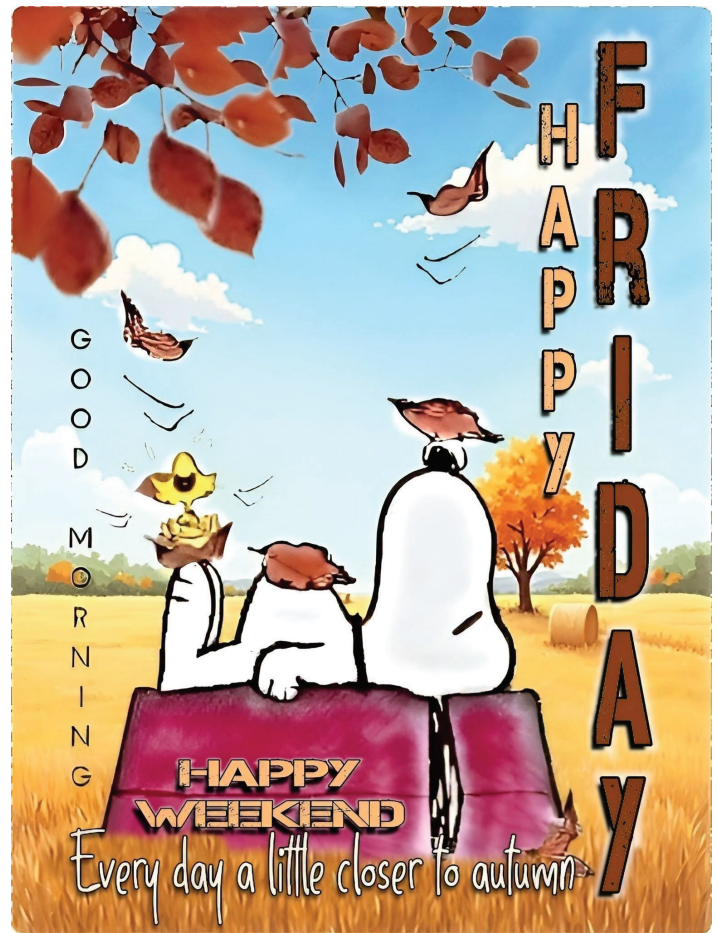


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Community Calendar

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.)

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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

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Sunday, Sept. 6

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship 9 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m. and at Zion, 11 a.m.

Third Grade Basketball practice in the GHS Gym, 4 p.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 7

LABOR DAY

No School

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1440

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

Gloria Steinem Dies

Feminist activist, journalist, and author Gloria Steinem died Wednesday at her home in New York City at age 92, her foundation announced yesterday.

Steinem became one of the most recognizable leaders of the modern women's movement, spending six decades advocating for gender equality, reproductive rights, and women's political representation. Her national profile began with a 1963 exposé of working conditions at New York's Playboy Club, where she spent 11 days undercover as a Bunny. She cofounded Ms. magazine in 1971—read her reflections on the first issue. She helped establish the National Women's Political Caucus and Women's Media Center and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2013. See how the movements she helped lead reshaped American life. Her final memoir, "An Unexpected Life," is due out later this month.

A Changing Game

College football returns this weekend with a packed slate of games. No. 9 Ole Miss, facing No. 24 Louisville on Sunday (7:30 pm ET, ABC), is the lone ranked matchup, but Week 1 features multiple storied programs clashing.

No. 11 LSU hosting Clemson (7:30 pm ET, ABC) is widely considered Saturday's marquee game. The Bayou Bengals and new coach Lane Kiffin have drawn scrutiny by attempting to roster players who signed NFL contracts. Those athletes sought another year of college eligibility by challenging NCAA rules—a move opposed by the Southeastern Conference, which is reportedly considering suspending or expelling LSU in response. Sunday's lineup includes No. 4 Notre Dame playing Wisconsin at Lambeau Field (7:30 pm ET, NBC).

The action follows a brief Week 0 schedule that saw former New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick lead North Carolina to a 15-10 victory over TCU in Dublin, Ireland.

 **Humankind:** A Chicago grandma has become a local celebrity by filling city buses, festivals, and baseball games with bubbles.

Nvidia Stacks Up

Nvidia is purchasing Hugging Face—a repository of open-source AI models—for \$12.9B, the company announced yesterday. The deal positions the world's most valuable company to expand its control of the AI ecosystem beyond supplying semiconductor chips.

Hugging Face received a private-market valuation of \$4.5B only three years ago. Since then, it has attracted more than 18 million users and 200,000 companies that use the platform to discover, share, and collaborate on more than 3 million open-source AI models. By purchasing the world's biggest open-source AI model repository, Nvidia positions itself for a day when chip demand may slow. The deal is expected to close in the first half of 2027, pending regulatory approval.

When Hugging Face was the subject of an OpenAI hack in July, the company closed the vulnerability using a Chinese open-source model. See five of the most fascinating takeaways from the hack.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Sean "Diddy" Combs' prison release date moved up to Feb. 5, 2028.

Music mogul was convicted on prostitution-related charges; see previous write-up.

The Athletic's investigation into Dianna Russini's journalism concludes the NFL reporter violated publication standards by engaging in an undisclosed relationship with New England Patriots coach Mike Vrabel. Read the full report.

Fox News parts ways with longtime host Maria Bartiromo; the network did not specify a reason behind her departure.

Science & Technology

OpenAI begins phased rollout of GPT-6 Astra, its latest model that can independently find and exploit security flaws in computer systems.

Tesla hosts private event promoting its fully autonomous Cybercab.

Psychedelic mushrooms contain a compound that may prevent nerve damage and pain caused by chemotherapy, new research using mice indicates; humans receiving cancer treatment will test the process in clinical trials later this year.

BepiColombo spacecraft approaches Mercury after traveling almost eight years through the solar system; mission will allow scientists to study the planet's geology, surface composition, and magnetic field.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +1.1%, Dow +1.2%, Nasdaq +1.4%) after Fed Gov. Christopher Waller signals support for holding interest rates steady this month if inflation continues to cool.

US mortgage rates climb to 13-month high, with average 30-year fixed rate rising to 6.71% from 6.66% last week; rate stood at 6.5% one year ago.

Dutch central bank reallocates roughly \$11B worth of gold reserves from the US and Canada to the UK, citing geopolitical tensions and desire for greater access to reserves.

Politics & World Affairs

Billionaire Leon Black and former associate of Jeffrey Epstein defies subpoena to testify before House Oversight Committee, sues to avoid turning over requested nondisclosure agreements.

People aged 65 and older began outnumbering children 5 and younger worldwide for the first time in recorded history in 2023, US Census report finds; the so-called "tipping point" in fertility came years earlier than expected.

Justice Department charges ICE officer who nonfatally shot a Venezuelan man in Minnesota with lying to investigators.

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).
=====

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Tensions, communication concerns surface during Groton baseball, softball discussion

By Elizabeth Varin

Tensions between the Groton City Council and the Groton Baseball/Softball Foundation took center field Thursday night as council members discussed the end-of-season baseball and softball report.

Foundation President Lars Hanson voiced a number of concerns to the council, including what he called "a skewed" revenue vs. expenses report. The foundation, a nonprofit organization that supports youth baseball and softball in Groton, raises money for improvements at the baseball complex and helps provide financial assistance to families who may otherwise be unable to afford registration and playing fees.

The financial report presented to the council compares baseball revenue and expenses from 2015 through the 2026 season. The city spent \$1,787,999.97 in that 12-year period while revenue totaled \$1,085,941.40. That brought the total financial loss for the city to \$712,058.57.

Hanson said the numbers alone don't tell the whole story. The city has a new concession stand and bathroom facility, as well as new scoreboards within the last few years.

"This program out there has never ever made any (money)," he said. "Neither has the pool. It's not designed for that. It's designed to keep people in this community."

"We need to keep everything going for the youth in this community," he continued. "That's the bottom line. If we lose the youth in this community, the community goes dry."

The concerns aired Thursday date back, in part, to a discussion at the council's Aug. 4 meeting. During that meeting, Baseball/Softball Foundation Vice President Jarod Fliehs raised safety concerns about the bleachers at the Locke-Karst Field at the baseball complex and presented a quote to move the bleachers, pour new footings and return them to their original location.

Councilman Brian Bahr questioned whether a less expensive solution could address the issue and also expressed frustration over the level of financial support the city already provides for the baseball and softball fields and programs. The exchange became part of a larger discussion Thursday about communication and the relationship between the council and the foundation.

Something needs to be done about the bleacher at the Locke-Karst field, Hanson said. The city can't host more state tournaments on the large field until the bleacher is fixed.

"You can put lipstick on a pig and it's still a pig," Hanson told the council. "Fix it and fix it right, OK."

The city and local businesses benefit extensively from the tournaments, including increased sales at local stores and increased taxes being paid on those sales, he said.

Hanson also addressed specific concerns raised during the August meeting, specifically a request that foundation members volunteer more time during uniform handout days.

"That's bulls*** Brian," Hanson said. "You have no idea how much time we spend out there."

Councilman Brian Bahr responded to concerns about the bleachers by drawing on his experience in the construction industry.

Bahr discussed potential alternatives for addressing the safety issues while looking for a solution that would cost the city less than the proposed repair. He questioned whether the bleachers could be stabilized or repaired without the expense of removing them, installing new footings and replacing them.

"Safety is a main concern out there, and I do believe it," he said. "But we got to pump the brakes, and we've got to look at things instead of just throwing money at something."

The conversation extended beyond the past season, highlighting questions about roles, expectations and how the city and foundation can work together to support the community's youth sports programs.

"One of the things that I think we probably should work together on more is the delineation of roles and responsibilities," said Councilman Mike Shilhanek. "I do know that there's been some challenges, and I think those challenges may be because the roles and responsibilities are confusing."

Councilman Karyn Babcock called out the hostility between the foundation and the City Council.

"I feel like there's a lot of hostility between the foundation and the City Council," she said. "I don't know how to resolve that or if you have any suggestions on how we can alleviate that. ...I would like for that

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(tension) to go away and us have a better relationship with the foundation, but I don't know how it got to that."

Councilman Jordan Voss-Severson added that she doesn't think the friction is from jersey handout or concrete sidewalk discussion.

"I think those are little pieces that are maybe causing issues today, but those issues didn't start 10 years ago for there to be this hostility between the two groups," she said. "I do think you coming was really great. ... I think that before it becomes a big thing that blows up ... there should be conversations leading up to that. You guys bringing concerns to us, having this discussion, I think it really helps smooth things over. Then I think everyone can really see both sides of the story."

Further discussion about baseball and softball was tabled to a future meeting.



Football
Flandreau at
Groton Area
Friday, Sept. 4, 7 p.m.



Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

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Northern State grabs the Ag Bowl win over Winona State

Aberdeen, S.D. – For the first time in over 20 years, the Northern State University football team is starting off the season with back-to-back wins, downing Winona State in the NSIC opener from Dacotah Bank Stadium. The Wolves racked up 31 points in the win and saw Hank Kraft match his rushing total from a week ago with another 232 yards and three total touchdowns.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 31, WSU 16

Records: NSU 2-0 (1-0 NSIC), WSU 0-2 (0-1 NSIC)

Attendance: 5855

HOW IT HAPPENED

The Wolves started fast, scoring 14 points in the first off a pair of Hank Kraft touchdowns, including the game opening scoring rush of 92-yards; Kraft now holds the second and third longest rushing scores in program history after his 89-yard last week and 92-yarder today

Kraft followed that up with a 3-yard receiving touchdown via Ty Englehart with 15 seconds to play in the opening frame

Winona State answered back in the second, putting three points on the board via a 38-yard field goal by Evan Swanstrom

Swanstrom opened the second half scoring with his second field goal at 10:15 in the third, bring the Warriors within eight of the Wolves

Nine plays and 65 yards later, Joey Dube-Garrett threw the first touchdown of his Northern State career to Jacoby Boykins, a 29-yard receiving score, which gave NSU a 21-6 lead

Swanstrom upheld his scoring prowess for the Warriors adding a 26-yard field goal as the third quarter wrapped up

It was all Northern State in the fourth, as Kraft rushed for his third touchdown of the evening a 47-yard run and Jeremy Caruso capped off the evening with a 34-yard field goal in the final two minutes of play

Caruso also went a perfect 4-for-4 in PAT, scoring a total of seven points for the Wolves in the win

Northern tallied 404 yards of total offense with 16 first downs, averaging 8.6 yards per rush and 5.0 yards per reception

The Warriors recorded 351 yards of total offense with 16 first downs as well, averaging 4.9 yards per rush and 5.1 yards per reception with the Wolves defense holding them to just one touchdown in the game

The Wolves defense held WSU to 4-of-16 on third downs, forced one interception to close out the game, and tallied two sacks for a loss of 19 yards from Gabe Gutierrez; the two sacks move the edge to fourth all-time on the career lists with 14.5

Dube-Garrett and Englehart threw for a combined 146 yards with one touchdown apiece, converting 16-of-29 attempts

Kraft averaged 10.5 yards per carry with two rushing touchdowns, including a 92-yard long, to lead the Wolves on the ground and added a team second best 33 yards receiving with one touchdown

Boykins led the receivers with 54 total yards, averaging 13.5 yards per catch

Jake Adams was back to his double figure ways on defense, racking up 17 total tackles, including 11 solo stops, followed by Cooper Logan with eight

Elijah Jopp and Javonnee Szymanski were third on the team with six tackles each with Jopp notching 2.0 for a loss of nine yards

Landon Kelley grabbed the team's interception on a last-ditch scoring effort by the Warriors as time expired in the fourth

Jackson Isakson tallied 183 yards punting, averaging 45.8 yards per punt, while Caruso averaging 59.7 yards per kick-off with four touchbacks

In the return game, Cooper Eisenbeisz tallied a combined 61 return yards with a 35-yard long

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Hank Kraft: 265 total yards, 3 touchdowns, 10.5 yards per rush

Jacoby Boykins: 54 receiving yards, 1 touchdown

Jake Adams: 17 tackles, 11 solo tackles

Elijah Jopp: 6 tackles, 2.0 tackles for a loss

Gabe Gutierrez: 2.0 sacks for a loss of 19 yards

Jeremy Caruso: 4 PAT, 34-yd field goal

UP NEXT

Northern State hits the road for a pair of contests over the next two weeks. They travel to Southwest Minnesota State for a 5 p.m. kick-off on September 12 and Minnesota State for a 1 p.m. match-up on September 19.

Data as of 9/2/2026

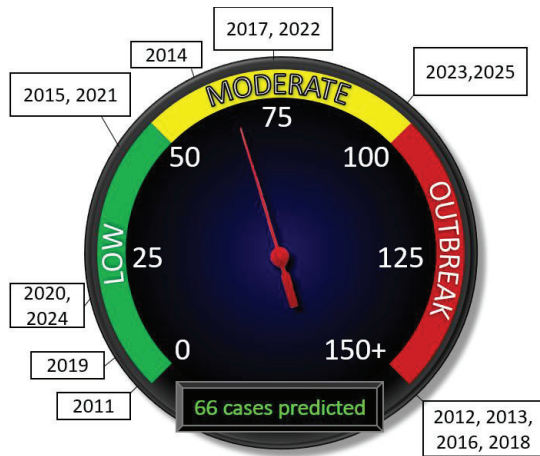
Division of Disease Prevention and Control

South Dakota Mosquito

SD West Nile Virus

- 19 human cases reported
 - 7 non-neuroinvasive cases
 - 12 neuroinvasive cases
 - 0 deaths
- 2 human viremic blood donor detections
- 7 counties with a positive mosquito pool

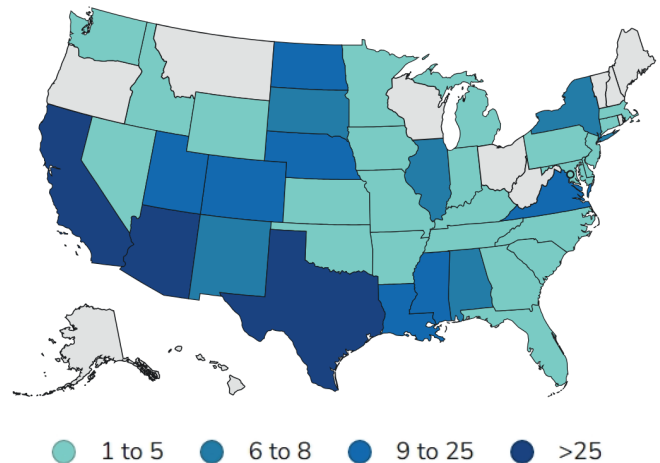
Current WNV SD Case Prediction:



US West Nile Virus

- 407 human cases reported
 - 285 of which are neuroinvasive
 - *Note: this map isn't as current as the SD data to the left*

WNV Human Disease Cases Reported by State of Residence:



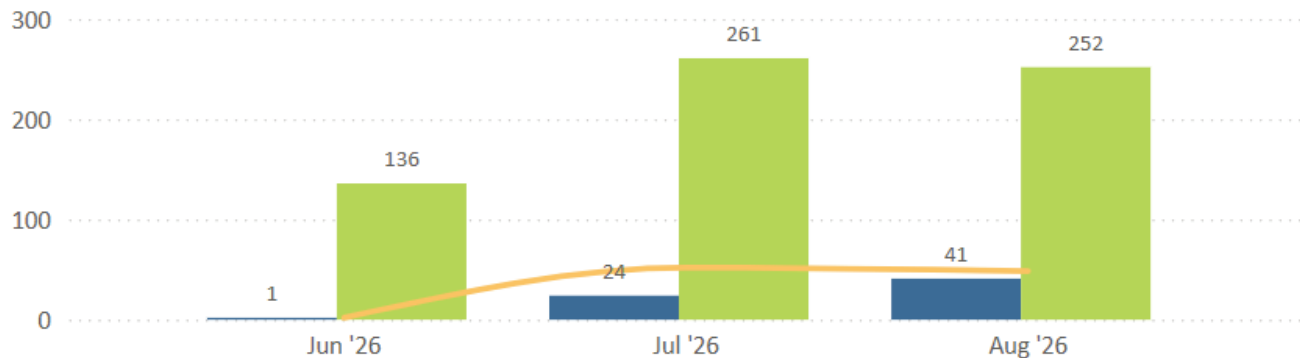
Data compiled from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. West Nile Virus: Current Year Data and Maps. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/west-nile-virus/data-maps/current-year-data.html>

SD Mosquito Surveillance Summary for 2026

- Total sites collecting mosquitos: 59
- Total mosquito pools tested: 715
- *Culex* Species Collected: 47,036
- Percent positivity: 9.23%

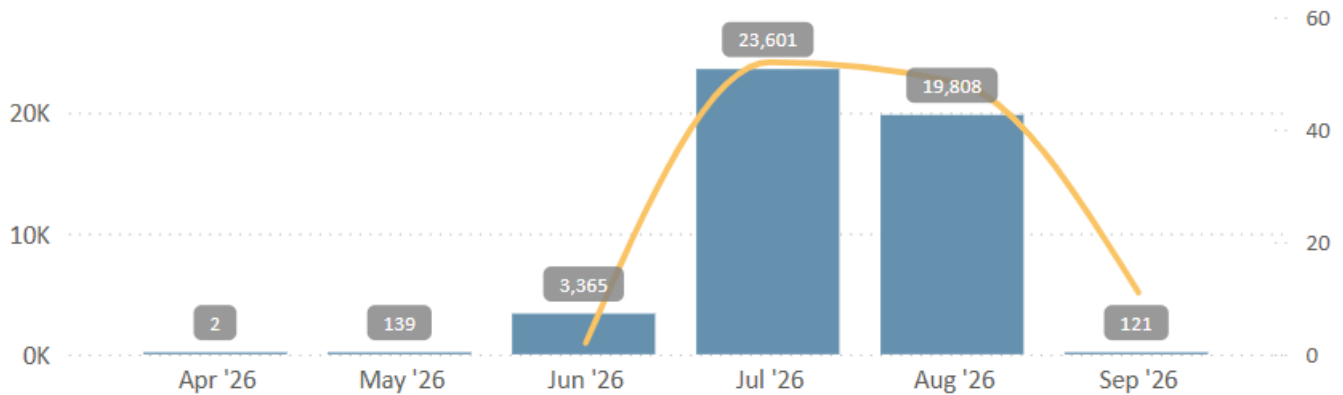
Number of Mosquito Pools Tested by Month and Status

Test Status: ● Positive ● Negative ● 5 Year Median Pool Count



Culex Mosquitoes Collected by Month

● Culex Species Collected ● 5 Year Median Pool Count





SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

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US Senate challenger says Wounded Knee medals 'should not stand'; incumbent says more info needed

Candidates respond to questions about 1890 massacre in South Dakota after Defense Department review

BY MEGHAN O'BRIEN

South Dakota Republican U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds said he wants to "get the facts" before deciding whether any medals awarded to soldiers who were at the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre should be rescinded, while his opponent said the medals "should not stand."

Independent candidate Brian Bengs is Rounds' only challenger in the Nov. 3 election after the Democratic nominee withdrew. Bengs served 26 years in the U.S. military and taught at the NATO School in Germany and the U.S. Air Force Academy, including courses on the law of war.

"And I will say categorically: Those medals are not earned. They are not deserved. They should not stand," Bengs said. "Their continuing standing is a dishonor to the individuals who currently hold the Medal of Honor."

Bengs spoke to South Dakota Searchlight for a recent episode of its Searchlight Report podcast, after Searchlight interviewed Rounds for an earlier episode.

Rounds is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. In a recent report about the pending National Defense Authorization Act, the committee included language directing the secretary of defense to "provide the full report and unredacted materials" from a recent review of the Wounded Knee medals.

In September, Secretary Pete Hegseth announced that a review ordered during President Joe Biden's administration had been completed and the medals would not be rescinded. The department has said about 20 soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor for actions at Wounded Knee, though the exact number is unclear due to incomplete or unclear records.

Rounds said he and other committee members are responding to survivors' descendants who want more information.

"There's a lot of people in South Dakota that live on the reservations that have relatives that were wounded or killed during that massacre that occurred in December of 1890," Rounds said. "Those people still feel strongly about the loss to their families."

Rounds said he ultimately wants the military to decide about the medals, "rather than having Congress get in the middle of it." Multiple attempts to pass congressional legislation rescinding the medals have failed, with neither Rounds nor any other member of the state's congressional delegation signing on as sponsors or cosponsors.

"Under the conditions at that time, there may very well have been the delivery or the awarding of those Medals of Honor appropriately, but there may also have been other areas where they may not have been," Rounds said. "But rather than arbitrarily saying we support it or we don't support it, let's get the facts."

The massacre occurred on Dec. 29, 1890, near Wounded Knee Creek in southwestern South Dakota, where a large group of Lakota people camped while traveling to the Pine Ridge Agency. They were surrounded by hundreds of Army soldiers. A shot rang out while the soldiers attempted to disarm the camp, and the soldiers opened fire.

Fewer than 40 soldiers were killed (some by friendly fire, according to historians), while estimates of Lakota deaths are 200 or more, including men, women and children. After some of the bodies froze on the ground for several days, a military-led burial party placed them in a mass grave.

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The Department of Defense created a five-member panel to review the medals in 2024.

In a redacted report obtained by South Dakota Searchlight, the panel's Defense-appointed chairman wrote, "While the actions of leadership were suspect, circumstances chaotic, and non-combatants tragically killed, three of the five panel members believe that individual soldiers distinguished themselves in action and found no disqualifying information."

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

COMMENTARY

Sometimes the best crop is grass

Proposals from South Dakota congressional delegation hold potential for farmers, ranchers, conservation and wildlife

by Brad Johnson

South Dakota farmers are sending Washington a message with their acres. It deserves attention.

This year, producers offered nearly 290,000 South Dakota acres for Conservation Reserve Program enrollment. About 54,000 acres were renewals and 237,000 acres were new land. The U.S. Department of Agriculture accepted about 209,000 acres.

Those numbers suggest something plain: Many South Dakota landowners are deciding some of their acres make more sense as grass than as another crop.

That comes at an interesting time in the farm bill debate. The Senate Agriculture Committee failed to advance its bill Aug. 6 amid disputes over food assistance and Republican absences. Chairman John Boozman says he will try again.

For farmers and ranchers who have waited years for a new farm bill, another delay is hardly welcome. But the conservation provisions are not necessarily finished.

South Dakota has some ideas already on the table.

Sen. John Thune has proposed changes to CRP that are included in the Senate bill. They would restore cost-share assistance for mid-contract management such as prescribed fire, help pay for fencing and water development, improve grazing and haying flexibility and raise the annual CRP payment limit.

