Noreen said that when she entered the burning nursery, she did not know whether she would come out alive. “I had only one mission: This is the time to save lives,” she said. “My aim was to save all the children. I did not think about my own safety for even a second.”

Then her voice broke again. She had a message for the mothers whose 14 newborns died in the fire.

"Please forgive me for not being able to save your babies," Noreen said through tears.

Edouard weakens into a tropical depression after landfall but still dumping rain into Texas

By JAMIE STENGLE and LEKAN OYEKANMI Associated Press

PORT ARTHUR, Texas (AP) — The former Tropical Storm Edouard weakened into a depression Tuesday night while unleashing heavy rains and strong winds on parts of Texas, knocking out power to thousands, toppling trees and flooding roads.

The storm downgraded hours after making landfall near the Texas-Louisiana border with maximum sustained winds of 60 mph (95 kph), according to the National Hurricane Center. Forecasters said the system would keep losing strength as it pushed inland but would likely continue to produce heavy rains and possible flooding into Wednesday.

Meanwhile, a burst of tropical weather continued in the Pacific, where three named storms were churning in open waters.

The hurricane center expected Edouard to dump 3 to 7 inches (8 to 17 centimeters) of rain with up to 12 inches (30 centimeters) in some areas.

Storm makes landfall along Texas-Louisiana line

As the center of the storm passed over Beaumont, Texas, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) northeast of Houston, the city's offices were shuttered and the Texas Office of Emergency Management warned residents to stay off the road.

Throughout the city were downed trees blocking roads, traffic signals that weren't working and flooded underpasses, Beaumont Police said in a post on social media.

About 32,000 utility customers were without electricity in Jefferson County, which includes Beaumont, according to poweroutage.com.

Mike Gilbert decided ahead of the storm to close his surf shop on Texas' Crystal Beach because he didn't want to risk his employees having a difficult time getting home. But, he said, it had ended up just being gray skies and drizzly rain there Tuesday as Edouard made landfall about 60 miles (96 kilometers) northeast of his shop.

"You literally never know," Gilbert said. "It could have all of a sudden moved over 50 miles and picked up 20 mph in wind and it could have been a whole different story."

In Cameron, Louisiana, the winds had picked up by Tuesday morning and rain was coming through on and off, said Connor Salvador, who owns an RV park there near the coast. He said while there could be a "little bit" of flooding if they get a lot of rain, he wasn't too worried about Edouard.

"We're pretty used to all these types of storms that come through," he said.

Several storms in the Pacific Ocean

Forecasters said newly formed Hurricane Lowell in the Pacific Ocean was expected to remain several hundred miles away from Hawaii for the next several days at least, but swells from the hurricane were likely to impact parts of the islands beginning Wednesday.

"This hurricane is likely to increase the surf and make for dangerous beach conditions and marine conditions for any boaters near the Hawaiian islands over the next few days," said Andrew Hagan, a forecaster with the National Hurricane Center.

Tropical Storm Marie formed in the Pacific Ocean early Tuesday well offshore of southwest Mexico, the center said. Forecasters said it was expected to become a hurricane by Wednesday night, and swells generated by the storm were expected to affect parts of the coast in southwestern Mexico and the Baja California peninsula over the next few days.

Elsewhere in the Pacific, Karina became a hurricane Sunday, fueled by warm waters far from any shore. It strengthened Monday into a powerful Category 4 storm but forecasters said Tuesday that it was expected to weaken.

What happens next if the jury in the Lindsay Clancy murder trial can't reach a verdict?

PLYMOUTH, Mass. (AP) — A Massachusetts jury plans to deliberate a fifth day Wednesday on whether Lindsay Clancy was criminally responsible when she strangled her three children in 2023, amid conflicting testimony about her postpregnancy mental health.

What happens if they can't reach a verdict?

A mistrial will be declared and the case essentially goes back to the same status as before the trial, with the 36-year-old former labor and delivery nurse charged with murder and held at a psychiatric hospital awaiting resolution of the criminal case.

Clancy will likely go back on trial, but prosecutors have options

Prosecutors will decide whether to try again with a new jury. If they do, the jury selection process will begin again and a new trial will be scheduled.

Prosecutors could also offer a plea deal to Clancy, said Brad Bailey, a Boston defense attorney and former prosecutor who is not involved in the case.

"Any time the threat of a retrial with murder one hanging over the client is re-interjected, defense lawyers will, at the very least, explore whether or not there's any interest in a resolution," Bailey said.

Clancy doesn't deny strangling her children at their home south of Boston, but says postpartum psychosis led to her actions. After the killings, her husband found her badly injured in the yard, where she landed after jumping from a second-story window. She was left paralyzed from the waist down.

Prosecutors argue she knew what she was doing.

Though less likely, the district attorney's office could decide to not retry the case.

"Sometimes they decide not to, because of the sense that there may be the same result each time they try it, and because of the expenditures involved in trying the case to begin with, particularly when you have expert witnesses," he said. "Those are going to be expensive cases."

Clancy's defense will likely push to drop the charges

Bailey expects her defense attorney to aggressively lobby against another trial, making a case to the district attorney's office along the lines of: "Why are you doing this to this poor woman? She's still clearly obviously suffering. She's been punished with her paralysis and, worse than that, the loss of her three children."

A conviction could mean life in prison for Clancy, while an acquittal might lead to confinement in a mental health facility.

Karen Read was another high-profile mistrial in Massachusetts

Karen Read was charged in the 2022 death of her Boston police officer boyfriend. Jurors in her 2024 trial deadlocked on the fifth day of deliberations, leading to a mistrial.

Prosecutors chose to retry the case, but a different jury last year found Read not guilty of second-degree murder and manslaughter charges.

Like Read's case, Clancy's has drawn a divided public reaction.

Clancy's livestreamed trial drew attention to maternal mental health after childbirth and was closely watched by a polarized public. Clancy's sympathizers saw her as a loving mom who had realized something was badly wrong in the months ahead of the killings and sought help, including checking herself in to a psychiatric hospital. Her detractors said she deserved to be punished for an evil and selfish act.

Judge sends Charlie Kirk murder case to trial with defendant facing potential death penalty

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM and GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

PROVO, Utah (AP) — The murder case against the Utah man accused of killing Charlie Kirk last year is headed for trial, and the defendant could face the death penalty if he's convicted.

Utah District Judge Tony Graf on Tuesday sided with prosecutors who said they had "a mountain of

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 42 of 67

evidence" that defendant Tyler Robinson fatally shot the conservative activist as he spoke to a crowd of thousands at Utah Valley University last September.

Robinson pleaded not guilty to all counts, including aggravated murder, following Graf's decision. The 23-year-old defendant turned himself in a day after the shooting, and his lawyers have not offered alternative theories for Kirk's death.

The defense team tried to block a trial or at least take the death penalty off the table, arguing that prosecutors failed to show Kirk's shooting placed others around him at risk of death. That's an aggravating factor under state law that makes Robinson eligible for capital punishment.

Kirk's family called the ruling "an important step in our family's pursuit of justice."

"Every step in this process carries the weight of all that Charlie's murder has taken from his family, especially his children who will grow up without their father," they said in a statement.

Prosecutors said Robinson shot Kirk from a rooftop more than 400 feet (122 meters) away, knowing he could have missed and killed others at the open-air event.

"Tyler James Robinson shot and killed Charlie Kirk because he disagreed with him, and he did it by firing a high-powered rifle into a crowd of over 3,000 people, which created a great risk of death that anyone would know about," said Ryan McBride, a prosecutor with the Utah County Attorney's Office.

Graf had the option to send the case to trial on a lesser charge of murder, which carries a minimum sentence of 15 years and a maximum of life in prison. He said his decision to approve the aggravated murder charge was based on the positions of several people in and around a tent where Kirk was speaking, among other factors.

Heavy security surrounds the courthouse

The hearing Tuesday in state court came after prosecutors in July spent five days presenting evidence, including DNA and a handwritten note they allege Robinson left for his romantic partner that read, "I had the opportunity to take out Charlie Kirk, and I took it."

Kirk's parents, Robert and Kathryn Kirk, entered the heavily secured courthouse arm in arm before the hearing in Provo. His widow, Erika Kirk, was seated beside them. The family stepped out briefly while a prosecutor described the shooting. Erika Kirk and her mother-in-law held each other in a long embrace while the judge read his ruling.

A few dozen local members of Charlie Kirk's organization, Turning Point USA, assembled outside the courthouse Tuesday evening to watch the family leave and express support.

Robinson had no visible reaction to the ruling. Tears welled in his mother's eyes as Graf read it aloud.

Defense says others were not endangered

Staci Visser, an attorney for Robinson, argued that prosecutors were trying to "shoehorn" the case into Utah's aggravated murder statute. Prior case law required prosecutors to show that there was a high probability — not merely a possibility — that other people could have been killed, she noted.

Kirk was seated on a stage in an elevated position, not immediately near anyone else, when he was shot once in the neck, she said.

"There is one shot. There is one bullet. There is one victim," Visser said. "There is zero evidence that there was any action taken towards other people."

Prosecutor Chad Grunander noted that the alleged murder weapon — a bolt-action rifle — was loaded with additional rounds that had not been fired, saying Robinson "came prepared to shoot again."

Investigators presented DNA analyses in July that they said linked Robinson to the rifle and a tool he allegedly used to engrave the bullet cartridges. Defense attorneys questioned the reliability of the DNA tests.

Prosecutors allege a political motive

Robinson also faces potential sentencing enhancements if prosecutors can show he targeted Kirk for his political beliefs.

Before his death, Kirk and Turning Point USA galvanized the conservative youth vote to help President Donald Trump win a second term.

Prosecutors argued that a bullet found in the rifle, engraved with "Hey Facist! CATCH!", shows that Kirk

was targeted for how the defendant perceived his politics. They have also alleged Robinson wrote in a text message about Kirk: "I had enough of his hatred. Some hate can't be negotiated out."

Defense attorneys argued that prosecutors do not have strong enough evidence to prove a political motivation.

Bessent says 19 finance ministers agreed 'cheap exports' are unsustainable, but China dissented

By FATIMA HUSSEIN and CHRIS RUGABER Associated Press

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (AP) — Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Tuesday that 19 of the members of the G20 had agreed to address streams of "cheap exports" that cause global economic imbalances, but said China had dissented.

Bessent made his comments at the end of a two-day meeting with finance ministers and central bankers where he tried to focus on growth, telling reporters he had urged some of his G20 counterparts to take a page from the Trump administration's playbook of using tariffs and other measures to crack down on trade imbalances.

"We believe that non-market-based economies pushing out a never-ending stream of cheap exports is not sustainable," Bessent told reporters, describing the sentiment that all but one G20 member had agreed to.

"It is clear that the country with the world's largest and unsustainable current account surplus, the People's Republic of China, was the dissenter," Bessent said.