Those changes may sound technical, but they matter. Grazing, prescribed fire and other management can improve forage and rejuvenate habitat for pheasants and other wildlife.

U.S. Senate Majority Leader John Thune and Sen. Mike Rounds, both Republicans from South Dakota, speak with an attendee of Dakotafest in Mitchell on Aug. 19, 2026. (Photo by Joshua Haiar_South Dakota Searchlight).jpeg

U.S. Senate Majority Leader John Thune and Sen. Mike Rounds, both Republicans from South Dakota, speak with an attendee of Dakotafest in Mitchell on Aug. 19, 2026. (Photo by Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

Sen. Mike Rounds has proposed something different. His bipartisan RANCH Act would give willing producers an option to take marginal cropland, restore it to perennial grass and, crucially, continue using it for livestock production.

The distinction is the point. The proposal is not about idling farmland.

The land could be grazed throughout the season. Producers would enter 10- to 15-year contracts, receive annual payments tied to county cropland rental rates and get help establishing grass. Highly erodible and poorly performing cropland would receive priority. The program could eventually cover as many as 20 million acres nationally, which is equivalent to 31,250 square miles.

South Dakota already has experience combining grass and agricultural production.

By 2024, about 1,800 South Dakota landowners had nearly 1.5 million acres enrolled in Grassland CRP. Those acres remain in grass while supporting sustainable livestock grazing.

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Grassland CRP generally helps keep grasslands intact. Rounds is proposing the other side of the equation: helping willing producers turn some marginal cropland back into grass.

Researchers examining U.S. land-use changes from 2008 through 2016 found that 88% of newly expanded cropland came from grasslands — and nearly 70% of those acres produced below-average yields.

South Dakota was among the places where grassland conversion was particularly significant. Nationally, millions of acres went from grass to crops, much of it becoming below-average cropland.

That raises a practical question: If many acres converted from grass to crops proved to be relatively poor cropland, why should federal policy make continued cropping the most attractive option?

Crop insurance remains an essential part of the farm safety net. South Dakota producers know better than most what drought, excess moisture, hail and other weather risks can do to crops.

But risk protection and land-use flexibility do not have to be competing ideas.

Rounds' proposal would give a producer another choice: establish perennial cover, graze cattle, reduce erosion and still earn an economic return from the property.

Wildlife would benefit as well. Perennial grass provides nesting cover for pheasants and waterfowl, holds soil in place, slows runoff and improves water infiltration.

The coalition behind the RANCH Act is notable: cattle producers, wildlife groups and conservation organizations backing a proposal that restores grass while keeping land productive. That coalition challenges the usual assumption that agriculture and conservation belong in separate camps.

A productive cornfield should remain a productive cornfield. The same is true for good soybean ground.

But South Dakota also has wet spots, saline soils, eroded slopes and marginal fields where grass and cattle may make more economic sense than another crop.

The state's congressional delegation is well positioned to explore that possibility.

Thune has already shaped the Senate's CRP provisions. Rounds has proposed a new working-grasslands option. Rep. Dusty Johnson serves on the House Agriculture Committee, and the House has already passed its version of the farm bill.

As Congress takes another run at the bill, those ideas belong on the same table.

South Dakota farmers have already shown they will use conservation programs when those programs fit their operations and make economic sense.

Not every acre that can carry a planter necessarily should be planted. Better farm policy may be to give producers another economically sensible choice for those acres.

Sometimes the best crop is grass.

Brad Johnson is a certified general real estate appraiser and longtime journalist. He is past president of South Dakota Lakes and Streams Association, president of the South Dakota Wildlife Federation, a member of the National Wildlife Federation's board of directors, and served 16 years on the South Dakota Board of Water and Natural Resources. He lives in Rapid City and Watertown.

Ag secretary: Decision to import ground beef highlights need to boost domestic food production

Rollins also talks about small refinery exemptions at Iowa Farm Progress Show

BY CAMI KOONS

BOONE — Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins said Tuesday that a U.S. decision to lower certain tariffs on ground beef imports has highlighted the importance of working to bring more U.S. food production on-shore.

While at the Farm Progress Show in Iowa, Rollins announced a U.S. Department of Agriculture data modernization program and spoke about the Trump administration's commitment to growing the nation's beef herd and advancing biofuels.

On Aug. 21, President Donald Trump announced he was suspending quota tariffs on ground beef for 90 days, or long enough for 300,000 metric tons of ground beef to enter the U.S. market, in an effort to

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lower grocery store prices.

The move was opposed by American cattle producers who have had declining herd sizes over the past several years.

While answering questions from the media after a press conference Tuesday, Rollins said she understands the president's decision to put the "American consumer at the front of the decision matrix" felt like a "gut punch" to ranchers. But, she said, the decision opens up a discussion around the nation's food system.

"If we don't have beef, we don't have freedom," Rollins said. "If we continue to offshore our American food production, we lose the American experiment — full stop. I think we're teetering on the edge of that in some ways with some of the offshoring that's happening, some of the big ag consolidation that's happening."

Earlier in the day, in a public address at the Farm Progress Show, Rollins said the "big four" meatpackers — referring to JBS, Tyson, Cargill and National Beef which Rollins said control more than 80% of meat packing in the nation — have "not been conducive to rebuilding the herd" and supporting independent ranchers.

"With the Make America Healthy Again movement, with the announcements that I made yesterday in Nebraska, we're putting protein, we're putting beef, right back at the center of policymaking in Washington D.C.," Rollins said.

On Monday, the secretary was in Nebraska where she announced a suite of actions to help rebuild the nation's beef herd. The "Ranchers First Initiative" included a tool to help ranchers keep their heifers, an expansion in grassland programs to help restore pasture, efforts to boost local processing and assistance to beginning farmers.

The initiative also called for the prioritization of American raised and processed beef in federal food procurement programs.

"All of these big federal agencies have hundreds of millions of dollars that we spend every day on food procurement," Rollins said while speaking about the initiative Tuesday. "By just recalibrating a little bit of that, the signal to our beef producers, to our farmers, would be so tremendous that we will continue to build that out to buy locally to get more healthy, nutritious food on the plates of our kiddos, of our veterans, of our soldiers."

Ranchers were also hit in August by the announced closures of two larger beef packing plants. Rollins said the "silver lining" to those closures is that it opens up an area of meat processing "that we can return back to regional and mid-sized processing, while ensuring we're rebuilding the herd."

Rollins said she had a verbal conversation with leadership at Tyson, one of the companies that recently announced a plant closure, to "make sure" the company's closed plant would only be sold to a American company.

The ag secretary said she will be making another announcement related to meat processing later this week with the president. She said that announcement will touch on "labeling" and "cross-state sales."

Small refinery exemptions

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced Monday it would grant exemptions to renewable fuel mixing requirements for certain small refineries.

Farm and biofuel leaders were disgruntled by the decision, arguing it hurts farmers and the biofuels industry by allowing these facilities to skimp on the requirements to mix fuel with bio-made fuels.

Rollins defended the action Tuesday by noting EPA also proposed to reallocate 100% of the awarded exemptions into the 2026 and 2027 renewable volume obligations. Rollins said Trump has been the "most pro-biofuels president in American history."

Earlier in the day, she highlighted the administration's work in issuing "historic" renewable fuel standards and finalizing a rule around regeneratively grown biofuel feedstocks.

Rollins was in Iowa in August to attend the Iowa State Fair and said Tuesday she will be "back in Iowa very soon."

This story was originally produced by Iowa Capital Dispatch, which is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit

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news network which includes South Dakota Searchlight, and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.

Cami Koons is an Iowa Capital Dispatch reporter covering agriculture and the environment. She previously worked at publications in Kansas and Missouri, covering rural affairs.

US Supreme Court again urged to permit Trump vote-by-mail restrictions

BY JACOB FISCHLER

The Trump administration asked the U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday to overturn a lower court and allow it to enforce a U.S. Postal Service rule restricting mail-in voting.

The trial judge, Indira Talwani of the U.S. District of Massachusetts, prejudged the rule before it was final when she issued a temporary restraining order last month and upheld it last week, U.S. Solicitor General D. John Sauer wrote. The rule only regulates standards of mail delivery and doesn't interfere with election administration, Sauer argued.

"Contrary to the claims of the district court and respondents that the Postal Service is trying to federalize the rules for mail-in voting, the Postal Service's final rule imposes only modest envelope-design and addressee-information requirements for federal-election ballots sent via U.S. Mail," Sauer said.

Temporary restraining orders are not typically appealable, but Sauer argued that because of the impending midterm election, the court should hear the appeal. The rule carries out an executive order made earlier this year by President Donald Trump.

Election Day is two months from Thursday. One state, North Carolina, is expected to begin mailing ballots Friday.

Morning hearing

The government filed the application just hours after Talwani, whom former President Barack Obama appointed, heard oral arguments on whether to convert her two-week restraining order into a longer preliminary injunction to block the administration from applying the rule during the fast-approaching election.

Over months of litigation, Talwani has communicated disapproval of the rule and the government's legal arguments and appeared skeptical of USPS's position Thursday, according to reporters in the courtroom.

The rule would create new standards for the envelopes used to send ballots to people who vote by mail. It would also allow the federal government to verify voters receiving ballots are eligible.

Democratic state officials and voting rights groups say that is an unconstitutional violation of states' role in administering elections and goes beyond anything Congress has authorized the agency to pursue.

In addition to constitutional concerns, the rule raises practical ones. Experts in election administration say mandating wholesale changes to mail-in voting this close to an election would cause chaos.

All states made arrangements to design, print and send mail ballots months ago. Changing those plans at this late stage would send them scrambling to update ballot envelope designs, have them approved by the USPS, printed in bulk and sent to voters — along with several other challenges, states have argued in court documents.

Multiple court decisions

The Trump administration has fought in court for weeks to allow the rule to go into effect before the midterms.

Administration officials appealed an earlier Talwani restraining order blocking enforcement of the rule. That appeal is currently before the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Supreme Court last month sided with the administration in a procedural ruling finding that the Democratic state officials and voting rights groups did not have the ability to challenge Trump's executive order before USPS issued its final rule. The challengers quickly refiled suits to reflect that the rule had been published.

The U.S. Justice Department and a handful of Republican-led states, including Missouri and Texas, de-

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fended the rule in the Thursday morning hearing, saying that it was a mail regulation within the agency's purview, and did not seek to administer elections.

Voting rights groups have argued the rule risks disenfranchising voters and solves no urgent problem.

Several phases of mail voting under the rule would put legitimate ballots at risk of rejection, they said, while the administration has shown no evidence that mail voting is particularly susceptible to fraud, as Trump repeatedly has claimed.

Portal problems

The buildout of an online tool the Postal Service plans to use to enforce the rule's requirements for ballot designs and voter eligibility has also encountered problems, according to an explosive whistleblower report this week.

A USPS official provided a written declaration following Thursday's hearing that the portal would be accessible to states that want to use it "sometime next week."

The whistleblower account published Tuesday detailed many problems with the tool, which the whistleblower said should have been a yearlong project but was rushed out in months.

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.

Election experts see few legal options for Trump to meddle with polling places

BY JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said earlier this year he'd "do anything necessary to make sure we have honest elections" this fall, declining to rule out sending the National Guard or federal law enforcement officers to polling locations throughout the country.

Those comments came a few months after Trump casually and briefly mentioned canceling the midterm elections that will determine control of Congress.

Any such actions would lie outside the bounds of presidential power and the law, according to experts interviewed by States Newsroom. Nonetheless, one Democratic U.S. senator is sending letters to numerous members of the administration asking for commitments troops won't be sent to the polls, and state officials are readying plans to keep voting secure.

"The president can say whatever he wants, but his powers are extraordinarily limited in this way," said Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows.

With two months until voting ends on Nov. 3, the administration's only publicly disclosed plan to monitor elections is a decades-old Justice Department program that sends federal workers throughout the country.

Michigan Deputy Secretary of State Aghogho Edevbie said there are strict rules for the people who participate, including that they can only observe if state election officials allow it or if a court orders it.

Edevbie said his state will allow DOJ monitors during this fall's elections to observe but not to interfere.

"Their job is not to interrogate individual voters," he said. "Now outside of the polling location, outside of the 100 feet, if they want to talk to a voter, they absolutely can. But if those interactions tip over into actions that we deem to be actions of intimidation, we will revoke our permission for them to be here."