The Trump administration, echoing many economists, has blamed China for trade imbalances that have left it with a large trade surplus while the U.S. has a sizable deficit. At the closing press conference Tuesday, Bessent also previewed the upcoming meeting between President Donald Trump and China's President Xi Jinping.

He told reporters he had warned other nations at the beginning of Trump's second term that the new U.S. "tariff wall" would mean that Chinese goods would flood their markets.

"And unfortunately, I was right," Bessent said. "The rest of the world probably needs to take a hard look at what they should be doing to protect their citizens' jobs, their manufacturing base, so that everything they do doesn't get offshored."

Bessent says AI companies must explain themselves better

He also said Trump and Xi would discuss artificial intelligence policy when they meet later this month, saying more guardrails were needed to prevent "non-state actors" from building their own models.

The treasury secretary added that he has made the point directly to industry leaders that AI companies, "whether it is the builders of the data centers, whether it is the labs themselves, have done a horrendous job, horrendous job of explaining themselves to the American people."

"They're going to have to take some of the blame, and they are going to have to convince the American people that all the benefits will not accrue to a small group."

After the press conference, Trump posted on his social media site that "very productive and positive conversations were had" during the G20 meetings. He added, "Other Countries should follow our lead."

The Trump administration's tariff policies have been criticized by economists and politicians for raising costs for U.S. consumers and, in many cases, for punishing allies. The Tax Foundation, an independent think tank, found that the tariffs imposed by the Trump administration throughout 2025 raised the overall retail price of imported consumer goods by roughly 7% relative to pre-tariff trends.

Ultimately, the U.S. Supreme Court in February decided that the sweeping global tariffs that Trump imposed under an emergency powers law were unconstitutional. The Trump administration has been overhauling its approach, and is eyeing an additional 7.5% tariff on Chinese imports after investigating alleged excess industrial capacity and forced-labor regulations.

US and China found some common ground on Iran

Bessent met with his counterparts from China at the summit and said there was some common ground on Iran, specifically that Iran "cannot have a nuclear weapon" and that oil and other goods should flow

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 44 of 67

freely through the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has restricted.

Bessent has said China's trade surplus, which reached a record-high \$1.2 trillion in 2025, is a barrier to global economic growth — as well as what he calls excessive regulation.

Global debt has reached a record high of \$353 trillion, with the U.S. debt reaching a record \$40 trillion in August. Markets have been concerned about a sell-off in U.S. government bonds, but Bessent told reporters, "I don't think we're in any kind of dire situation" on bond markets.

Meanwhile, the presence of Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov continued to agitate attendees of the conference. Siluanov met with Bessent on Monday on the sidelines of the meeting, but was not included in the traditional "family photo" of ministers.

Canadian Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne said Russia's attendance at the G20 meeting "created a lot of discomfort around the table, not only from Canada, but from colleagues around the table."

"We have made sure our discomfort is being heard by colleagues with respect to who is in attendance at the meeting," Champagne said.

The European Commissioner for the Economy, Valdis Dombrovskis, said during a press conference Tuesday that it is not the time to "normalize" relations with Russia.

Bessent defended the inclusion of Siluanov, arguing that "if the sides don't talk, if we are not engaged, then how can it be solved?"

"I know that some Europeans had a sour taste" about the invitation, Bessent said. "If both fighters go in a corner, then there will never be a resolution to this horrible conflict," he said.

America's story intertwined with its military history, but a military-civilian disconnect persists

By DEEPTI HAJELA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The realization brought Qwynn Galloway-Salazar to tears.

She was looking for civilian work two decades ago after leaving the Army Reserves, but what she saw was the disconnect between her and the panel of interviewers. As a Black woman, she didn't fit the stereotypes of who veterans were or what military service looked like.

"They thought of a veteran to be a white male who served in Vietnam," said Galloway-Salazar, who has built her professional life since then around veteran issues and working to increase the public's awareness.

"I realized the minute I sat in that room that that interview panel did not know what the heck to do with me," she said. "And I remember going to my car and crying because my thought was, what am I going to do now?"

Her experience illustrates two delicate questions that the country rarely, if ever, confronts: In this experiment in democratic life that has run for 250 years, how can military and civilian life sit so far away from each other? And how can that divide be crossed?

Military service is threaded through American life

The soldiers. The sailors. The battles. The conflicts.

There is no recounting of the U.S. story where its very existence as a nation isn't intertwined with its military history, from its creation in 1776 to the expansion of its physical borders to its role in the global political and economic order.

A number of those threads can be found running through the weave of ordinary American life. Some are in the lessons American students learn and the monuments people visit. Some are in public rituals at sporting events and holiday commemorations. Some are in the way that "Thank you for your service" is a commonplace saying aimed at veterans and those in uniform.

But other threads have frayed.

In a nation that lionizes an idea of military service, most American adults don't serve, or aren't very connected to the people who do and their families to have a sense of what their lives are like. Those who do serve often end up coming from generations of the same families, or the same communities, from certain states more than others. It's a concentration that can make the responsibilities and burdens of military

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 45 of 67

life land disproportionately on them.

The public pays little attention unless there's a crisis situation, like the concerns over mental health for USS Abraham Lincoln sailors who had been on an expanded deployment as part of the U.S. war against Iran, in which 18 service members have been killed and more than 750 injured since its start six months ago.

In fabric, decaying threads can cause holes. In the U.S., there's a military-civilian divide, a gap in understanding and connection that carries real-world impacts on public policy, on the logistical issues of everyday military life, on the views or stereotypes each side carries about the other.

From the start, what form the relationship between the country and its military would take was something the founders were concerned with, said Peter Feaver, a professor of political science at Duke University.

After all, among the concerns leading to the Revolutionary War had been opposition to British laws requiring the colonies to feed and house British soldiers, if necessary in private homes, without needing their consent.

There was no doubt that the new country needed some kind of military to protect itself, but the idea of a large standing army did not initially appeal to them, Feaver says.

"From the very beginning, the country has wrestled with ... the need to have a military to protect you from threats, but the need for that military not to become a threat to the republic itself," he says. Hence an initial small professional army, with limited tasks like border protection.

That's not to say there wasn't any expectation of service. States had militias, and conscription efforts were part of major military endeavors like the Civil War and the World Wars when there weren't enough volunteers.

That draft continued through most of the 20th century even as the military transformed into a large, professional endeavor. But the policy ended in 1973, a political decision spurred by factors including vehement public opposition to the Vietnam War and the draft. The armed services have been all-volunteer ever since.

Disconnects are ever more evident

That America benefits from having a professional, highly trained military whose members have opted into being there is not in contention, nor is there any serious effort to bring back an active draft. (There is still a requirement for adult men to register for selective service in case a draft is ever reinstated.) These days, the military includes about 2 million people on active duty or in the National Guard and reserves.

That number is a tiny portion of the roughly 230 million adult citizens and legal permanent residents in the country. Contrast it to the World War II era, says Feaver, "where everybody, every family, had somebody who had served."

"If not themselves, if not their dad or mom, certainly they had an uncle or an aunt or somebody," he says. "And the military was widely distributed geographically throughout society."

That's generally not the case these days, says Kathy Roth-Douquet, co-founder and CEO of Blue Star Families, an organization which advocates for military households and has launched the Do Your Part initiative, calling on sectors in civilian society to think of policies and other ways to support military families without being required to serve.

"Military service kind of became a cul-de-sac, where it was people who served beget people who served, who married people who were from families who served," she says.

Take the Army. More than 75% of recruits come from families where a relative has served, according to the U.S. Army Recruiting Command. In fiscal year 2025, about half of the Army recruits came from seven states. In recent years, U.S. military leaders have spoken of the importance of shifting that, to be able to recruit from a wider pool of young Americans.

Such concentrations have meant that the hazards and dangers of military actions aren't shared equally in the public, says Jason Higgins, an assistant professor of history at Virginia Tech, where he teaches on the Vietnam War.

He pointed to the Iraq War. Repeat deployments became a frequent thing for some of those serving, creating more adverse effects like PTSD and physical injuries, as well as families having to cope with long

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 46 of 67

absences and repeated attempts to reintegrate a loved one who would then have to leave again.

"You have this small group of American families who are the only ones who directly experience the consequences of war," he says.

That lack of knowledge on the part of the American public can also lead to stereotypes and assumptions about what it means to be a military member or veteran, the different roles in which people serve, and what they might need to help them reconnect to civilian life when their service is done.

Pop culture portrayals of grizzled soldiers, usually male, often white, gun-laden and in their fatigues don't tell the full story, Higgins says. Of course, there are combat troops, but there are plenty of other roles — administrative, mechanical, logistical. "There are millions of jobs in the military that are not related to killing people," he said.

It's what has made some veterans uncomfortable with the "Thank you for your service" refrain, feeling like they've been turned into "statues," he said.

"Whenever you turn people into statues, you're not recognizing their humanity," he said. So the repeated thanks, the valorizing, "while they're well-intended, they make people feel like outsiders of a society ... not every veteran wants to be called a hero."

'Get to know us,' a military spouse hopes

It's not just in times of war and military action that the gap exists, but in understanding the realities of day-to-day military life.

Military parents are continually dealing with their kids having to transfer to new schools. Military spouses can find it difficult to build fulfilling careers if they're regularly moving regions for their partners' orders.

Trying to close the gap isn't about everyone enlisting, though, says Sheila Rupp, a military spouse for over 20 years whose life has included regular moves every couple of years as her husband got new assignments. It's about the general public being willing to connect with military families, to understand more about the realities of their lives.

"I think the average American really wants to support military families, but they often don't know how," said Rupp, 43. "If people were more connected and they actually knew their friends and neighbors that do serve or have served recently, I think it would impact a lot of things."

She added: "I just wish that there were more opportunities for people to get to know us ... because obviously the civilian population brings support to our networks. And I think that there's a lot that military families bring to the communities in which they live and serve too. So I think relationship is really important."

After fleeing Afghanistan to continue educating girls, SOLA opens a permanent school in Rwanda

By GLENN GAMBOA AP Business Writer

Shabana Basij-Rasikh smiles as she points to the sign in the middle of campus: School of Leadership of Afghanistan, SOLA, a home in Rwanda.

The sign, like the campus, is virtually brand new — with classes beginning for the first time later this month. It is a declaration, but also a symbol of the danger associated with educating Afghan girls — even thousands of miles from their homes. It's not visible from outside the compound, whose location SOLA closely guards for safety reasons. It's only for the students and faculty to see.

"That's exactly what this place represents for us — a permanent home for our girls," Basij-Rasikh explains. "I'm so grateful for the welcome that we have received."

It has been five years since U.S. troops left Afghanistan and the Taliban once again took control of the country and its government. When Kabul fell, Basij-Rasikh fled Afghanistan for the East African nation of Rwanda, which had extended the school an encouraging invitation to relocate there. All the girls then enrolled at SOLA; about 100 recent graduates and the school's faculty also joined her.

Four days after the group of 250 arrived in Rwanda, SOLA resumed classes at a hotel that became its temporary school.

"One of the things that really deeply inspires all of us is that these girls — they will never give up," Basij-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 47 of 67

Rasikh said. "It's just not part of their vocabulary or thinking."

Millions of Afghan girls are deprived of education

According to a United Nations report in August, about 2.4 million Afghan girls are excluded from secondary education in Afghanistan, and conditions for all Afghan women and girls have continued to deteriorate.

Before the Taliban took over Afghanistan, it stated girls would have access to education, employment and public participation, as long as it was in accordance with its interpretation of Islamic principles. But in 2021, the Taliban barred girls from attending school beyond the sixth grade — restrictions that remain in place today.

In August, a Taliban spokesperson said that Afghanistan pays "significant attention" to education, with more than 10 million students — about 25% of the nation's population — currently enrolled in schools, universities, and institutes. The Taliban has said it is working to establish conditions under which girls and women can attend classes in line with Islamic Sharia laws.

The 122 girls enrolled at SOLA celebrate their opportunity to learn while mourning that girls and women back home are denied the same chance and face "very different futures," including child marriage, Basij-Rasikh said.

Expanding education for Afghan girls — viasmartphone

What has long haunted SOLA's faculty since it opened as a girls' boarding school in Kabul in 2016 is the number of potential students it has had to turn away.

Thousands of Afghan girls from around the world annually apply to become SOLA students. However, even though the new Rwanda campus will allow SOLA to double enrollment, more than 99% of applications will still be rejected.

To reach more Afghan girls, SOLA created an online education platform that allows students to learn at their own pace using a smartphone. Basij-Rasikh and her husband, Mati Amin, developed SOLAx, which offers online classes based on the Afghan school curriculum for grades 6 through 12 via WhatsApp.

"We understood the political and technological realities on the ground," said Amin, who has also launched several educational technology companies. "We knew we had to innovate in the space."

Most Afghan girls don't have their own smartphones, he said. Many borrow them from their fathers and brothers. They also lack reliable internet access and long stretches of uninterrupted time because of household chores. But they do find time to communicate with friends and family on WhatsApp.

That's what made the app the right fit for SOLAx. The platform is available to anyone, but geared toward Afghan girls and includes built-in precautions that allow students to quickly delete their chats and resume studies where they left off using a PIN code, Amin said. The lessons for earlier grades, including English as a second language, are taught in Afghanistan's official languages, Dari and Pashto, but later grades are taught in English.

SOLAx launched in 2024 and now has 41,000 students, mostly living in Afghanistan, but also in 76 other countries.

Student records are stored on SOLAx, in part because Basij-Rasikh is still troubled by having to burn all of SOLA's records before she fled Afghanistan so the Taliban would not learn which families had educated their girls.

"I carry that fire and the flames of that with me to this day," she said. "I remember feeling so much anger... And it felt like one of the moments where you have no idea the kind of fire you have started. This fire is going to come around and burn you one day."

Global support makes SOLA's work possible

SOLAx, like all programs offered by the nonprofit SOLA, is free of charge and funded by donors from around the world.

Dame Louise Richardson, who headed the University of Oxford when Basij-Rasikh was earning a master's degree in public policy there, said Basij-Rasikh's dedication to educating Afghan girls was impressive even then.

Richardson, now president of the Andrew Carnegie Foundation, said Basij-Rasikh's commitment to

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 48 of 67

education mirrors that of the philanthropist who established the foundation. "The young women who are leaving their family, their country and everything they know, to travel to Rwanda for an education are paying a high price for their education," Richardson said. "I believe they are truly worthy of our support."

Haven Ley, chief strategy officer at Pivotal Ventures, said Basij-Rasikh's 2016 launch of SOLA in Afghanistan put her on philanthropist Melinda French Gates' radar. The two shared an "understanding of the role that girls' education plays in empowering women."

When French Gates launched an initiative in 2024 giving 12 leaders \$20 million each to grant to charities doing urgent, impactful work supporting women and girls, she selected Basij-Rasikh as one of them.

Basij-Rasikh said she has directed the money to other Afghan civil society organizations, most of which are working in exile like hers. "The reality is that we can't do this work alone," she said. "We need a robust ecosystem of organizations that could address different aspects of the need in Afghanistan when it comes to girls and women, because it is enormous."

These organizations, including SOLA, are not "waiting passively" to return to Afghanistan, Basij-Rasikh said.

"We have a mission to get ourselves back into Afghanistan," she said. "The Afghan girls that we prepare in exile, they will be the ones who lead."

With the opening of the school in Rwanda, Basij-Rasikh said she feels closer to her goal of solidifying that SOLA's future is bigger than her. She says she still takes security precautions because when she was in Afghanistan, she learned that the Taliban wanted to kill her. However, those threats do not worry her now.

"We are ready," she said. "We're ready to be better known than we are. We're ready to get this message out to the world, and to Afghan families and to Afghan girls. We are here. And we will always be here."

US military completes latest strikes against Iran, while Trump vows more for Tehran's retaliation

By BEN FINLEY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military hit targets in Iran on Tuesday and Tehran fired missiles and drones at various sites across the region in response as hostilities flare once again in an intermittent war that has lasted more than six months. One U.S. strike hit a home hosting a wedding, killing five people and wounding dozens, local officials said.

U.S. Central Command said in a statement Tuesday evening that it had completed the latest barrage against Iranian military targets including air defense sites, radar systems and maritime assets.

The U.S. strikes followed others on Sunday that abruptly ended a month without military action and threatened to fully reignite a conflict that has spiked global oil prices and posed political problems for Republicans in November's midterm congressional elections.

Late Tuesday, U.S. President Donald Trump said he would not force Iran to the bargaining table.

"I couldn't care less if they sign a worthless, to them, agreement. I like our position now much better, with almost total control of the Hormuz Strait, and their economy totally collapsing. They are just playing out the inevitable. When are the Iranian people going to rise up and fight?" Trump wrote on social media.

Earlier, Trump had appeared to pivot toward trying to bend Iran to his will through economic sanctions. He warned that if Iran retaliated for the new strikes, "they will be hit again at a much harder and higher level."

U.S. Central Command said the latest attacks were in response to Tehran trying to hit commercial ships and American forces in the Middle East. The president offered an additional explanation, telling Fox News in a phone call that U.S. forces struck Iran's radars.

"They tried to rebuild their radar because they can't see anything," Trump told Fox earlier in the day. "We waited until it was almost built and then we hit it."

After the U.S. attacks started, Iran launched ballistic missiles at Jordan. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard claimed to have targeted a U.S. base along Jordan's Gulf of Aqaba coast, according to Iran's state television.

Jordan's military said it shot down 10 of the missiles and the three remaining landed in unpopulated

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 49 of 67

areas. Explosions that appeared to be interceptions of incoming air attacks were seen over Aqaba.

Iranian state media reported that the U.S. had bombed civilian sites along Iran's southern coast and hit a civilian airport. A U.S. strike hit a home where a wedding ceremony was being held in Kuhestak in southern Iran, killing five people, including a child, and wounding at least 68 others, Ahmad Nafisi, Hormozgan Province's deputy governor, told Iranian state television in a phone call.

"Make no mistake: these crimes will not go unpunished," Ebrahim Azizi, chairperson of the Iranian parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said on X.

U.S. Central Command is aware of the reports of civilian casualties, said Capt. Tim Hawkins, a spokesperson. He noted that they "originated from Iranian state media."

"The U.S. military never targets civilians, unlike the IRGC," Hawkins said.

The Kuwaiti Army said on X that its air defenses intercepted drone attacks "following the criminal Iranian aggression." Iran also said it launched a drone attack at U.S. forces in Bahrain, but that country said all attacks had been intercepted.

Iran's military warns of 'devastating blows' as country reports attack on airport

Iran's Armed Forces General Staff and its joint military command said the armed forces would deliver what they described as "crushing and devastating blows" against the United States. The state-run IRNA news agency cited a statement by Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, which warned that the attacks have only strengthened the Islamic Republic's resolve and tightened Iran's effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20% of the world's oil normally flows.

Explosions were reported across several southern Iranian coastal areas, including the port city of Bandar Abbas that is home to naval and air force facilities as well as Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz. Witnesses in Bandar Abbas told The Associated Press that the explosions were stronger than those on Sunday and said they saw smoke rising from the eastern part of the city on the strait.

Iranian state television said U.S. strikes hit a fishmeal factory on Qeshm Island and several civilian sites in Hormozgan province. It said a fishing pier and a Ports and Maritime Organization tower in Sirik were among the locations struck.

State TV also reported that the U.S. military struck the civilian Jiroft Airport in central Iran's Kerman province, saying a projectile struck an area outside the runway and caused no casualties or damage to airport infrastructure.

Iranian state television reported that Tavanir, Iran's electricity grid management company, said several parts of Hormozgan province's power network had been struck. It said authorities were working to restore resulting outages.

The U.S. and Iran are both seeking control over the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway off Iran's coast that is a vital oil shipping corridor. Tehran effectively closed it after the war began.

Oil prices have moved sharply higher this week with renewed clashes between Iran and the United States. Crude, already up about 7% this week, continued to rise following the strikes on Tuesday.

The price of crude has jumped more than 50% this year and dragged the cost of gasoline upward with it. The cost for a gallon of regular gasoline in the U.S. ticked higher again overnight to \$4.10, according to AAA. Last year at this time, a gallon cost \$3.19.

Strikes have renewed after Iran said it would stick to a ceasefire deal if the US did the same

Before military action began again, the Trump administration had argued that hitting the right economic target in a campaign of financial isolation would get Tehran to its breaking point. Now, strikes are renewing even as U.S. stockpiles of advanced interceptors have been diminishing and the war has been unpopular among many Americans.

A return to open conflict would be dangerous for the region, where Iran has targeted U.S. military bases and infrastructure in Gulf countries since the war began.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said earlier Tuesday before the latest strikes that the Islamic Republic is ready to return to the interim ceasefire deal reached with the U.S. in June if Washington does the same.

"If the U.S. returns to its commitments in the memorandum of understanding, the Islamic Republic of

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 50 of 67

Iran will immediately reciprocate," Iranian state media cited Pezeshkian as saying at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Kyrgyzstan.

The June interim deal called for an immediate ceasefire and started a 60-day period for negotiations aimed at reaching a wider agreement, but crumbled soon afterward.

In the previous strikes on Sunday, U.S. Central Command said its forces struck Iranian rocket launchers that would launch sea mines into the strait.

Iran responded to Sunday's attacks by launching missiles at U.S. sites in Jordan, which were intercepted, while the United Arab Emirates said it stopped an Iranian drone over its waters. Trump acknowledged Monday that more strikes might be necessary.

The American military in recent days has cast the renewed fighting as limited. Central Command reiterated Tuesday that its attacks followed Iranian aggression against commercial vessels and American troops in the region.