The Department of Justice declined an interview request from States Newsroom, writing in a statement the administration hopes "to have the largest monitoring effort in the Department's history," totaling around 1,000.

DOJ election observers have been dispatched to monitor primary elections throughout the year without much fanfare, though Wyoming Republican Gov. Mark Gordon said in late August that their behavior in his state was "a bit aggressive."

"It just was irregular, and I have asked the attorney general to start looking into, you know, kind of the nature of the visits and all that sort of stuff," Gordon said, according to reporting from WyoFile, an independent nonprofit newsroom.

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Will ICE be sent to the polls?

White House staff have sent somewhat mixed messages on what else the president may try to do. A White House spokesperson wrote in an email they wouldn't "engage in hypotheticals," adding that "Anyone breaking the law will be held accountable."

The spokesperson pointed to comments former press secretary Karoline Leavitt made in February when she said she hadn't heard the president say he would consider sending Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents to polling locations.

Trump has repeatedly raised concerns that noncitizens may try to vote in the elections, despite it being illegal. There, however, isn't much evidence of that having happened, with the Bipartisan Policy Center writing, "there is no evidence that noncitizen voting has ever been significant enough to impact an election's outcome."

Leavitt added, "I can't guarantee that an ICE agent won't be around a polling location in November. I mean, that's frankly a very silly hypothetical question. But what I can tell you is I haven't heard the president discuss any formal plans to put ICE outside of polling locations. It's a disingenuous question."

A few months later, Trump was asked whether he would rule out sending the National Guard or ICE officers to polling locations. He did not answer the question directly.

"I'd do anything necessary to make sure we have honest elections. We have to have honest elections," he said.

Trump has repeatedly raised grievances about the outcome of the 2020 election without providing any evidence of fraud significant enough to change the outcome. He hasn't expressed doubts about election integrity in 2016 or 2024 — the years he won despite a Democratic president running the country at the time.

This year, Trump has said he believes Democrats can only win if they cheat without releasing any proof of fraud or plans for sabotage. At the same time, he's acknowledged that, historically speaking, Republicans are likely to lose seats in Congress during the November midterm elections.

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin said during a press conference in early September that ICE officers "will be where we need to be" when serving warrants. He did not rule out an ICE presence under some circumstances.

"ICE isn't there to patrol the polling places. We're there to enforce specific threats. The only reason why we would be at polling places, if there is a threat to that polling place or we're serving a warrant on someone that we have been actively tracking down," he said. "ICE's job is immigration (and) custom enforcement. That's their job and so if we're doing something, we're doing that specifically."

'Egregious history'

Federal law enforcement officers cannot enter polling places under most circumstances, according to Steve Huefner, the C. William O'Neill professor in Law and Judicial Administration at Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University.

"There's this really egregious history of uniformed police officers intimidating Black voters in the Jim Crow era, and so today we have laws that prohibit uniformed officers from being observers at the polling place," he said.

Additionally, there's a federal law from the Civil War era that bars any federal official with a weapon from showing up at polling locations, unless that "force is necessary to repel armed enemies of the United States."

Those prohibitions apply at the polling site and usually within 100 feet of that location, sometimes more. But there could be a loophole beyond that radius, Huefner said.

"If they just happen to be very close to a polling place, but not within 100 feet, it probably gets much trickier to figure out whether the president can have military troops in that kind of circumstance," he said.

Any attempt to place either federal law enforcement, the National Guard or military members at or near polling locations would likely end up in the court system, which Huefner said would in many ways be "uncharted territory."

"It's being characterized as an effort to help states, but states aren't asking for this help," he said.

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"States don't feel like they need this help. States feel perfectly adequate to run safe, free, fair elections. And so it's uncharted in the sense that we've never seen this kind of tension between states and the federal government. And this worry that what's happening is an effort to intimidate voters on the part of the federal government."

Slotkin letters

Members of Congress have also raised concerns the president may try to send members of the military or National Guard to polling locations.

Michigan Democratic Sen. Elissa Slotkin sent letters to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine in August, asking they provide assurances the government wouldn't "send Federal troops to the polls or to seize election materials of any kind."

Slotkin requested the two "confirm that deploying the military to polling places for political purposes would undermine the integrity of our free and fair elections, pose an existential threat to our democracy, and taint the military as a politicized institution."

Caine replied in a letter released by Slotkin's office that the joint forces had and would continue to act "in accordance with the Constitution and the law."

"Election administration and security remain the fundamental responsibility of state and local officials," he wrote. "The Joint Force has no plans to send Federal military personnel or Federalized members of the National Guard to polling places during the 2026 elections. Likewise, the Joint Force has no plans to use such personnel to seize ballots, voting machines, or other election-related material."

Hegseth hadn't responded as of early September and a Pentagon spokesperson wrote in a statement that as "with all Congressional correspondence, the Department will respond directly to the member."

States make plans

Bellows, the Maine Secretary of State, said she and other elected officials are planning for several scenarios that could come up during election season, building on past experiences.

"We have run free, fair and secure elections through pandemics, through heightened threats in 2024. In Maine, for example, there were six swatting incidences at polling locations and voting continued uninterrupted," she said.

Despite the president's comments throughout the year, Bellows said the Constitution and law "are crystal clear that federal law enforcement, ICE or otherwise, are strictly prohibited at polling places."

Maine law also makes it illegal to interfere with anyone's voting rights, which Bellows said she and others in state government will be watching closely this fall.

"If any federal armed officer were interfering with a citizen's right to vote on Election Day, we would take every available legal action to disrupt and prosecute that because that is criminal and prohibited," she said.

Director of Elections for Washington state Stuart Holmes said the Constitution and court rulings have made it clear that only state legislatures and Congress have the ability to regulate elections.

"And until either of those act, it's business as usual," he said.

The Department of Justice could send election observers to Washington state this fall, Holmes said, but those people wouldn't have any more authority or access than the regular citizens who are also allowed to observe certain aspects of the election.

"They can come in and they can watch and observe the process," he said. "But the county auditor or elections director in that county is the administrator of that process and can set the rules based on the safety and operations of their facility."

It is illegal for anyone to interfere with a voter's ability to cast a ballot, regardless of whether they're near or inside a polling location. That would include an observer asking voters to show their identification, Holmes said.

"Doing something like that could be seen as intimidating or interfering with their ability to cast their vote freely," he said.

Despite the speculation around what Trump may or may not do, Holmes said he and other officials in Washington state are preparing much like they would for any other midterm elections.

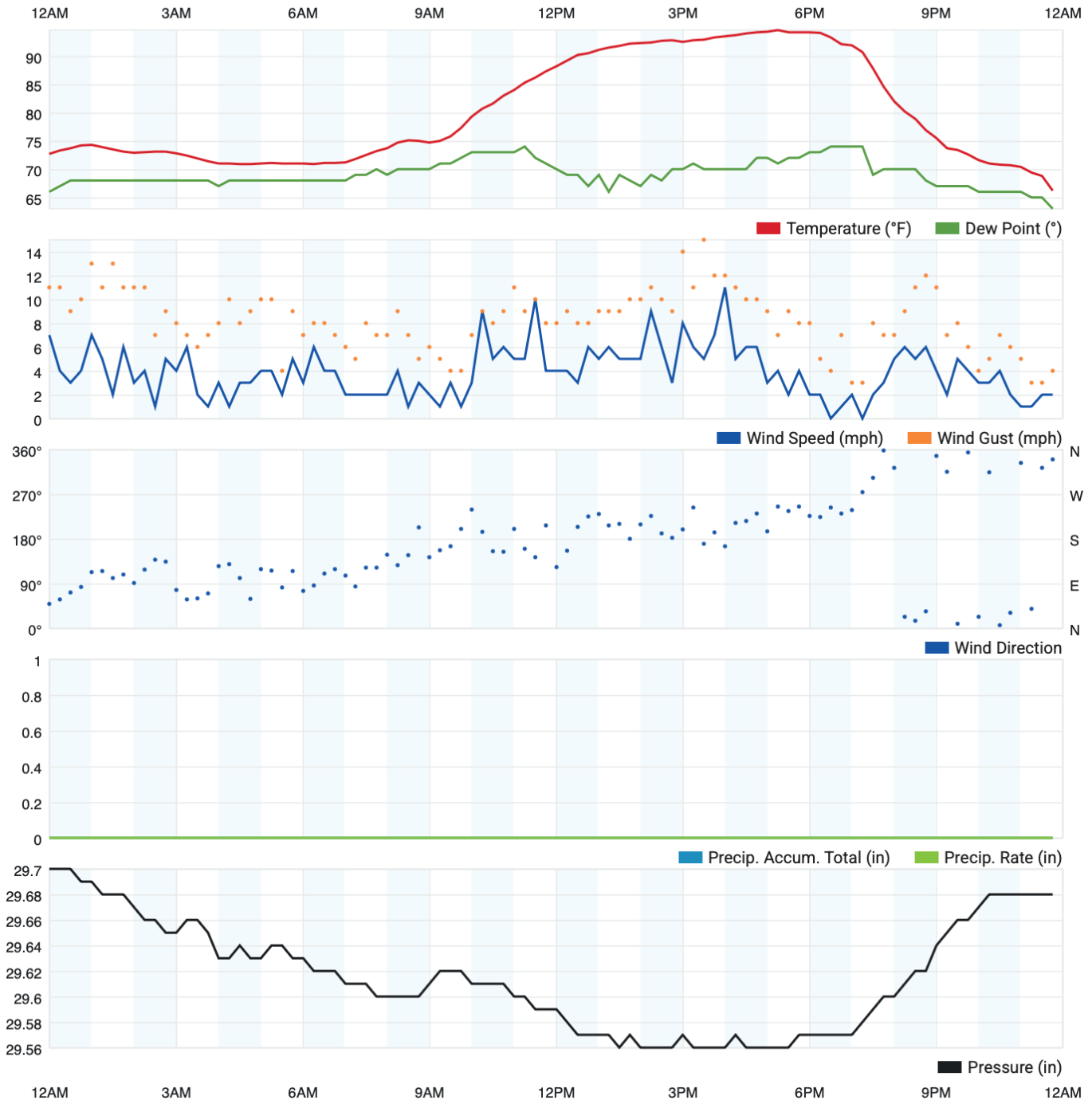
Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

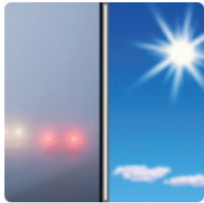
September 3, 2026



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Today



High: 90 °F

Patchy Fog
then Sunny

Tonight



Low: 68 °F

Partly Cloudy
then Slight
Chance
T-storms

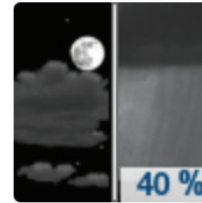
Saturday



High: 91 °F

Hot

Saturday Night



Low: 68 °F

Partly Cloudy
then Chance
Showers

Sunday



High: 86 °F

Chance
Showers

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:

Isolated Severe Storms
Possible

Afternoon/Evening

PRIMARY THREATS



Wind Gusts
of 60-70 mph



Quarter to
Golf-ball Sized
Hail

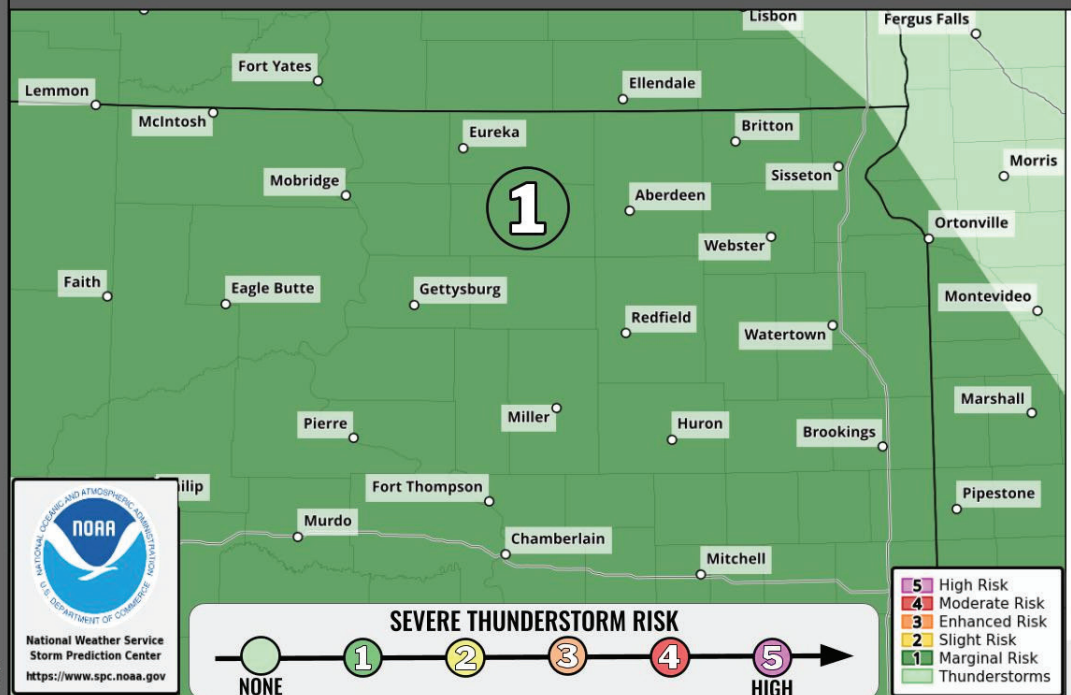
SECONDARY THREATS



HEAVY
RAIN

NWS
Aberdeen, SD

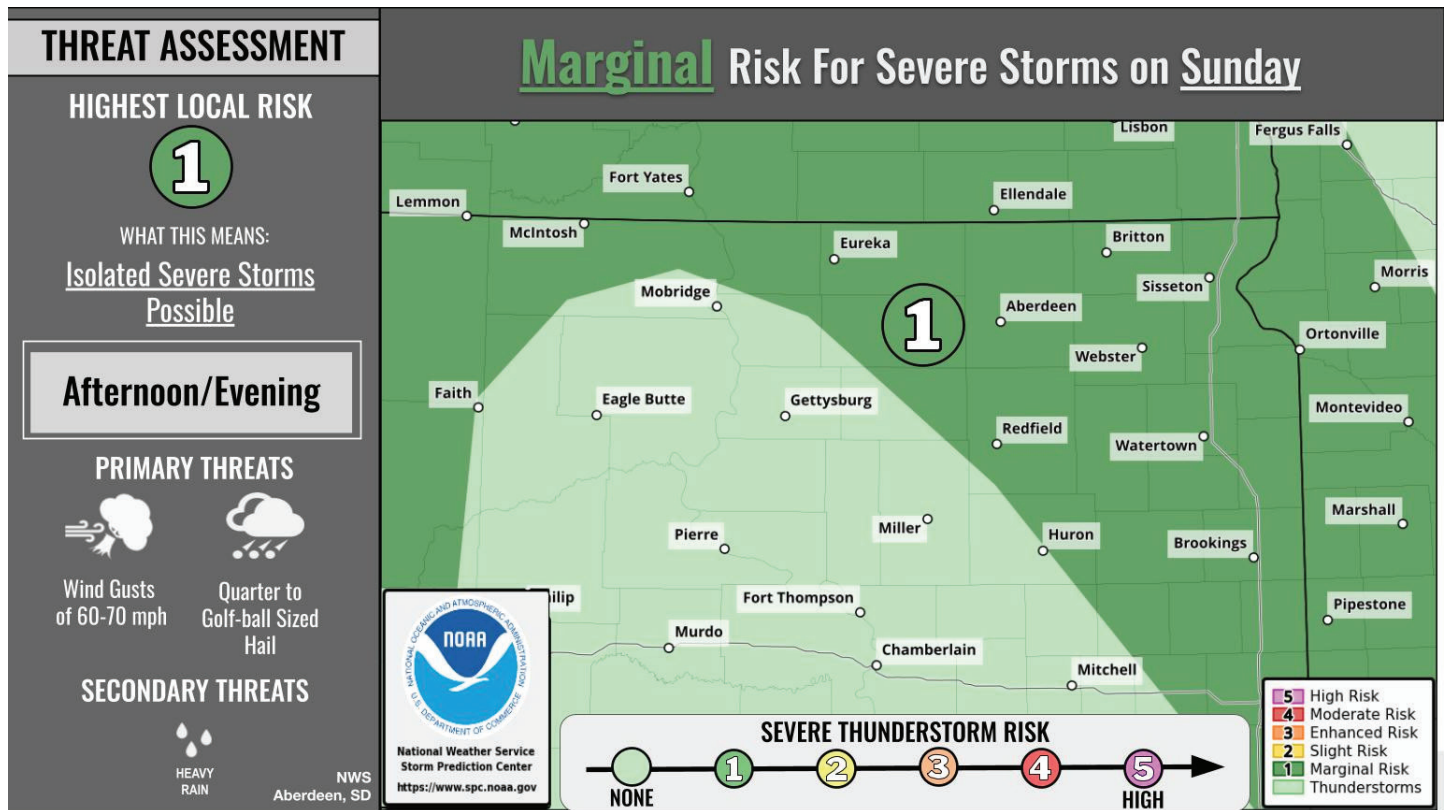
Marginal Risk For Severe Storms on Saturday



A few severe thunderstorms are possible on Saturday as a hot and humid air mass will remain in place this weekend, creating an unstable atmosphere capable of supporting these storms. Main threats will be large hail from quarter to perhaps golf ball size, along with strong wind gusts from 60 to perhaps 70 mph.

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With hot and humid conditions remaining in place on Sunday, the atmosphere will be supportive of strong to severe thunderstorm potential across the region. A Marginal Risk for severe storms exists on Sunday across portions of the region.

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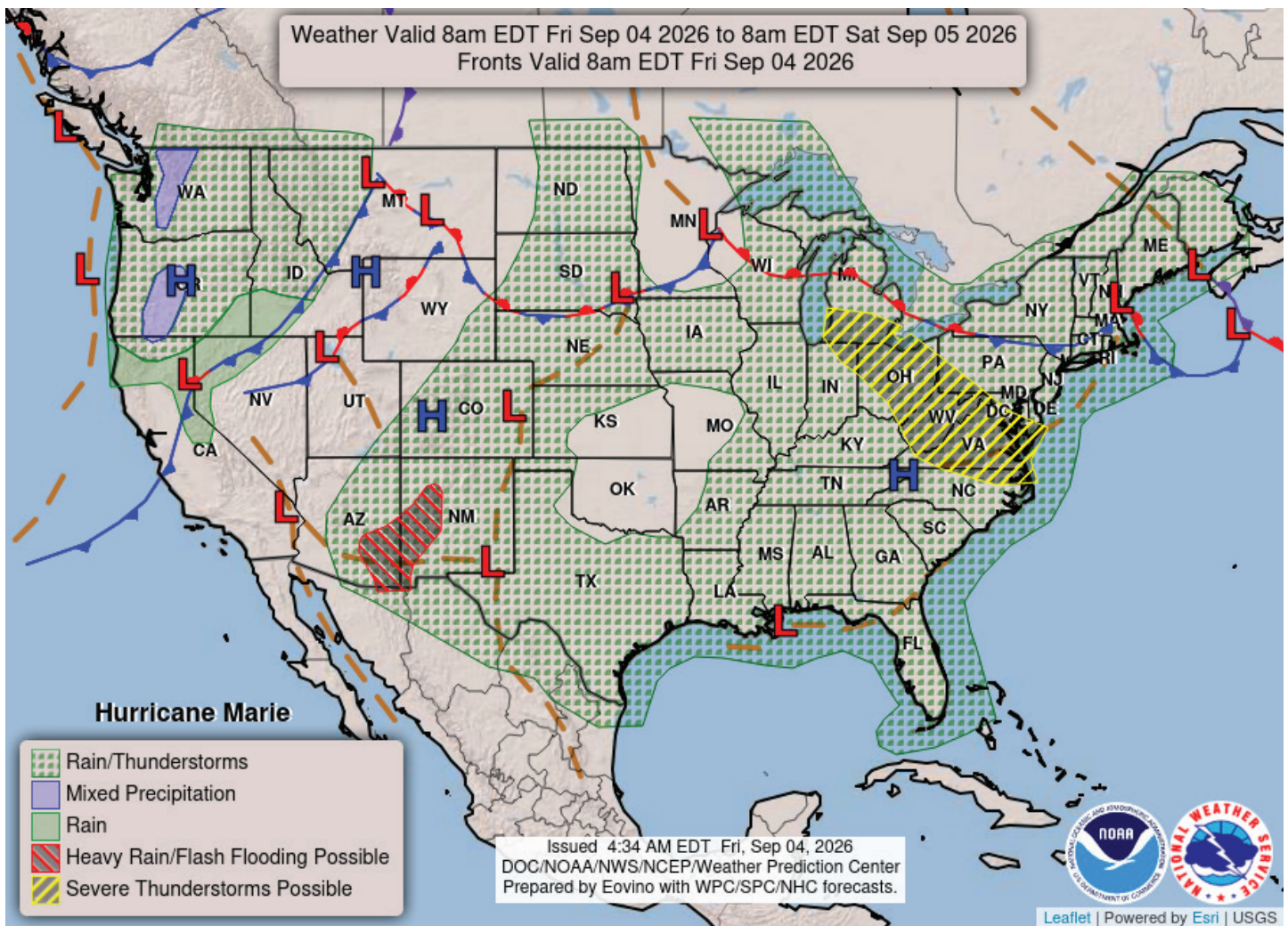
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 95 °F at 5:10 PM
Low Temp: 69 °F at 11:29 PM
Wind: 15 mph at 3:28 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 1931
Record Low: 30 in 1961
Average High: 79
Average Low: 51
Average Precip in Sept.: 0.27
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 16.61
Precip Year to Date: 20.06
Sunset Tonight: 8:05 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:58 am



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Today in Weather History

September 4, 2001: Near record or record heat hit central and north-central South Dakota on this day in 2001. High temperatures during the afternoon were in the upper 90s to around 105 degrees. Pierre and Kennebec set record highs of 105 and 106, respectively. Mobridge rose to a high of 96, and Timber Lake topped out at 98 degrees on this day in 2001.

1766: A hurricane made landfall at modern-day Galveston, Texas. The following is from David Roth of the Weather Prediction Center. "A mission, named San Augustine de Ahumado was located in what is now-days known as Chambers County. This mission was destroyed and subsequently abandoned. A seven-foot storm surge put the area under water. A richly-laden treasure fleet of 5 galleons en route from Vera Cruz to Havana was driven ashore and had to wait many weeks for assistance to come. La Caraqueña wrecked on Galveston Island while El Nuevo de Constante sank along the western Louisiana coast. Fortunately, much of the treasure and people aboard were saved."

1939 — A thunderstorm deluged Washington D.C. with 4.4 inches of rain in two hours. September of that year was very dry across much of the nation, and Washington D.C. received more rain in that two hour period than most other places in the country that entire month. (David Ludlum)

1941: A violent tornado ripped through Northeast and North Minneapolis shortly afternoon on this day. The hardest-hit location was the Soo Line Railroad's Shoreham Yards where four people died, and at least 50 were injured. The death toll at Soo Line could have been higher, but the tornado struck five minutes after the lunch bell went off, meaning 100 men left the shops.

1970 — The greatest natural disaster of record for Arizona occurred. Unprecedented rains caused rivers in central Arizona to rise five to ten feet per hour, sweeping cars and buildings as far as 30 to 40 miles downstream. Flooding claimed the lives of 23 persons, mainly campers, and caused millions of dollars damage. Water crested 36 feet above normal near Sunflower AZ. Workman's Creek was deluged with 11.40 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a state record. Moisture from Pacific Tropical Storm Norma led to the severe flooding. (4th-6th) (The Weather Channel)

1988 — The western U.S. experienced another day of record heat. The afternoon high of 91 degrees at Stampede Pass WA established an all-time record for that location, and Los Angeles CA equalled their all-time record high with a reading of 110 degrees. A record high of 107 degrees at San Diego CA was their hottest reading in 25 years. Red Bluff CA was the hot spot in the nation with an afternoon reading of 118 degrees. (National Weather Summary)

1989 — Overnight thunderstorm rains of four and a half to seven inches drenched eastern Nebraska during the morning hours, pushing creeks out of their banks, and flooding fields, country roads and city streets. Totals ranged up to 6.97 inches south of Creston. It was also a soggy Labor Day for northern Florida. Jacksonville reported 6.82 inches of rain, and evening thunderstorms produced 2.75 inches of rain in one hour at Sandlewood. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2000: Houston and College Station, Texas recorded their hottest day on record when highs reached 109° and 112° respectively. Houston has tied their record on August 27th, 2011. Other daily record highs included: Wichita Falls, TX: 111°, Waco, TX: 111°, Dallas, (DFW), TX: 111°, Austin, (Bergstrom), TX: 110°, Austin (Camp Mabry), TX: 110°, Dallas, TX: 110°, Victoria, TX: 110°, San Antonio, TX: 109°, Shreveport, LA: 108°, Corpus Christi, TX: 107 °F.