Postal Service work to comply with Trump's executive order is rushed, sloppy, whistleblower contends

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

The U.S. Postal Service is poised to launch a hastily built, error-riddled computer system that could jeopardize the process of mail voting relied upon by one-third of all voters, according to a whistleblower statement released Tuesday by Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal.

The effort is part of the implementation of President Donald Trump's executive order limiting mail voting and has been temporarily halted by a federal judge. The ruling is being appealed by the administration and the directive may ultimately end up back before the U.S. Supreme Court.

The disclosure from the unidentified whistleblower contends that the Postal Service has been scrambling to try to build a complex system that would normally take a year or more in only three months, sometimes in defiance of the judge's orders halting work. The goal is to have it ready for use in the midterm elections.

The disclosure contends that, due to the new procedures, a single scanning error in a batch of tens of thousands of ballot envelopes could prevent any from reaching voters. It details a system that election officials have already warned could not be implemented before the first mail ballots begin going out Friday in North Carolina.

"The Postal Service has designed a system to disenfranchise millions of Americans," Blumenthal told reporters in advance of releasing the whistleblower information. "This administration seems hell-bent on changing the framework on casting ballots in this country clearly for political reasons."

Executive order is subject to furious court action with midterms nearing

Trump's executive order, signed in March, directed U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the commissioner of the Social Security Administration to develop state citizenship lists and then required the Postal Service to send mail ballots only to voters who are on such a list. Ballot envelopes would have to comply with new Postal Service rules and include barcodes.

The online portal that is the subject of the whistleblower complaint is intended for states to deliver their lists of verified voters to the Postal Service.

The Postal Service released a statement Tuesday evening in response to Blumenthal's letter, pledging to work with Congress and the courts. It noted that the judge who issued the latest restraining order explicitly allowed the service to continue to develop its online tool for states that want to use it voluntarily.

"Regardless of political party or perspective, we share a common goal: ensuring that Americans can have confidence that their election mail will be handled securely and delivered reliably," the Postal Service said.

The White House said the software buildout process is "neither complex nor unique" for the Postal Service because it already uses bulk mailing and intelligent mail barcodes for large customers. "Under President Trump, the federal government is working to ensure safe, transparent, and honest elections," spokeswoman Lauren Bis said.

Jonathan Smith, president of the United Postal Workers Union, which has long opposed the executive

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 51 of 67

order, said in a statement Tuesday: "The whistleblower report reveals what this executive order was always about — denying Americans their hard-fought right to vote. It is creating chaos in a system that is proven to be a safe, secure way for millions of Americans to vote."

The 20 Democratic House members who sit on the Oversight Committee wrote a letter to Postmaster General David Steiner criticizing the project in light of the new revelations. "We demand that you immediately cease implementation of this irresponsible and illegal scheme to implement the Trump Administration's plan to control our federal elections," the Democrats wrote.

Trump has long opposed voting by mail, even though he has repeatedly used the method to cast his own ballot. He falsely blamed mail voting for his 2020 election loss and has spent years spreading conspiracy theories about it. A report by the Brookings Institution published in 2025 found that mail voting fraud occurred in only about four cases out of every 10 million mail ballots cast.

Since returning to office, Trump has said Republicans should be "taking over" vote counting in Democratic areas and launched a sweeping attempt to reinvestigate the 2020 election, despite a mountain of evidence that he lost fairly to Democrat Joe Biden.

Until Trump came out against mail voting in 2020, the system was used equally by both parties. Since then, it has become more common among Democratic voters. More than 29% of all voters in 2024 cast their ballots through the mail.

After Trump issued his executive order, Democrats and civil rights groups sued and eventually won a ruling from U.S. District Court Judge Indira Talwani in Boston barring implementation of the system before the November midterms. But without ruling on the legality of Trump's order, the Supreme Court's conservative majority last week found that was premature and overruled Talwani, momentarily clearing the way for its implementation.

On the night of Aug. 21, the Postal Service released a final rule outlining how it would implement the order.

It said it would only send mail ballots for states that got approval for the design of their envelopes and submitted a list of voters receiving them through the still-not-active online portal. That rule gave plaintiffs a chance to sue again, and Talwani on Thursday night issued a 14-day restraining order against implementation of the measure.

Whistleblower complaint says portal development is rushed and sloppy

The letter from Blumenthal and an accompanying summary of the whistleblower's statements says the Postal Service began work on the portal on June 15 and stopped on June 25 after Talwani's initial order. Then on July 29, the Postal Service restarted the work. That was when the administration appealed the judge's order to the Supreme Court. The high court did not strike Talwani's injunction down until Aug. 24.

Talwani last week found the Postal Service violated her order by continuing to work on the final rule, but she imposed no sanctions on the government. On Monday, she issued a ruling refusing to lift the restraining order that also said the Postal Service could continue work on its portal, as long as it wasn't forcing states to use it.

In its summary of the whistleblower's statement, the group Whistleblower Aid says the hurried construction of the portal, with a goal of being active Tuesday, meant it did not undergo full testing.

"The apparently sloppy and rushed manner in which the Federal Ballot Mail Portal and supporting IT systems are being built poses significant risk," the group wrote. "Potentially millions of American voters may not receive their mail-in ballot this election cycle in a timely manner, or at all."

The statement also says the Postal Service is implementing a "zero percent" rule in which any errors in any mail ballots sent out by an election office could lead to all of them being discarded — even if it's simply one problem amid tens of thousands of legitimate ballots.

The rule requires ballots to be handled in a physical post office by an election official. Those will then be scanned to ensure they match the voter database. During three layers of checks, a single apparent error could cause the whole batch to be rejected, the statement says.

Blumenthal said he has "a very strong hope and some faith that our system of justice will strike down this unconstitutional and unconscionable rule." But, he added, if it somehow goes into effect for the midterms, he would not advise voting by mail.

Grand Canyon flooding harms an economy that's still recovering from a fire

By MEAD GRUVER and WUFEI YU Associated Press

Deadly flooding at the Grand Canyon is damaging the area's economy, with a washed-out pipeline severing the South Rim's water supply and shutting down lodging at the popular tourist vista for an indefinite period.

The national park remained open Tuesday but tourists who planned to stay overnight — many traveling long distances for reservations from a year or more ago — have had to scramble to find rooms elsewhere.

The flooding that killed two people and left a third missing washed out an already decrepit pipeline spanning the canyon that supplied every shower, faucet and spigot at the South Rim.

Now, hundreds of rooms are no longer available due to insufficient water, thwarting plans for thousands of tourists staying at the canyon or headed that way in the days ahead.

Michelle Allen, of Olathe, Kansas, got word Sunday evening she'd need to check out the next morning after just one night into a five-night stay.

"We had to hurry up and make accommodations somewhere else," Allen said. "Luckily we were able to do that."

Uncertainty ahead for residents, tourists and service workers

As of Tuesday, it's uncertain how long the lodging would be closed. Experts warn that the economic toll of such closures would affect not only Northern Arizona but southern Nevada.

Many who visit the Grand Canyon also visit Las Vegas, said Christine Vogt, a consultant on sustainable tourism and outdoor recreation in the Western U.S.

"This will be catastrophic," Vogt said, adding that the water shut-off could last weeks.

Lodges and outfitters preparing for bigger crowds this upcoming Labor Day weekend — the last summer push before the warmer peak season ends — are forced to scale back.

An extended lodging shutdown could also affect hundreds of service jobs in and around the national park and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars in local revenue, said Megha Budruk, an Arizona State University associate professor who studies communities near public lands.

The Grand Canyon weathered a fire last year, rain this year

This is the latest economic blow to the region after a wildfire last summer destroyed a historic lodge at the Grand Canyon's less busy but lush North Rim, putting all rooms and cabins on that side of the canyon out of commission.

Grand Canyon was the fourth-most visited national park in 2025, behind Great Smoky Mountains, Zion and Yellowstone. Summer is the park's busiest time, although tourist visits typically dip under 500,000 in September. After the North Rim fire last year, visitation was just 372,000 for the month.

In 2024, the park drew almost \$1 billion a year in spending by close to 5 million tourists visiting the otherwise remote Northern Arizona region, according to the National Park Service.

That spending further supported almost 9,000 jobs, which in turn generated \$400 million in labor income and \$1.1 billion in economic output in nearby communities, according to the park service.

Besides the shuttered Phantom Ranch lodge and campground at the canyon bottom directly affected by the floods, closed South Rim accommodations included El Tovar Hotel, Bright Angel Lodge, Maswik Lodge and the Yavapai Lodge and Trailer Village, park officials said.

South Rim campgrounds remained open but without spigots. Campground bathroom faucets would remain operational, but campfires were banned since less water would be available to fight a wildfire.

An already dicey pipeline situation

Restaurants and other food and beverage services at the South Rim remain open. But only so much water will be available from tanks that were supplied by the cross-canyon pipe.

In all, some 1,600 year-round residents and the South Rim's millions of annual tourists rely on the 12.5-mile (20-kilometer) pipe built down, across and up the sheer canyon walls in the 1960s.

Grit in the water has scoured the aluminum pipe, weakening it from the inside and causing dozens of failures in recent years. A more than \$200 million repair project was well underway before the flooding

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 53 of 67

that had damaged about 40% of the pipeline.

Conservation will be at least part of the plan to keep water flowing from tanks that still have weeks' worth of water in them. After that, how the tanks might be refilled is an open question.

Park officials planned a public meeting Wednesday at the canyon to provide updates on the water situation.

In the meantime, the priorities will be reporting leaks, using reclaimed water for nondrinking uses, running dishwashers and washing machines only if they're full or in eco mode, Andy Stiles, South Rim general manager for Xanterra Travel Collection, said by email.

"And asking guests and staff to be mindful of things like handwashing length and running water," Stiles said. "Actions like these across the South Rim are what's helping the available water reserves go as far as possible."

Some people move south to unaffected town outside the park

Unaffected was Tusayan, a tourism hub just outside the park boundary 15 minutes from the South Rim.

"We're just heartbroken about what has happened at Phantom Ranch," Tusayan Mayor Clarinda Vail said, adding: "We are open. Full services in Tusayan."

The community with 1,200 lodging rooms doesn't rely on the pipeline but uses well water. Besides hotels and camping, Tusayan hosts restaurants and businesses that offer tours of the canyon by air and ground.

At Grand Canyon Camper Village in Tusayan, business had been "oddly slow" for this time of year, but now general manager Joan Marquez is seeing a surge in business at showers and laundry rooms. Both are available for the general public as well as people staying at the campground.

South Rim lodging companies such as Delaware North, which runs the 350-room Yavapai Lodge, promised to get as many customers rebooked in Tusayan as they could.

But the community's five main hotels were filling up quickly. Grand Canyon Plaza Hotel is usually the last in town to sell out but was seeing a surge in South Rim lodgers seeking rooms, front desk supervisor Steven Ayres said.

"We're going to have more coming, I guarantee you," Ayres said.