2007: Hurricane Felix came ashore in the pre-dawn hours as a Category 5 storm on the northeastern coast of Nicaragua. At the time of its landfall, the maximum sustained surface winds were approximately 160 mph. Felix killed at least 130 people along the coast, with damage in Nicaragua totaling \$46.7 million.

2011: The center of Tropical Storm Lee moved ashore around sunrise. However, it would be a while before Lee would weaken to a depression as it remained nearly stationary while the southern half of the circulation was over water where it could continue to derive additional energy from the warm ocean. Lee brought torrential rains to Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

2016: An EF1 tornado developed in the open country area north of Merna, Wyoming. The tornado caused tree damage along its 2.45-mile path. At its widest, the tornado produced sporadic tree damage approximately 300 yards across. The trees fell on some fence line but otherwise caused no property damage.

When God Says "Not Yet"

Waiting for God's "yes" grows our patience and anchors our trust in Him.

Genesis 16:1-12: 1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar.

2 So Sarai said to Abram, "Now behold, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children through her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

3 After Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife.

4 He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight.

5 And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms, but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the LORD judge between you and me."

6 But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight." So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence.

7 Now the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.

8 He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from and where are you going?" And she said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."

9 Then the angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority."

10 Moreover, the angel of the LORD said to her, "I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count."

11 The angel of the LORD said to her further, "Behold, you are with child, And you will bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has given heed to your affliction.

12 "He will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers."

God answers prayer in one of three ways: "yes," "no," or "not yet." This last reply is possibly the most dreaded—and for good reason. Waiting requires us to trust God's plan when we can't yet see it. However, patience is an important trait for the Christian, as Scripture repeatedly teaches us in stories, proverbs, psalms, and epistles.

Waiting on God to unlock a door is always wiser than attempting to open it ourselves. After God promised him descendants (Genesis 12:2), Abraham waited 25 years with an answer of "not yet." That is a long time to hold on to a promise!

Abraham and Sarah were human, and eventually they came up with their own plan to get an heir. Sarah's servant Hagar bore Ishmael. It's easy to understand the impulse; the waiting must have felt unbearable. But the consequences were painful. Bitterness and blame touched every member of the family (Genesis 16:4-6; Genesis 21:9-10). When the divine "yes" finally came through Isaac, it arrived in God's timing and on His terms—as it always does.

Our patience isn't to give God more time—He doesn't need it. But waiting deepens our trust and prepares us for what He has on the other side of that door (Isaiah 40:31). His timing is always worth trusting in, especially when the waiting is hard.

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.03.26

1 10 23 29 33 3

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

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 44 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.01.26

1 22 51 61 63 17

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$177,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 29 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.02.26

2 4 16 39 45 6

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$3,610,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 44 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.02.26

3 4 5 6 12

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$46,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 59 Mins 16 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.02.26

5 6 15 26 33 20

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 28 Mins 16 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.02.26

3 10 29 58 64 14

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$173,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 28 Mins 16 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Aberdeen Central def. Herried-Selby, 25-4, 25-10, 25-21
Aberdeen Central def. Yankton, 25-21, 25-17, 25-9
Aberdeen Roncalli def. Tiospa Zina, 25-3, 25-7, 25-6
Avon def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-7, 25-14, 25-7
Baltic def. Garretson, 25-17, 25-20, 25-16
Bennett County def. Jones County, 25-12, 25-15, 25-18
Canton def. Hills-Beaver Creek, Minn., 22-25, 25-20, 25-14, 25-21
Clark-Willow Lake def. Milbank, 25-7, 23-25, 26-24, 25-18
Colman-Egan def. DeSmet, 0-0
Corsica/Stickney def. Centerville, 25-19, 25-19, 25-19
Custer def. Newell, 25-20, 25-17, 25-10
Dakota Valley def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 25-9, 25-16, 25-12
Deubrook def. Castlewood, 25-17, 25-17, 25-21
Deuel def. Redfield, 23-25, 25-15, 25-20, 25-21
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Oldham-Ramona-Rutland, 25-20, 25-18, 25-11
Faith def. McIntosh High School, 25-22, 25-15, 25-12
Faulkton def. North Central, 25-17, 18-25, 18-25, 25-19, 15-10
Freeman def. Howard, 25-12, 25-12, 25-8
Gayville-Volin High School def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-10, 25-6, 25-14
Great Plains Lutheran def. Tri-State, N.D., 25-10, 25-8, 25-14
Groton def. Sisseton, 25-14, 25-13, 25-10
Hamlin def. Flandreau, 25-18, 25-13, 25-10
Harding County def. Lemmon High School, 25-21, 25-14, 25-19
Harrisburg def. Sioux Falls Washington, 23-25, 25-14, 25-22, 25-16
Highmore-Harrold def. Lower Brule, 25-7, 25-10, 25-19
Kadoka def. Philip, 25-23, 28-26, 20-25, 25-20
Lead-Deadwood def. Wall, 27-25, 16-25, 19-25, 27-25, 15-13
Lennox def. Tri-Valley, 25-15, 25-23, 25-10
Lyman def. Gregory, 25-12, 25-15, 25-20
McCook Central-Montrose def. Parker/Marion, 25-10, 25-19, 25-15
Miller def. Bon Homme, 25-11, 26-24, 25-16
Mobridge-Pollock def. Gettysburg, 25-21, 25-16, 25-9
Northwestern def. Langford, 25-18, 25-14, 25-22
Parkston def. Hanson, 27-29, 25-22, 26-24, 25-17
Platte-Geddes def. Stanley County, 25-12, 25-4, 25-15
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket def. Ethan, 25-21, 25-22, 25-18
Sioux Falls Christian def. Dell Rapids, 28-26, 25-23, 19-25, 15-25, 15-13
Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Sioux Falls Jefferson, 24-26, 26-24, 17-25, 25-13, 15-7
Sioux Falls Lutheran def. Menno, 25-21, 25-15, 25-17
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Huron, 25-17, 25-19, 25-16
Tea def. Riggs, 25-19, 25-18, 25-11
Tripp-Delmont-Armour def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-23, 16-25, 25-20, 26-24
Valentine, Neb. def. Winner, 25-17, 25-18, 25-19
Vermillion def. South Sioux City, Neb., 25-18, 18-25, 25-20, 25-20
Wagner def. Chamberlain, 25-12, 25-17, 25-16

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Warner def. Leola-Frederick High School, 25-15, 25-8, 25-8
Watertown def. Brookings, 25-21, 25-15, 25-19
Waubay/Summit def. Ipswich, 25-23, 25-14, 25-17
West Central def. Madison, 25-17, 25-23, 25-18
White River def. New Underwood, 25-20, 25-21, 22-25, 25-23

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

PREP FOOTBALL

Colman-Egan 52, Arlington 14
Dupree 38, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte/Tiospaye Topa 0
Hitchcock-Tulare 59, Iroquois-Lake Preston 6
Mahpiya Luta def. St. Francis Indian, forfeit
Tiospa Zina 54, Flandreau Indian 6

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

Wells drying up at South Dakota homes and ranches due to heat and drought

By BART PFANKUCH/South Dakota News Watch South Dakota News Watch

Each morning this summer, Gordon and Connie Howie have awoken on their cattle ranch in central Pennington County and turned on the kitchen faucet, unsure if any water will come out.

"We can't do laundry or dishes or take showers other than with a little trickle," said Connie Howie, 76. "Other times we have a little water because it seems to come and go."

Like many ranchers and residents in rural areas of western South Dakota, the Howie family relies on a well to provide them with water for their lives and livelihood.

But this year, perhaps the worst in recent memory, many shallow wells are running slow or have gone completely dry, forcing people to go to great lengths and expense to provide clean water for themselves or their livestock.

Experts say several consecutive years of limited winter snow pack and a shortage of rainfall have combined with increased consumption of water to cause a decrease in the levels of some underground aquifers that are a main source of water for a large swath of the Black Hills region. The problem is most acute in areas outside the reach of pipes from municipal and rural water systems.

High heat during the summer of 2026 has exacerbated the problem as people, crops and animals all require more water than usual to survive.

"We have a well at the house, but it's just not keeping up because the aquifer is dry," said Gordon Howie. "For 20 years you could trust that well 24/7, and it never quit on us, but now it's not providing enough water for everything we need."

The Howies are buying bottled water for drinking and positioning jugs of fresh water throughout the house for daily uses. On a recent day in late August, the couple hauled a trailer to a public-access water station in Rapid City and spent \$17 to fill a 1,300-gallon tank they use to keep their 150 Texas longhorn cattle alive on their ranch in Caputa, about 10 miles southeast of Rapid City Regional Airport.

"I've lived here my whole life and I've never seen it this dry, this hot, this long," said Gordon Howie, who served in the Legislature from 2009-2011 and ran for governor in 2010. "We've seen some drought, but this is the worst one I can remember, and I'm 77 years old."

Self-serve water sources aiding those in need

All across the plains of western South Dakota, some residents who rely on shallow wells — generally 1,000 feet deep or less — are being forced to find alternative water sources.

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Some are utilizing a somewhat obscure system of obtaining water in which users insert quarters or bills into a vending machine that triggers a hanging water spout to provide fresh water that is collected in tanks in pickups or on trailers. Such water stations are available in Black Hawk, Deadwood, Piedmont, Rapid City, Spearfish and Sturgis.

Those self-serve water stations are much busier than usual this summer, particularly in Rapid City, where the spout at J&J Asphalt is the only bulk water available in town and is often accessible only after a long wait.

"Everybody is hauling water these days," said Nick Randall, shop foreman at J&J Asphalt, whose shop and water station are located in an industrial area off Dyess Avenue.

Randall said the asphalt company built the water station for its own trucks that use water on paving jobs but decided to make a few extra bucks by selling it through the self-serve system.

Until this year, there were three or four places to buy bulk water in Rapid City.

But now J&J — which provides water it obtains from the Rapid City municipal system — is the only public-access spigot still flowing.

Lately, the long line of trucks and trailers at the spigot has caused some inconvenience for the business, Randall said.

"Some days, there's so many people lined up that we can't get our own trucks in and out," he said.

Ralph Bifulco, 62, drives his pickup with a water tank in the back to J&J Asphalt every day to spend \$7.50 to fill most of the 550-gallon tank with drinkable water.

Bifulco lives in the Ashland Heights community southwest of Ellsworth Air Force Base, where soil, surface water and groundwater have been contaminated by toxic chemicals produced by base activities.

The area has been declared an Environmental Protection Agency Superfund site. Despite significant cleanup and remedial activities, drinking water wells near the base were found in 2016 to be contaminated with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), the so-called forever chemicals used in firefighting foam, according to the EPA.

Bifulco said he needs the water from J&J for all everyday activities.

"We've got no clean water for anything," said Bifulco. "If you can't drink it, why would you shower or wash your clothes in it?"

Water hauler having a busy summer season

Many rural residents have clean water delivered by truck, which requires planning and expense.

Businesses such as Frontier Water in Rapid City are extremely busy this summer. It uses three trucks to carry up to 2,500 gallons per load to residences and ranches across the Black Hills region.

"With all these shallow wells going dry, it's really boosted my business," said Darin Klapperich, the owner of Frontier who also ranches northwest of Rapid City.

Klapperich gathers purified fresh water from municipal systems across the Black Hills and delivers it to anyone for any reason.

"From swimming pools to hot tubs to cattle to cisterns, if you want to pay the freight, then I'm your man," he boasts.

But this summer, the majority of his runs are to provide drinking water for people and cattle.

On arrival, the water is dumped into a cattle tank or a holding tank for household use. At some locations, he fills underground concrete cisterns people use to store water on their properties and occasionally drains the water into a well to fill it part way, Klapperich said.

An average household uses about 150 to 200 gallons of water per day, but many rural residents are finding ways to reduce daily usage during the drought, Klapperich said.

"If you have a shallow well, you're kind of in trouble. But it's been amazing to see all the tricks people are using to conserve water right now," he said.

Concerns over long-range aquifer depletion

While large, deep-water Black Hills aquifers such as the Madison, Minnelusa, Inyan Kara are lower in volume but still providing sufficient supplies of water, many smaller, shallower aquifers tapped by individual

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users of the aquifer are dry or getting close. Even some wells that don't go deep enough into the large aquifers could be seeing reduced flows.

Mark Anderson, an adjunct geology professor at South Dakota Mines and a former director with the U.S. Geological Survey, said the Black Hills region is in the midst of a precipitation shortage that is preventing underground aquifers from recharging as fast or as much as usual.

Combined with the large number of wells being drilled, the lack of rain and snow is causing concern about the long-term ability of aquifers to recharge enough to meet the needs of a growing population, Anderson said.

As reported by News Watch, that concern was highlighted in a recent USGS study showing that water use within some of the six "sub-aquifers" in the Black Hills is outpacing the rate at which the aquifers are refilling.

Anderson, who now serves as a water consultant, said he is working with a client who recently drilled two new wells up to 1,000 feet deep and did not find sufficient water to justify completion of the well. It is unknown if drought or poor location was the cause, but Anderson noted that some monitoring wells around the Black Hills are indicating lower levels in recent years.

"When we've had years of successive below average precipitation, wells have demonstrated significant water level decline," Anderson said. "This past year has been remarkable with the warm temperatures in the Black Hills with very little snow or rain."

An expensive but necessary project

To avoid future dry spells, the Howies plan to drill a new, deeper well to replace the 30-foot well that has run dry. The couple will continue to use a reverse osmosis system in the house to purify the well water for drinking and other uses.

Before picking a site for the new well, the couple has hired a "witcher" who will use divining rods in hopes of identifying underground water in a process known as dowsing.

Gordon Howie said he expects a sizable bill for the project, with well drilling costing about \$100 per foot and possibly a new pump ranging from \$20,000 to \$50,000.

Until then, he'll continue his twice-weekly water-gathering ritual, positioning his trailer below the J&J spigot, climbing a ladder to connect an extension pipe to the spout, unfurling bills into the payment slot and filling the tank on his trailer.

"I let every last dribble go in, because those cattle have got to have water," he said.

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A single juror may prevent a verdict in the Lindsay Clancy trial as deliberations resume

By LEAH WILLINGHAM and MIKE CASEY Associated Press

PLYMOUTH, Mass. (AP) — A deadlocked jury returns Friday for the seventh day of deliberations in the Lindsay Clancy trial, a day after the jury's foreperson told the judge a single juror won't follow the court's instructions about reasonable doubt.

The extraordinary disclosure made Thursday in the form of a note delivered to the judge offered the clearest glimpse yet of what may be keeping jurors from reaching a verdict on whether the Massachusetts mother is criminally responsible for killing her three children.

The jury has twice told Judge William Sullivan that it is unable to agree on a verdict. On Thursday, Sullivan brought in each juror individually and questioned them in private. The judge then reread his instructions on reasonable doubt before sending them back to continue deliberating.

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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's lawyer, Kevin Reddington, then asked Sullivan to dismiss the juror from the case, arguing the person had refused to follow the judge's instructions. Prosecutors objected, and Sullivan declined to remove the juror.

"I don't feel it is proper for me to side with one side or the other of the deliberations," the judge said. "I don't feel it's appropriate for me to say, 'I agree with one juror or the 11.' I have asked if they are able to follow my instructions. They swore earlier that they could."

At one point and for the first time in the trial, Clancy was brought to join a sidebar conversation with the judge. Paralyzed from the waist down after her suicide attempt, Clancy uses a wheelchair, which Reddington pushed to the front of the courtroom.

"She has a right to know what's going on," he later told reporters.

Clancy, a 36-year-old former labor and delivery nurse, doesn't deny strangling her children in the basement of their home in 2023 before trying to take her own life. Her attorney argues that postpartum psychosis led to her actions, while prosecutors say she knew what she was doing when she killed Cora, Dawson and Callan Clancy, ages 5, 3 and 8 months.

The prosecution argues she deliberately sent her then-husband on errands to get him out of the house, and prosecutors have questioned the seriousness of her suicide attempt.

Clancy's livestreamed trial has generated intense interest, with reporters and spectators packing the courtroom. The case has also sparked deep public divisions over her culpability and the issues around maternal mental health after childbirth.

If the jury ultimately can't agree on a verdict, the judge could declare a mistrial. Prosecutors would then have to decide whether to put Clancy on trial again, drop the charges or try to negotiate a plea deal with her lawyer.

If the jury decides Clancy was criminally responsible for her actions, it could convict her of either murder or manslaughter. If she is acquitted, a judge could still order her confined to a mental health facility if an evaluation determines that she poses a danger to the public.

Louisiana judge rules against NCAA, clearing path for former NFL players to join LSU roster

By BRETT MARTEL AP Sports Writer

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — LSU coach Lane Kiffin's chances of fielding former NFL players improved Thursday night when a Louisiana judge issued a preliminary injunction against the NCAA in a high-profile eligibility case.

East Baton Rouge Parish Judge William Jorden issued his ruling the night before LSU was due to submit its 105-man roster to the Southeastern Conference, which last week announced heavy potential punishment for football and basketball teams that bring in ex-pros.

The ruling clears the way for LSU to list some former NFL players on its roster. How many games they might be eligible to play remains to be seen as the matter continues working its way through the courts.

"It's not about coach Kiffin. It's not about LSU. It's about treating these kids fairly," said Tony Clayton, an attorney for the athletes. "Today, justice was served. And justice was serve to the SEC. It was served like a cold cup of gumbo. And that judge forced them to eat it."

The ruling followed a nearly nine-hour hearing in a courtroom less than three miles from the LSU campus. Several athletes took the stand to explain why they should be allowed to return to play college sports for a fifth season — some of them after turning pro.

The commissioner of the powerful SEC argued against them, and the league doubled down by filing a lawsuit against the school in a federal court in Alabama. That lawsuit could become the SEC's best chance

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at preventing former pros from playing this season.

Thursday's hearing was attended by Louisiana attorney general Liz Murrill, who filed an athlete-friendly brief in the case. While she did not make any arguments in court, she spoke after the hearing and referred to the SEC's federal lawsuit against LSU as "legal garbage," and "frivolous."

"We're going to continue to do everything we can to protect the school from those threats," she said.

The courtroom confrontation came just two days before 11th-ranked LSU opens the season at home against Clemson. Jorden scheduled the hearing over his temporary injunction preventing the NCAA from barring former pros or fifth-year college athletes, a stance reiterated by the SEC and other Power Four conferences in potential punishments adopted last week.

"Lane Kiffin is cold as ice. He's wonderful to watch. He pushes every limit to try to win," said New Orleans attorney Jason Williams, representing the SEC. "The SEC exists in part to prevent individual competitive incentives from destroying the common conditions that make college football great."

Former NFL players testify about modest pay in pros

Former New Orleans Saints defensive lineman Zxavian Harris and former Cleveland Browns tight end Dae'Quan Wright, two players who now expect to suit up for LSU within weeks, sat next to each other in the gallery as the hearing began. Both took the stand to say they would not have signed with NFL teams this year had they known they might get another year in college.

Each said they each earned about \$1 million in college. Harris said he was paid just \$190 in travel expenses by the Saints and spent all of his time with the club rehabbing a foot injury. Wright said he was paid a \$25,000 signing bonus by Philadelphia before his brief time with the Browns and would gladly pay that back for the chance to play for LSU.

While both former Mississippi players were unsure how soon they might make their LSU debut, they said after the hearing that they expect to play when the Tigers visit Ole Miss on Sept. 19.

Two LSU soccer players, Jazmin Ferguson and Jocelyn Ollivierre, won earlier court orders and have already played this season. Ferguson testified that she was paid \$4,500 by a USL team, but ended her contract and paid the money back in hopes of clearing the way to play for the Tigers again. Two LSU softball players also testified.

The athletes were questioned after SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey was on the stand for more than two hours, defending the league's authority to enforce its longstanding rules barring former pros from returning to play at its 16 member schools — and enforce newly outlined fines and suspensions against programs and coaches. He said school presidents and chancellors felt that they needed to establish ways to hold schools accountable for recruiting professionals back to college.

"The line between professional sports and college sports needs to be maintained," Sankey testified, adding that the league was concerned about incoming athletes being displaced from limited roster spots.

As he spoke, the SEC filed the federal lawsuit in Alabama against LSU and its leadership, alleging the school had "waged a deliberate and coordinated campaign to recruit professional athletes" in defiance of league rules. The court filing against one of the league's founding members in 1933 seeks an injunction barring LSU from violating the SEC's First Amendment rights by forcing it to "associate with conduct that is contrary to the conference's purpose and mission."

Questioning of Sankey turns sharp

While questioning Sankey, attorneys for the athletes cited numerous examples of when SEC eligibility rules align with NCAA rules, suggesting the potential for collusion. They questioned why league members met last week to adopt stiff penalties for the very actions addressed in the Louisiana state court's temporary injunction against the NCAA.

The attorneys also asked why the SEC singled out players who signed contracts with specific U.S.-based leagues — the NFL, NBA and WNBA — but not overseas pro leagues or women's pro soccer leagues. When Sankey tried to qualify an answer about whether the SEC had previously punished a school for adding a player with previous pro experience, Clayton said, "I didn't ask how to build a clock. I'm just asking what time it is."

Sankey acknowledged that there had previously been no such punishment, but that it had been considered

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against Alabama last basketball season when the Crimson Tide briefly added a former G League player.

Players going to court has become common

The players in question also include former Denver Broncos defensive back Blake Cotton, who like Harris and Wright is hoping to join LSU and Kiffin.

Wright started practicing at LSU this week, too late to be eligible for Saturday's home opener against Clemson under the NCAA's required seven days of practice. Harris has committed to LSU, while Cotton, who played at Utah last fall, has been recruited by Kiffin.

All three are among a host of athletes who've argued in lawsuits around the country that they are unfairly being denied an opportunity to spend a fifth year in college under newly adopted NCAA rules allowing for five full years of competition. In all, the NCAA says there are approximately 450 athlete plaintiffs seeking additional eligibility through litigation, with some 300 of them winning the ability to play at least for now.

NCAA attorney Taylor Askew said the number of disputes actually strengthens the argument that the NCAA is trying to enforce rules fairly.

"That can't be arbitrary," Askew said. "It's consistency."

The athletes in the case who signed pro contracts have argued they did so only because current rules that would have allowed them another college season weren't adopted until after their decisions to sign NFL contracts.

The SEC contended the question before the judge narrowly regarded whether the conference "can enforce and require its member institutions to comply with SEC rules." The SEC's new penalties include fines up to half of a given sport's revenues, up to half-season suspensions for coaches and member universities' loss of voting privileges on league business matters.

Sankey provided an affidavit stating that SEC university presidents had voted 15-0 in favor of those penalties, with LSU's Wade Rousse abstaining.

The fight over eligibility between schools and their own conferences and the NCAA has simmered for months and spilled into politics.

Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry posted on X to attorneys general in Georgia and South Carolina that "calling them 'NFL players' is at best disingenuous, and at worst intentionally deceptive."

"They are not professional football players circling back after years in the NFL," Landry wrote. "They are college players who were told, by the NCAA, that they were done. So they took the only door that was open — only to watch the NCAA change the lock behind them."

Jordan's alliance with the US makes the kingdom a target for Iranian strikes

By SAM McNEIL Associated Press

Jordan, a staunch U.S. ally that hosts American forces in the Mideast, has paid a price for its relationship with Washington, which has made the kingdom's military bases a target of repeat Iranian strikes.

Hundreds of drone and missile attacks have added to other strains on Jordan that include a slumping economy and volatility in the neighboring West Bank, where Israeli settlers have ramped up attacks on Palestinians.

Despite the risk of more strikes, Jordanian leaders say they are committed to maintaining the relationship after decades of courting deeper security ties with American officials and offering to be a reliable partner with the West in a region rocked by conflict. Analysts say the alliance offers Jordan a way to guard against Iran's attempts to destabilize its neighbors.

King Abdullah II of Jordan seemed to acknowledge the need for such alliances last year, when he warned that destabilization fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and multiple Israeli military campaigns in the Middle East could trigger chaos far beyond the region.

"We are living through wave after wave of disruption, without pause," he told European lawmakers. "There is no telling where the boundaries of this battleground will end. That, my friends, is a threat to people everywhere."