Man put to death for girl's killing as Florida carries out its 14th execution of the year

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

STARKE, Fla. (AP) — A man convicted of killing a teenage girl who rejected his romantic advances and wounding two of her friends was put to death Tuesday in the first of three executions planned this month in Florida.

Harold Gene Lucas, 74, was pronounced dead at 6:18 p.m. following a three-drug injection at Florida State Prison near Starke. He was condemned for the 1976 shooting death of 16-year-old Jill Piper and the wounding of her friends, Richard Byrd Jr. and Terri Rice.

Lucas was strapped to a gurney with an IV in his arm when the death chamber curtain arose on schedule at 6 p.m. Asked by a warden if he had any words, he responded, "No."

The drugs began flowing soon afterward and Lucas began breathing heavily and then gasping before he stopped moving. Minutes later, the warden shook Lucas and shouted his name, but there was no response. A medic was called in and declared Lucas dead.

Lucas was the 14th prisoner executed in Florida this year, and Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis has signed death warrants for two more lethal injections later this month. Florida has carried out more than half of the two dozen executions conducted in the U.S. this year.

Lucas declined to file any last-ditch appeals, telling a judge: "I've been on death row for 50 years, and I have no desire to carry this any further," according to court transcripts. "The sooner it's over, the better I'll enjoy it. I am tired."

Murder victim's brother expresses relief

Lester Piper, Jill's brother, said it was good to see the legal process finally at an end.

"I don't know if closure is the right word to use, but I do believe there's a big sense of relief," Piper said

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 54 of 67

after witnessing the execution.

Janice Rice, whose sister Terri survived the attack on Piper, said she was sorry her sister was no longer alive to witness the injection.

"Terri survived that horrific night 50 years ago and lived with the trauma and pain for 44 years," Rice said afterward. "She wanted more than anything to be here today to witness justice for Jill, but God had other plans for her."

Man had confrontations with the victim before the attack

Lucas was 24 in August 1976 when he was arrested for trespassing at Piper's Bonita Springs home, south of Fort Myers, according to court records. Lucas had known the teen for four years and had worked for her family, officials said. Lucas and Piper had previously dated, the records showed.

About a week after the arrest, Lucas and Piper had two separate confrontations hours apart, investigators said. Witnesses testified Lucas threatened to kill Piper.

Piper asked Byrd and Rice to spend that night at her home for protection, officials said. Lucas eventually showed up with a rifle and shot Piper multiple times while she begged for her life and then shot and wounded her friends, investigators said. Lucas was arrested the next day.

Lucas was sentenced to death and resentenced several times

Convicted of first-degree murder and two counts of attempted first-degree murder, Lucas was sentenced to death — and eventually resentenced to death four more times.

Lucas was initially sentenced to death in 1977 with a 12-0 jury recommendation, court records show. The Florida Supreme Court later ruled the trial judge was wrong to consider the heinousness of the attempted murders while deciding the sentence for the murder. That trial judge resentenced Lucas to death in 1980.

By the time a third sentencing was ordered, the original trial judge had died and a new judge was assigned. That judge sentenced Lucas to death in 1985, but the Florida Supreme Court later ruled a new jury should consider a sentence recommendation, though the conviction itself would still stand. The new jury recommended death by 11-1, and Lucas was sentenced to death for a fourth time in 1987. The Florida Supreme Court ruled that sentencing order wasn't clear, and Lucas received a death sentence again in 1990.

Florida leads in executions

A total of 47 people were executed in the U.S. in 2025. Florida led that year with 19 executions, a record in the state since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976.

In July, Florida executed two prisoners in one day, the first state in nearly a decade to do so. And two more Florida executions are planned shortly, those of Daniel Owen Conahan Jr., 72, on Sept. 10, and Curtis Wilkie Beasley, 77, on Sept. 29.

Conahan was convicted of kidnapping and strangling a man he had paid to pose for nude photos, and authorities suspect him of similar homicides committed in the 1990s in southwest Florida. Beasley was convicted of beating a woman to death with a hammer and stealing her car in 1995.

All Florida executions are by injection of a sedative, a paralytic and a drug that stops the heart, according to the Department of Corrections.

MLB's Los Angeles Angels to be sold to Rams and Arsenal owner Stan Kroenke

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Kroenke Sports and Entertainment has reached a deal to purchase controlling ownership of the Los Angeles Angels from Arte Moreno, expanding its sprawling empire of teams across every major U.S. professional sport with the addition of the beleaguered baseball club.

The company led by Stan Kroenke made the surprising announcement Tuesday, saying it expects to close on the transaction in early 2027. Major League Baseball, which must approve any sale, didn't immediately comment on the news, but The Athletic reported the deal is being done at a \$4 billion valuation — a record for an MLB team.

Kroenke's company owns the NFL's Los Angeles Rams, Premier League champion Arsenal, the NBA's

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 55 of 67

Denver Nuggets, the NHL's Colorado Avalanche, Major League Soccer's Colorado Rapids and SoFi Stadium, along with the large Hollywood Park campus around the multibillion-dollar Inglewood venue. The conglomerate has now moved into baseball with the Angels, whose turbulent 23-year tenure under Moreno's stewardship will finally end.

"The Angels are a storied franchise anchored in a great market," Kroenke said in a statement. "We look forward to an exciting future with the Angels organization."

Moreno will remain a minority owner of the club in the sale, which also includes the team's regional television network and radio station.

When the players arrived at Angel Stadium to face the Yankees, they uniformly said the news had been shocking.

Mike Trout, the three-time AL MVP who has spent his entire 16-year career in Anaheim without winning a single playoff game, expressed his gratitude to Moreno while hailing the deal as "just a fresh start."

"I mean, you kind of felt it was needed," Trout added. "No hard feelings against Arte, but I'm super excited, the guys are excited. There's a good vibe around the clubhouse, around the stadium. We're all excited."

Moreno bought the Angels from the Walt Disney Company in 2003. While the club had steady success in its first years under Moreno with much of the roster that won the 2002 World Series, claiming five AL West titles in six seasons during the 2000s, the Halos have entered an era of profound decline since their most recent playoff victory in 2009.

At 53-85, the AL-worst Angels are currently headed to their 11th consecutive losing season and their 12th consecutive non-playoff season, both the longest active streaks in the majors. Incredibly, they've made the postseason just once with three-time AL MVP outfielder Trout, who teamed with two-time AL MVP Shohei Ohtani for six straight seasons with no success.

In sharp contrast, Kroenke's teams consistently have been among their sports' absolute best in recent seasons.

The Rams, the Avalanche, the Nuggets and Arsenal have all won championships in their respective leagues over the past five years, and all four teams remain serious title contenders during a renaissance for an ownership group that was once criticized for its early struggles in English soccer and its decision to move the Rams from St. Louis back to Los Angeles.

Trout is thrilled by the possibilities created when the Halos join Kroenke's stable of winning teams.

"As soon as I got the word, I looked him up, and what a track record," Trout said of Kroenke. "Wherever he buys, they win, so that's a good sign. No doubt he'll invest in the team, in the players. That's all you can ask."

Trout also confirmed he still has no desire to leave Orange County: The 12-time All-Star intends to play out the remaining four years of the \$426.5 million contract he signed with Moreno in 2019.

A hefty portion of the Angels' struggles over the past two decades can be attributed to the 80-year-old Moreno, an outdoor advertising magnate from Arizona who has repeatedly inserted himself into personnel decisions while presiding over the rest of his organization with much less interest or acumen.

While he spent aggressively on payroll in his attempts to build a winner, his biggest moves usually backfired and produced little impact. His acquisitions of Anthony Rendon, Gary Matthews Jr., Josh Hamilton and many others were expensive disasters, while even his landmark \$240 million free-agent contract for Albert Pujols didn't result in the homers or the victories expected from the price tag.

Moreno has been roundly criticized for skimping on infrastructure, resources and support staff throughout his organization compared to other MLB teams. He hired a series of baseball operations bosses who all had little or no experience in a top job, declining to turn over his front office to experienced winners.

The Angels have also endured numerous troubles off the field during Moreno's tenure, from the drug-related death of pitcher Tyler Skaggs to numerous smaller scandals.

Despite Moreno's much-derided decision to change the franchise's name from the Anaheim Angels in an attempt to build a more national brand, the team remained a healthy box-office draw to its loyal Orange County fans during most of his tenure — but the fan base has lost patience in recent years. Angel Stadium's slightly smaller crowds this season have regularly chanted "Sell the team!" and derided Moreno by name.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 56 of 67

Shortstop Zach Neto echoed the views of many players who appreciated Moreno's role in their careers even while understanding the criticisms.

"I've seen a lot of hate, a lot of love, but a lot more hate," Neto said. "But as a player who has played under him, it's a lot of love."

The lack of success clearly began to wear on Moreno, whose children reportedly aren't interested in carrying on in the baseball business. Moreno publicly explored a sale of the Angels in 2022, only to pull the team off the market in early 2023.

Significant positive change occurred earlier this year when Moreno fired general manager Perry Minasian and hired John Mozeliak on a temporary basis to run his baseball operations. Mozeliak, the longtime St. Louis Cardinals GM, is the first baseball boss hired by Moreno with prior experience as a permanent general manager.

Mozeliak has already made significant changes to reshape the long-stagnant operation while starting a rebuild of sorts after years of resistance from Moreno.

Mozeliak said Moreno told him upon his hiring that a future sale was a possibility. He doesn't know how the deal will affect the front office, but he has been told to conduct business as usual for now.

"I was definitely surprised, but it wasn't a shock," Mozeliak said. "I think it's exciting news for everybody. ... I can understand why there's a lot of optimism right now in this community. The last 12 years have been difficult in terms of winning and losing and not going to the postseason. But I will say this on Arte's behalf: He cared about this team as much as anyone. Now, some of the investments or decisions that didn't pan out were not for lack of trying."

KSE owns the stadiums in which its other teams play, but Angel Stadium is owned by the City of Anaheim. Moreno had a deal to buy the stadium and the land around it in 2020, but the arrangement was scrapped two years later amid a corruption scandal that led to the resignation of Anaheim's mayor.

Kroenke's MLB and NFL teams have a historic connection: The Rams played their home games at Angel Stadium from 1980 until 1994, when former owner Georgia Frontiere moved them to her hometown of St. Louis.

Moreno, a Mexican American, was the majors' first Latino majority owner, and he remained the only one until Puerto Rico-born billionaire José E. Feliciano closed his purchase of the San Diego Padres last month. Latino and Hispanic players comprise roughly 30% of major league rosters.

KSE will be only the fourth permanent owner of the Angels, who were founded as an AL expansion club in 1961 by early Hollywood star Gene Autry. His widow, Jackie, temporarily owned the team for a year after his death before selling it to Disney in 1999.

House censures Rep. Chuck Edwards for conduct toward former female staffers

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House voted Tuesday to censure Rep. Chuck Edwards, R-N.C., following a House Ethics Committee investigation that concluded he engaged in persistent unprofessional and inappropriate conduct toward two young female staffers in his office.

A censure registers the House's deep disapproval of a lawmaker's conduct that does not meet the threshold for expulsion from office.

The 413-2 vote was just the latest instance of the House grappling with revelations about lawmakers' behavior toward female staffers, a trend that prompted House leaders to launch a bipartisan review this year focused on making Capitol Hill a safer job environment for women.

Rep. Michael Guest, the chairman of the House Ethics Committee, said the Edwards case did not involve what he called "quid pro quo sexual harassment," but rather conduct and behavior that created a hostile work environment.

"While Representative Edwards denies that his conduct was intended to be sexual or romantic, his pat-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 57 of 67

tern of behavior would lead a reasonable person to interpret it as such," Guest said.

Guest said that behavior included providing the aides with lavish gifts, making comments about their appearance and dress, sending notes regarding his affection and inviting them to intimate dinners and vacations. He also said Edwards was aware that the women were uncomfortable with his behavior.

Edwards apologized to the two women, who are no longer on his staff, for actions that put them in an uncomfortable position. He said his intentions were "only grounded in what I understood our friendship to be" and said he admired them. He also apologized to his wife and family, saying they carried a burden they did not create or deserve.

But he also forcefully rejected the committee's most damaging conclusions and the recommendation that he be censured. He emphasized that the investigative report itself concluded there was no evidence he engaged in sexual activity or explicitly propositioned any staff member.

"I am imperfect. I have made mistakes, but I do not believe I committed sexual harassment," Edwards said on the House floor. "The factual findings of this investigation do not justify branding me as though I did."

Edwards was one of the two lawmakers who voted against the resolution. The other was Rep. Ralph Norman, R-S.C.

Edwards told reporters after the vote that he had expected the result would not go his way. House Speaker Mike Johnson sat with Edwards for a few minutes before the vote and told him how he thought it would go.

"It would not have been politically expedient for anyone to vote against a resolution accusing someone of sexual harassment," Edwards said.

Edwards stood in the well of the House as the censure resolution was read. When he left the chamber, he remained highly critical of the Ethics Committee's findings and at one point said the investigation was "very much akin to a Russian show trial."

Edwards becomes the 29th member in the history of the House to be censured. He was asked about that distinction after the vote and said he lived a terrific life before he got into politics.

"I look forward to getting my life back," Edwards said.

Edwards is serving his second term in Congress representing a district in western North Carolina. He chose not to seek reelection after the committee issued its report.

Edwards is the latest in a line of ethics cases this Congress

Earlier this year, Democratic Rep. Eric Swalwell and Republican Rep. Tony Gonzales faced calls for their expulsion before they stepped down.

And last month, the Ethics Committee announced it was reviewing allegations that Rep. Jimmy Gomez, D-Calif., may have engaged in inappropriate sexual contact with a House staffer. He said he would cooperate with the investigation but his actions were consensual in nature and didn't violate the law or House Ethics rules. He also apologized to his family and constituents.

House members are prohibited from engaging in sexual harassment or making unwanted advances toward their subordinates. The Ethics Committee said that despite the absence of an explicit proposition, a reasonable person could interpret Edwards' "intimate and effusive attentions, where he prioritized the personal over the professional, as thinly veiled advances."

Rep. Mark DeSaulnier, the committee's ranking Democratic member, said the investigation spanned more than four months and included interviews of 16 people and a review of nearly 1,500 pages of documents.

He said Edwards provided the two women with jewelry, designer purses, shoes and flowers and commented on their appearance. He also sent deeply personal letters and even skipped a vote series to decorate a Christmas tree at the home of one of the staffers.

"These are not innocuous, isolated instances," DeSaulnier said. "They are part of a sustained, unprofessional and inappropriate conduct by Representative Edwards toward two young women he employed."

Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez, D-N.M. said Edwards' behavior was "outlandish and disturbing."

"If we don't take action today, there is no opportunity for these women to receive justice," Leger Fer-

nandez said.

Woman killed in Times Square stabbing worked for Bank of America

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The woman killed in a random stabbing in Times Square was a Bank of America employee, the bank confirmed Tuesday. Police identified her and the attacker, who was killed in a confrontation with officers shortly after the rampage.

The woman who died, Erin Piacenti, 32, was one of two people who were stabbed Monday afternoon in the tourist and theater hub, a few blocks from Bank of America's office tower in New York.

"We are shocked and deeply saddened by the tragic loss of our colleague," the bank said in a statement. The company didn't immediately answer questions about the specifics of Piacenti's work there.

She had earned a law degree from Fordham Law School, graduating in 2021 alongside her husband, Frank Piacenti, according to the school. Fordham Law said in a statement it was heartbroken by her death.

Messages were left with possible phone numbers and contacts for her relatives.

The other victim was a 68-year-old man whose identity hasn't been released. He was hospitalized, and no update on his condition was immediately available Tuesday.

Police identified the attacker Tuesday as Pamela Cisneros, 49, of Queens. Officers shot and killed her after the stabbing.

Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch has said the woman had mental-health-related encounters with police in 2018 and 2019 but had no arrest record in New York City.

Cisneros' brother, Patrick Peralta, told the New York news outlet Gothamist that she had psychiatric problems for decades but wasn't aggressive. The divorced mother of three had been taking medications and doing better in the last several years, working on and off in a legal office, according to Peralta, who said he last saw her at a relative's birthday gathering early last month. He said Cisneros skipped family dinners last week but assured their mother she was OK in a phone call Saturday.

Then he saw Monday's news from Times Square.

"We really don't know how to express or how to explain why this happened," Peralta told Gothamist, expressing sympathy for Piacenti's family and the injured man.

The Associated Press left messages at phone numbers for Cisneros' relatives.

The attack happened in one of the busiest and most heavily policed areas in New York — next to a police station and just outside the building that hosts the city's annual New Year's Eve ball drop celebration. A man was fatally stabbed in the same area in May.

Cisneros pulled two knives from a shopping bag, stabbed the man, and then attacked Piacenti, Tisch said at a news conference Monday.

Bystander videos recorded police gathering around Cisneros as she held two large knives in front of her. Then, as they used a stun gun on her, she waved the knives and walked quickly toward the officers, the video showed.

Tisch said officers tried to persuade Cisneros to drop the knives for several minutes before they used the stun gun. She told them she wouldn't drop anything and "would rather kill" the officers, according to Tisch.

Two officers then shot Cisneros, according to police.

Lindsay Clancy jury goes home after a fourth day without a verdict and signals an impasse

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

PLYMOUTH, Mass. (AP) — Jurors in the Lindsay Clancy trial ended a fourth day of deliberations without a verdict Tuesday after earlier saying they couldn't agree whether the Massachusetts mother is criminally

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 59 of 67

responsible for killing her three young children.

Not long after arriving at the courthouse, the jury sent Judge William Sullivan a note saying they had been unable to reach a unanimous decision despite many hours of back and forth. He told them to keep trying.

It was the jury's first indication of an impasse in the closely watched trial that has focused on maternal mental health after childbirth, and which has stirred deep divisions among the public.

Clancy, a former labor and delivery nurse, doesn't deny strangling her children but says postpartum psychosis led to her actions. Prosecutors argue she knew what she was doing. Clancy, 36, has pleaded not guilty by reason of lack of criminal responsibility.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know needs help, the national suicide and crisis lifeline in the U.S. is available by calling or texting 988.

Clancy stared straight ahead as the jury entered in the morning to say they were at a standstill, then looked toward them as the judge spoke.

Sullivan told the jurors that he recognized it had been a long trial with more than 80 witnesses and 300 exhibits. "But because of that, I'm going to ask you to go back out," he said.

They're expected to resume deliberations Wednesday.

What happens if there's a hung jury

The jury, which began deliberating Thursday afternoon, could convict Clancy of murder or manslaughter, or acquit her if they believe her deteriorating mental health was to blame.

A conviction could lead to a life prison sentence. If she is acquitted, a judge could still order her confined to a mental health facility if an evaluation determines she is a danger to the public.

If jurors can't reach a verdict and a mistrial is declared, the charges against Clancy would remain. Prosecutors would need to decide whether to try Clancy again before an entirely new group of jurors.

Prosecutors could offer a plea deal to Clancy, although her attorney is more likely to push for them to drop the charges, said Brad Bailey, a Boston defense attorney and former prosecutor who is not involved in the case.

Defense attorney Kevin Reddington called it a good sign that the jury hasn't given up. "I think that they're showing that they are more than willing to keep working at it," he said.

Trial focused on Lindsay Clancy's mental health

During more than four weeks of testimony, jurors heard differing views from medical experts.

Clancy's lawyer argued she loved her children, but killed them because she lost her grip on reality — and on herself — due to bipolar disorder and postpartum psychosis, a rare mental illness that can follow childbirth.

Prosecutors said Clancy was depressed and tired of living, and made a conscious choice to kill the children. A forensic psychologist who testified for the prosecution said he concluded that Clancy killed the children because she wanted to end her life but didn't want to leave them behind.

Clancy's mother and sister testified that she became anxious, paranoid and suicidal after the birth of her third child. She sought treatment for her worsening mental health, including a stay in a psychiatric hospital, in the months before killing Cora, Dawson and Callan Clancy, ages 5, 3 and 8 months.

Less than three weeks after being discharged, she sent her husband on an errand and killed the children with exercise bands in the basement of their home south of Boston. She then jumped from a second-floor window and remains paralyzed from the waist down. Her lawyers say she heard a voice telling her to kill the children so she could end her own life.

Lindsay Clancy didn't take the stand during her trial

Clancy chose not to testify. She watched the proceedings from the defense table, occasionally weeping, as when prosecutors showed autopsy photos of the children to the jury.

Jurors spent two days listening to testimony from her former husband, Patrick Clancy, and his anguished 911 call. He was on the phone when he discovered the children's bodies, minutes after finding his wife.

Patrick Clancy has said in interviews that he forgives his ex-wife, whom he viewed as ill rather than evil.

The trial marks the first time he has seen Lindsay Clancy since the killings.

Postpartum psychosis, the condition that Clancy's attorney says she had when she killed the children, is more serious and less common than postpartum depression. Researchers estimate that the condition afflicts 1 to 2 out of 1,000 women after delivery.

Stocks slip on Wall Street under pressure from higher oil prices and rising bond yields

By DAMIAN J. TROISE and ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writers

Stocks closed broadly lower Tuesday as another round of U.S. military strikes on Iran sent oil prices higher, stoking worries about stubbornly high inflation. A bond market sell-off deepened, putting more pressure on stocks.

The S&P 500 index fell 0.7%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 0.8%, and the Nasdaq composite slid 1%. The major indexes have lost ground three days in a row.

The weak start to September follows a shaky but mostly positive month for Wall Street. Every major index notched monthly gains in August. The same worries continue to hang over Wall Street, though, including anxiety over rising prices, government debt, and the impact of global conflicts on the U.S. and the global economy.

Technology stocks were among the heaviest weights on the market. Nvidia fell 1.5%, Amazon dropped 1.9% and Advanced Micro Devices gave up 2.4%. Their big market values tend to give them more influence over the broader market's direction and their growth amid the artificial-intelligence boom has been heavily reliant on borrowing, which becomes more expensive as interest rates rise.

Much of the continued pressure being felt by Wall Street is coming from an ongoing sell-off in U.S. government bonds. The yield on the 10-year Treasury, which tends to impact mortgage rates, rose to 4.79% from 4.75% late Monday. It was as low as 4.20% at the beginning of 2026.

The yield on the 2-year Treasury, which closely tracks expectations for Federal Reserve moves on interest rates, rose to 4.39% from 4.34% late Monday. That's up significantly from about 3.50% at the beginning of 2026.

Bond yields, which have an inverse relationship to prices, rise as bond prices fall. Rising yields signal that investors are demanding a higher return from Treasuries because they are becoming riskier. Growing government debt is highlighting that risk.

The U.S. debt surpassed \$40 trillion two weeks ago, a shocking milestone as defense costs and interest on the burgeoning deficit make up an enormous share of federal spending. The bond sell-off is global, with other nations facing the same economic pressures.

Higher yields on bonds signal higher borrowing costs on mortgages and a wide range of other loans. Higher borrowing costs tend to weigh down investments, including stocks, while making it more difficult for businesses to expand.

Oil prices have been behind much of the pressure on inflation, bond yields and the broader stock market. The price of Brent crude, the international standard, rose 4.6% to settle at \$94.65. U.S. oil climbed 5.2% to settle at \$90.22 per barrel — the first time it closed above \$90 in more than a month.

Energy costs remain high and volatile amid the ongoing U.S. war with Iran, which has essentially shut down the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20% of the world's oil is typically shipped.

Higher oil prices have pushed up costs for everything from gasoline to shipped goods, fueling inflation that has been squeezing households and businesses.

Higher inflation has also been a problem for the Federal Reserve. The rate of inflation is well above 3%, and Wall Street expects the Fed to raise interest rates before the year is over in order to try to bring inflation down to its 2% target. Investors are betting on a 66% chance that the central bank will raise its benchmark interest rate at its upcoming September meeting, according to CME FedWatch.

The Fed will get more updates on inflation ahead of the meeting. Meanwhile, it is getting updates on the

jobs market this week. On Tuesday, the government reported that U.S. job openings rose slightly in July. A broader monthly report for August will be released on Friday.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 54.67 points to 7,631.47. The Dow dropped 419.02 points to 52,766.88, and the Nasdaq fell 271.11 points to close at 26,099.77.

Markets in Europe fell and markets in Asia ended mixed.

House passes short-term funding bill to avoid a shutdown before the election

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House passed a short-term measure Tuesday to fund the federal government into early December, a move designed to avoid a chaotic shutdown as lawmakers campaign for reelection.

Lawmakers needed to act before the fiscal year concludes at the end of September to avoid a funding lapse. They were determined not to bump up against that deadline during the campaign season following this past year's historic shutdowns.

The House passed the bill by a vote of 370-48. The Senate has already overwhelmingly approved the measure, so it now moves to President Donald Trump's desk for his signature.

"It gives the nation and our constituents certainty, certainty that the government will remain open, certainty that our service members will be paid," said Rep. Tom Cole, the Republican chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

A record 43-day shutdown occurred last fall when the two parties disagreed on renewing an expiring tax credit that lowers the cost of health coverage obtained through Affordable Care Act marketplaces. Then came the shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security, which lasted 76 days before lawmakers agreed to fund much of the department but not its immigration enforcement operations.

Lawmakers were wary of a repeat before voters go to the polls. They also blamed the other party for the recent impasses.

"We're going to avoid the threat of another Democratic shutdown," House Speaker Mike Johnson told reporters in advance of the vote.

After the vote Johnson said the House delivered, despite those who doubted the Republican majority would be able to push past its own divisions and rally support.

"We're continuing to do the grown-up thing, get the job done," he said.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro, the lead Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, encouraged her Democratic colleagues to vote for the measure during a closed-door meeting Tuesday morning.

She said the bill was much improved from the product that passed the House earlier this summer on a mostly party-line basis. For example, she said it prevents the Department of Homeland Security from transferring funds to the Border Patrol, and it delays a proposed rule that would give political appointees in the Trump administration more authority to stop federal grants from going out for programs they view as not in line with the president's agenda. Those changes were made when the Senate approved its version of the bill.

Democrats fear the administration will use the proposed regulation on grants to steer money away from Democratic-led states. DeLauro called the delay an important first step, but said more must be done to block the policy from taking effect.

"Whether a community receives disaster relief should not depend on who they voted for in the last election," DeLauro said.

The short-term measure funds federal agencies generally at current levels through Dec. 11. It will give lawmakers more time to find compromise on a full-year measure, though that will likely be quite difficult.

Republicans are seeking hundreds of billions of dollars in additional spending for the military while cutting most non-defense programs. Democrats say that's a non-starter and insist on a bipartisan approach that treats domestic programs with parity.

DA says a teen who recorded San Diego mosque shooting livestream has been charged with murder

By GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

A 17-year-old North Carolina girl who recorded a livestream of a shooting that killed three people at a San Diego mosque and then disseminated the attackers' white-supremacist writings has been charged with murder by aiding and abetting, a district attorney said Monday.

Forsyth County District Attorney Jim O'Neill said at a news conference in Winston-Salem that the girl, identified in court records as Sarah L. Santiago, was arrested last week. A grand jury indicted her on three counts of murder and one count of conspiracy Monday.

"At this time I can confirm that my client is innocent of all these charges," Santiago's attorney, Alan Doorasamy Sr., wrote in an email to The Associated Press. He said he had not received evidence from law enforcement and did not elaborate on any connection between Santiago and the attackers.

Under North Carolina law, the aiding-and-abetting charges carry the same penalties as if the girl had committed the attack herself, O'Neill said. She is charged as an adult and was being held without bond.

According to the indictment, Santiago agreed prior to the attack that she would record the livestream as the gunmen filmed it, distribute the recording, and release a document written by the attackers. She carried out those tasks, it said. She's also accused of purchasing a patch bearing a white-supremacist symbol and sending it to one of the gunmen to wear during the attack.

In all, three people watched the initial livestream, O'Neill said. It was not immediately clear if investigators had identified the others, and the indictment did not specify on which platforms the livestream was recorded or shared.

"The individual here, locally, was the person who was recording the livestream," O'Neill said. "She disseminated that information and she published their manifesto."

Cain Clark, 17, and Caleb Vazquez, 18, stormed the Islamic Center on May 18 before being driven back outside by a security guard who exchanged gunfire with them as he initiated a lockdown, helping to protect 140 children who were just steps away.

The pair killed the guard, Amin Abdullah, and two other men before taking their own lives in a vehicle nearby. They left behind rambling writings full of vitriol against a wide range of people, and cited the shooter who killed 51 people at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2019, as one of the models for their violence.

Clark and Vazquez also planned subsequent attacks on two other targets: a Jewish temple and Black students at a high school, authorities said. O'Neill credited the guard and other victims at the mosque with having saved countless lives.

The attackers' writings cited a range of far-right ideological inspirations, including the notion that white people are being replaced by other populations, and detailed their motives and goals. They included hateful rhetoric toward Jewish people, Muslims and Islam, as well as the LGBTQ+ community, Black people, women, and the political left and right.

They indicated they were trying to accelerate the collapse of society. Vazquez wrote of having "some mental health issues" and being rejected by women.

In a written statement, the Vazquez family said Caleb Vazquez was on the autism spectrum and had grown to resent parts of his identity. The family said they believed that, combined with exposure to hateful rhetoric online, contributed to his radicalization.

Tazheen Nizam, executive director of the San Diego office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, a Muslim civil rights group, said it is essential to hold everyone involved in such attacks accountable.

"We as a community need to invest in dismantling anti-Muslim hate," Nizam said.

Santiago's arrest came just days before classes were to begin for the new school year, O'Neill said.

"The thought of her going back to school ... we didn't know what she was capable of," he said.

Apple's new CEO, John Ternus, takes over from Tim Cook after 15 years

By The Associated Press undefined

Apple's new CEO John Ternus takes the helm of the iconic tech giant on Tuesday, ending Tim Cook's 15-year tenure during which the company's value skyrocketed to \$4.6 trillion thanks to the iPhone's enormous popularity.

The transition to a new CEO comes at a pivotal time for Apple. Artificial intelligence has unleashed the greatest upheaval within the industry since Steve Jobs unveiled the first iPhone in 2007. Apple has gotten off to a rough start in AI after stumbling in its efforts to deliver new features built on the technology, as promised nearly two years ago.

Earlier this year, it unveiled new artificial intelligence advances, including upgrades to its Siri assistant, emphasizing a focus on privacy and day-to-day use as the iPhone maker tries to catch up with rivals.

Ternus faces challenges that will force him to step outside his comfort zone in hardware engineering. Beyond finding ways to keep Apple competitive in the artificial intelligence race, he will need to navigate supply chain questions and relationships with figures such as President Donald Trump, who offered public praise for his predecessor on Tuesday.

Serving as Apple CEO will also require soft skills, including developing relationships with important figures. Cook cultivated ties with Trump as he navigated the company through business challenges, including Trump's trade and tariff war targeting countries in Asia, where Apple has extensive manufacturing supply chains. Although he is handing over the CEO reins at Apple, Cook is widely expected to help the company maintain a good relationship with Trump after he shifts to his new role as executive chairman.

Ternus worked on some of Apple's signature products under Cook, including the Apple Watch, AirPods and Apple Vision Pro. He will headline next week's launch of the latest iPhone at Apple's Cupertino, California, headquarters.

Kickers taken in the NFL draft rarely have long-term success with their original teams

By STEVE MEGARGEE AP Sports Writer

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) — Green Bay Packers rookie kicker Trey Smack's preseason performance indicates he has what it takes to stick around for several years with the team that just drafted him.

But the sixth-round pick from Florida must buck history to do it. There's perhaps no other position with less of a correlation between a player's draft status and his long-term success.

Just three of the 16 kickers drafted from 2016-23 stayed with their original teams for at least three full seasons. The only one who remains with the team that selected him is Cincinnati's Evan McPherson, a 2021 fifth-round pick from Florida.

"With all players coming into the National Football League, it takes a little time," Packers general manager Brian Gutekunst said. "At the other positions ... you have probably a little more grace period to develop. Whereas as a kicker, you don't. So you see a lot of those guys bounce around before they catch on."

Indeed, plenty of those kickers who got drafted from 2016-23 have enjoyed productive NFL careers. Kansas City's Harrison Butker is a three-time Super Bowl champion. Philadelphia's Jake Elliott was on two Super Bowl-winning teams and made a Pro Bowl. Daniel Carlson earned All-Pro honors for Las Vegas in 2022.

They found success only after switching teams.

Butker lost a training camp battle in Carolina and Elliott did the same in Cincinnati before they landed in their current spots. Carlson played just two games for Minnesota in 2018 before getting cut.

"It's a weird phenomenon," former Packers kicker Mason Crosby said. "But I do feel like coming out of college, adjusting to the NFL, the ball, the timing, the speed of the game, all the pressure — all of those things — it just doesn't always work out in that first run."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 64 of 67

Crosby is an exception. He spent 16 years with Green Bay and became the Packers' all-time leading scorer after they selected him out of Colorado in the sixth round of the 2007 draft.

But he understands why other drafted kickers haven't had that kind of staying power. One major reason is the ball itself.

Adjusting to how the NFL differs from the NCAA

The NCAA and NFL don't have the same size requirements for their footballs. That caused a tough transition for Arizona Cardinals kicker Chad Ryland, who went to the New England Patriots in the fourth round of the 2023 draft but was cut a year later.

"A college ball's a little bit smaller than the NFL ball, so with that come different factors in how the wind affects the movement of the ball, how mis-hits work," Ryland said. "You can't quite get away with as much with the NFL ball, which is why becoming a good ball striker is such a high valued thing in the NFL. It's not just having a big leg."

The hash marks also are positioned differently. They're 40 feet apart in college. In the NFL, they're separated by 18½ feet, matching the distance between the uprights.

Crosby says that forces NFL kickers to adjust to subtler and trickier angles.

"Think of a golf course," said Crosby, who now hosts a show on the Wisconsin Sports Radio Network. "If you've got a hard dogleg left, you can cut over the trees. That angle seems simpler than whenever it's just a slight, subtle dogleg, and you have to try that little perfect-angled shot to get in prime position."

In the NFL, the games also are tighter. According to Sportradar, NFL games last year had an average margin of 11.2 points last year, compared to 16.4 points for college games featuring two FBS opponents.

"It's that first just like initial shock of like how serious this is and how close games are," said Las Vegas kicker Matt Gay, who lasted just one season in Tampa Bay after the Buccaneers selected him in the fifth round of the 2019 draft. "And I think it just takes a second to get your feet wet, get a little comfortable. I think those expectations with the team that drafts you, you feel it."

"And then almost like once you get released or go somewhere else, it's like you can kind of decompress a little bit and it's like, 'Oh, what just happened?' And guys find their feet on that next team."

NFL accuracy rate leaves no room for error

Veteran kickers also have become so proficient that anyone breaking into the league can't afford to start slowly.

Sportradar says NFL kickers made 85.6% of their field-goal attempts last season, including 84.3% from 40-49 yards out and 68.8% from at least 50 yards. FBS kickers made 76.6% of their field goals, including 67% from 40-48 yards and just 51.8% from at least 50.

"It's just a new environment," Smack said. "You haven't been there before. You don't know what to expect. As young kickers, we try to resolve the equation of how to kick in the NFL and we think of it as different, since we did well in college, now we're at a whole new level where everybody's the best of the best in the NFL. How can we get better? This is one of the positions where it's kind of like, you don't need to get better. You just need to swing your swing and trust your process."

There are indications this trend could be changing.

Four of the five kickers drafted from 2024-25 remain with their original teams, though the Los Angeles Rams cut 2024 sixth-round pick Joshua Karty last November. That group includes 2025 All-Pro Will Reichard of Minnesota.

Smack, the only kicker drafted this year, went 9 of 9 on preseason field-goal attempts and made three from at least 50 yards, with a long of 59. The Packers want him to stabilize their kicking situation, which has been a problem ever since they moved on from Crosby.

Anders Carlson, a 2023 sixth-round pick, lasted one season. Brayden Narveson opened 2024 as the Packers' main kicker but stayed for just six games before giving way to Brandon McManus. The Packers are switching kickers again after McManus missed two field goals and an extra-point attempt in a 31-27 playoff loss at Chicago.

"Hopefully, we can have some patience," Gutekunst said. "I stood up here and told you I always envied (former Packers general manager) Ted (Thompson) because he had a lot of patience with Mason as he

was going through the things that he went through early and late in the middle of his career. He just, he had a conviction there, and we certainly do with Trey as well."

Social media companies are trying harder to know which users are kids

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

Of the child safety measures agreed to in Meta's landmark legal settlement, no category contains more detailed requirements than its commitments on age assurance — and for good reason. No matter how well the protections work, they are of little use if Meta can't tell which users are kids.

Determining which accounts belong to children is also the linchpin of child safety measures that other companies, including Google, TikTok, and Roblox, are ramping up as public and regulatory sentiment turns against them in the U.S. and other countries.

The Meta settlement — with protections the company says could become industry standards — will give the social media giant a year to refine its approach. But the options are limited, and improving age verification technology presents steep challenges, including navigating privacy implications not just for children but for adults who could have to prove they are over 18.

The \$18 billion settlement resolves claims from state attorneys general that it hurt children's mental health by deliberately designing its Instagram and Facebook platforms in ways that hooked young people's attention. The agreement announced last week with the Menlo Park, California, company involves 48 states plus the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.

Tech companies lean on AI for estimating ages

In the offline world, people use government-issued IDs to prove they are over 18 or 21, whether they want to get into a club or buy cigarettes. While this technically works online too, many people are not comfortable giving a Big Tech company like Meta or Google access to their driver's license or passport.

Meta accepts IDs to check ages, and promises to delete them within 30 days. Beyond IDs, though, a growing number of tech companies are using artificial intelligence to try to determine users' ages. This is not true age verification. While AI can estimate a person's age, often accurately, it can't verify a person's birth date.

Last year, Google began using an age-assurance system for YouTube that relies on AI to differentiate between adults and minors based on their watch histories. Meta does the same.

AI age checks use clues to determine how old someone is. On Instagram, this includes "contextual clues" such as posts about birthday celebrations or school, and things like which posts people like, comment or linger on, who their friends are, as well as the times of day they log in. For instance, someone who is offline during school hours would likely be school-aged.

In a blog post last year, Meta said its AI also looks at photos people post for visual cues, including "height or bone structure, to estimate someone's general age; it does not identify the specific person in the image."

"By combining these visual insights with our analysis of text and interactions, we can significantly increase the number of underage accounts we identify and remove," the company added.

Under the settlement, Meta agreed to strengthen its age-checking technology using its own tools, as well as third-party ones, with regular outside audits on how well it is working. The agreement also includes specific goals around false positive rates — that is, minors who are identified as over 18. And if a user is identified as under 13 and kicked off one of its platforms, Meta will check the ages of their friends, too.

Face scans count as age assurance on some sites

Identity verification companies like Yoti and Persona, which work with tech companies like Meta and Roblox, use video selfies people upload to estimate their ages.

The gaming site Roblox, which, unlike social media platforms, allows kids under 13 to sign up, requires players to take a video selfie to estimate their age. Roblox says the videos are deleted after the age check is processed. Users are not required to submit a face scan to use the platform, only if they want to chat with other users.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 66 of 67

Some users have reported inaccuracies, and some experts have expressed caution about the reliability of facial age estimation tools, especially for women or certain racial or ethnic groups. But Matt Kaufman, chief safety officer at Roblox, said last year that for people between about 5 and 25, the system can accurately estimate their age within one or two years.

Some websites and social media companies such as Meta have argued that age verification should be done by app store owners, such as Apple and Google, and not individual platforms. This would mean that app stores would have to verify their users' ages before they allow them to download apps. Unsurprisingly, Apple and Google disagree.

"Billed as 'simple' by its backers, including Meta, this proposal fails to cover desktop computers or other devices that are commonly shared within families. It also could be ineffective against pre-installed apps," Google said in a blog post last year.

Privacy concerns remain an obstacle

Age checks are meant to keep kids out of online spaces that are not safe or appropriate for them, whether that's social media or adult websites. But critics of online age verification see a worrisome trend toward a less secure, less private and less free internet, where people can be denied access not just to pornography but news, health information and the ability to speak openly and anonymously.

What's considered harmful to minors can be subjective, and this is where experts believe laws requiring age verification can run afoul of the First Amendment. The question could lead to people being required to verify their ages to access anything, from Netflix to a neighborhood blog.

The digital rights group Electronic Frontier Foundation has been warning for years about "age-gating the internet."

"(No) matter the method, every system demands users hand over sensitive and immutable personal information that links their offline identity to their online activity," EFF writes in a blog post. "Once that valuable data is collected, it can easily be leaked, hacked, or misused."

Today in History: September 2 Japan surrenders to end World War II

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 2, the 245th day of 2026. There are 120 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 2, 1945, Japan formally surrendered in ceremonies aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, ending World War II.

Also on this date:

In 1666, the Great Fire of London began, which would destroy more than 13,000 homes and hundreds of additional structures, including St. Paul's Cathedral, over the ensuing three days.

In 1789, the United States Treasury Department was established.

In 1864, during the Civil War, Union Gen. William T. Sherman's forces occupied Atlanta.

In 1935, a Category 5 hurricane slammed into the Florida Keys on Labor Day, claiming more than 400 lives.

In 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the National Defense Education Act, which provided aid to public and private education to promote learning in such fields as math and science.

In 1963, Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace prevented the integration of Tuskegee High School by encircling the building with state troopers.

In 1969, in what some regard as the birth of the internet, two connected computers at the University of California, Los Angeles, passed test data through a 15-foot cable.

In 1998, a Swissair MD-11 jetliner crashed off Nova Scotia, killing all 229 people aboard.

In 2005, four days after Hurricane Katrina, a National Guard convoy packed with food, water and medicine rolled into New Orleans.

In 2013, on her fifth attempt, U.S. endurance swimmer Diana Nyad became the first person to swim

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Sept. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 088 ~ 67 of 67

from Cuba to Florida without using a shark cage.

In 2018, a huge fire engulfed Brazil's 200-year-old National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, as firefighters and museum workers raced to save historical relics.

In 2019, a fire swept a vessel carrying recreational scuba divers that was anchored near an island off the Southern California coast; the captain and four other crew members were able to escape the flames, but 34 people who were trapped below died.

In 2024, an attempted jailbreak in Congo's main prison left at least 129 people dead, including some who were shot by guards and soldiers and others who died in a stampede at the overcrowded penitentiary in Kinshasa.

Today's Birthdays: Former United States Olympic Committee Chairman and former Major League Baseball commissioner Peter Ueberroth is 89. Football Hall of Famer Terry Bradshaw is 78. Basketball Hall of Famer Nate Archibald is 78. Actor Mark Harmon is 75. Tennis Hall of Famer Jimmy Connors is 74. Football Hall of Famer Eric Dickerson is 66. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is 64. Actor Keanu Reeves is 62. Boxing Hall of Famer Lennox Lewis is 61. Actor Salma Hayek is 60. R&B singer K-Ci is 57. Electronic music DJ/producer Zedd is 37.