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Jordan embraces Washington to weather stormy Middle East

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a puzzle-piece-shaped nation bordering Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Israel and the West Bank. More than 11 million Jordanians live between the Jordan River, the Red Sea and eastern deserts strewn with ruins.

Besides the threat from Iran, Jordan faces other challenges, such as an economy that has buckled under millions of refugees fleeing regional conflicts. Soaring energy prices and inflation have added to the burden as the tourism sector struggles to draw visitors to landscapes lionized in Hollywood by Peter O'Toole, Harrison Ford and Matt Damon.

And next door, growing Israeli settler violence in the West Bank is deeply unsettling to Jordanians who fear instability could drive many of the 2.8 million Palestinians there to flee into the kingdom, said Sean Yom, a professor at Temple University and author of a 2025 book titled "Jordan: Politics in an Accidental Crucible."

Since taking the reins from his father, King Hussein, in 1999, Abdullah has forged ever-stronger links with Washington. The monarch — a fluent English speaker whose dynasty claims to be descended from the Prophet Muhammad — enjoys widespread support among world leaders and Democratic and Republican lawmakers in the U.S.

U.S. President Donald Trump once called the king "one of the true great leaders of the world." Trump's predecessor, Joe Biden, also praised his leadership. First lady Jill Biden was a guest at the wedding of Abdullah's son Hussein to a Saudi aristocrat in 2023. Pope Leo welcomed Abdullah to the Vatican in 2025.

As part of its partnership with the West, Jordan provided logistical help and intelligence for the U.S.-led 2003 invasion of Iraq, and it contributed to the fight against Islamic State militants in Syria and Iraq.

Amer Sabaileh, an independent Jordanian political analyst, said Jordan's alliance with the U.S. is central to Abdullah's yearslong campaign to secure his kingdom against danger, including from Iran.

Jordanian elites see Iran's support of Shiite militias in Iraq, armed Palestinian groups and Syrian drug traffickers as direct threats to the royal court, Yom said.

"Very few people in Jordan think the Islamic Republic is good for the Middle East," he said.

US military operations rely on a dozen sites in Jordan

Amman and Washington signed a defense-cooperation agreement in 2021 that granted U.S. forces and contractors access to 12 military installations across the kingdom. The NATO military alliance opened its first liaison office in the region in Jordan in 2025.

In the run-up to the Iran war, Jordan's sprawling Muwaffaq Salti Air Base became "a key logistics hub" for U.S. C-17 transport planes and about 60 combat aircraft, said David Schenker, a fellow at the Washington Institute.

"Jordan provides great strategic depth," he said, calling the kingdom's position "essential" to the U.S. campaign against Iran. "This makes Jordan a target, not just targeting U.S. forces but also targeting the king."

About 50,000 U.S. troops are currently deployed across the Middle East, with an unknown number in Jordan. Schenker estimates that at least 8%, or \$1.47 billion, of the kingdom's annual budget comes directly from U.S. grants.

Adm. Charles Bradford, commander of the Pentagon department covering the Middle East, said in May that the U.S. military had relocated personnel and assets from its mission against the Islamic State from Iraq to Jordan. The shift was part of a broader, long-running strategy to put more distance between American forces and Iranian missiles.

Those troops were enough to draw fire to Jordan from the Islamic Republic. Most of the incoming missiles and drones were knocked down by U.S. air defenses.

Speaking Thursday in Vienna, Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi defended his country's right to make its own decisions.

"Iran has been attacking us and many other countries in the region long before even this war started," he said, referring to Iranian "meddling in internal affairs" and other clandestine efforts. "So we do not buy their argument. We are a sovereign country. We were not a party to this war."

US diesel prices hit a record high of \$5.85 on average as the Iran war disrupts the flow of fuel

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Diesel hit a new record price in the U.S. on Friday, soaring to an average of \$5.85 a gallon for the first time ever as the six-month war with Iran disrupts the world's flow of fuel.

Because diesel is used for many freight and delivery networks, higher diesel prices mean higher transportation costs for a long list of everyday goods. More expensive fuel is increasing bills for businesses across sectors — some of which have already passed off costs to consumers in the form of added fees on online orders and packages in the mail. And shoppers may see more and more sticker shock trickle into store shelves.

The increases could have political implications, with economic issues likely to be top of mind for many voters in November's midterm elections.

One of the most immediate strains falls in the grocery aisle, particularly with produce, meat and other perishable foods that need to be hauled in and restocked frequently — or even harvested using diesel-powered farm equipment. It can take time for all of those costs to trickle down.

Still, experts warn that price hikes could mount the longer diesel remains expensive. A range of other products are also transported by diesel trucks, trains and boats, including clothing, cosmetics, furniture and more.

The price for regular gasoline has also been going up, although not as fast as the price of diesel. The average price was \$4.15 a gallon, compared with \$3.20 at this time last year, according to AAA.

What's driving the latest jump for diesel

Before the U.S. and Israel launched their war against Iran in late February, the national average for a gallon of diesel was about \$3.76 in the U.S., per AAA. Prices quickly climbed as the cost of crude oil — the main ingredient in diesel, as well as gasoline — soared amid supply chain disruptions and production cuts across the Middle East, notably with most tanker traffic bottlenecked in the key Strait of Hormuz.

Despite prices cooling some during hopes for peace earlier in the summer, oil has now renewed its climb as fighting once more escalates between the U.S. and Iran. Brent crude, the international standard, was trading at more than \$95 a barrel Friday, up from roughly \$70 before the war. Prices at the pump always follow closely behind.

The last time U.S. businesses and drivers saw sky-high fuel prices was in June 2022, when diesel reached as high as nearly \$5.82 a gallon on average, months after the Ukraine war began and world leaders imposed sanctions against Russia, a leading oil producer.

When adjusted for inflation, however, prices have been higher in the past. Ahead of the 2008 financial crisis, for example, diesel peaked at about \$4.74 a gallon — equivalent to \$7.20 in 2026, according to the government's latest data. And 2022's record of nearly \$5.82 would be about \$6.56 this year when accounting for inflation.

That doesn't take the pain away from today's steep prices, which are already bringing ripple effects for the economy and wider costs of living. Drivers are feeling the pain each time they fill up gasoline, too.

The average \$4.15 for a gallon of regular unleaded is up from \$2.98 before the Iran war, although still well below the 2022 peak of nearly \$5.02 a gallon nationwide.

Diesel has been more expensive than gasoline for decades, and its price has risen at a faster pace during recent energy crises. Some reasons include more limited supply, less flexibility in demand, and diesel's position in global commerce overall. Individual households may find ways to drive less when gas prices are high, for example, but there's fewer immediate substitutes for networks that rely on diesel to help produce and haul goods worldwide.

All eyes on food

Diesel is integral to every part of the food supply chain. It powers farm equipment and fishing boats as

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well as the trains, cargo ships and trucks that get food to grocery stores.

Fuel accounts for roughly 15% to 30% of the total cost of food, according to the Independent Grocers Alliance, a grouping of 7,500 global supermarkets. Because of this, higher diesel costs often result in more expensive food, although it can take a while for energy shocks to wind their way through the supply chain.

Items that need to stay refrigerated while they're transported are often the first to see prices rise, according to David Ortega, a professor of food economics and policy at Michigan State University. In July, for example, overall U.S. grocery prices were up 2.7% compared to last July, but seafood prices were up 7% and fresh fruit prices were up 4.9%.

Ortega cautioned that there can be other factors at play when food prices go up or down. Lettuce also faced higher transportation costs in July, but a drop in demand due to the cyclospora outbreak caused prices to fall.

Still, consumers could feel more of a squeeze the longer diesel prices remain high.

"Early on, much of the cost increase gets absorbed along the supply chain through existing freight contracts and retailer margins," Ortega said. "But as contracts reprice and fuel surcharges take hold, more of that cost makes its way to the grocery store."

More fuel shocks

Back in April, e-commerce giant Amazon rolled out a temporary 3.5% fuel and logistics surcharge on some third-party sellers. And United Parcel Service, FedEx and the United States Postal Service also moved to add fees on some of the packages they ship earlier in the war, citing rising operational costs for fuel overall.

Ajesh Kapoor, CEO and founder of trucking technology company SemiCab, said trucking and transportation can adapt to rising diesel prices — but at some point there is a limit.

"Diesel price has a very, very direct impact on everything that moves on pretty much any mode," Kapoor said.

The ramifications extend beyond the movement of consumer goods. Some public transit buses and trains also run on diesel — and diesel generators are often used for backup or emergency power, if not central electricity sources in some remote parts of the world.

Experts warn that the consequences could continue to deepen — particularly in countries in Africa and Asia, which rely more heavily on imports from the Middle East and have already been hit the hardest by energy shocks over the course of the war.

Neil Atkinson, energy analyst and senior fellow at the National Center for Energy Analytics, said refined oil products like diesel are becoming more expensive as supplies get stretched.

"This is gradually becoming a major crisis because A) the prices themselves are very high — but the physical stocks of these products are dwindling," he said in a weekly briefing with maritime data firm Lloyd's List Intelligence, pointing to the strain on the global refining system. "This cannot go on forever."

Rescuers pull 2 trapped workers from a hydropower tunnel 9 days after Nepal floods

By SHRISTI KAFLE and SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Rescuers in Nepal pulled two workers alive from a tunnel at a hydropower plant Friday, raising hopes of reaching dozens of others believed to be trapped nine days after deadly floods swept away villages and submerged the Himalayan region in mud and debris.

Search teams first heard voices from inside the tunnel in the morning, allowing them to locate the two men, Nepalese lawmaker Shri Ram Neupane said. Images showed a rescuer carrying one of the workers, covered in mud, on his back, while soldiers on either side helped.

One of those rescued said more people are alive inside the tunnel, according to army spokesperson Brig. Gen. Raja Ram Basnet, and the search is ongoing.

"I can't explain what we are feeling at the moment. We are just grateful to god," Amir Maharjan, the brother of one of those rescued, told The Associated Press.

Basnet confirmed the first trapped worker's rescue, and Neupane posted about the second on his Face-

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book page shortly after.

Both men were flown to a hospital in Kathmandu, and Maharjan said his family was on its way there. One of the survivors was in critical condition, according to a statement from the prime minister's office.

Officials identified the men as a mechanical foreman and a mechanical supervisor. They were rescued from a tunnel at the Trishuli 3A plant.

About 900 workers are missing from 12 hydropower projects in Nepal, with roughly 500 believed to be trapped in tunnels, according to authorities.

About 115 are believed trapped in the tunnel at Trishuli 3A alone, according to the Independent Power Producers Association of Nepal.

Nepal's Communication Minister Bikram Timilsina wrote on his Facebook page that officials "are waiting for the rescue of more and more people."

At least 1,287 people were killed in the Aug. 26 floods, likely caused by a glacier collapse, and more than 5,000 remain missing, according to the country's disaster management agency. China said late Wednesday that 21 people were killed and 541 were missing on the Tibet side of the border.

Nepal's disaster agency estimated Friday that flooding caused at least 387.5 billion Nepalese rupees (\$2.5 billion) in damage to infrastructure and property.

Russia now bombards Kyiv during the day as well as at night

By SAMYA KULLAB and VASILISA STEPANENKO Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — For much of the war, Russian drone and missile attacks in Kyiv followed a particular rhythm. They almost always came at night.

The warnings would begin on monitoring channels on Telegram in the late evening. They announced drones moving south, missiles being launched, air defenses working. Ukrainian civilians judged whether it was prudent to stay indoors or make for shelter in the metro based on the severity of the threat.

Now, Russia has changed tactics with the use of fast-flying, jet-powered drones, and the expectation that daylight brings a return to normal life has been shattered. Since last week, attacks have come day and night, compounding the terror of overnight strikes with the exhaustion of constant daytime disruption.

In Kyiv, the recurring wail of air-raid sirens has become part of daily life. It has interrupted commutes, shopping trips and children's school, intruded on life's biggest moments, from weddings to funerals, and, as these attacks always have, taken lives. The relentless alerts are exhausting residents, leaving some wondering how long they can stay.

Air raids are woven into the routine of daily life

An alert sounds. People look at their phones or up at the sky. Moments later, in the distance, the familiar sounds of air defenses intercepting drones resound.

Plumes of smoke can often be seen rising in the distance. Photos quickly spread across Telegram channels, showing where the destruction has occurred.

An hour or two later, another siren echoes.

In malls, banks and other businesses, air-raid protocols require customers and staff to leave when an alert sounds. A bank transaction can be interrupted midconversation; a shopping trip can become a cycle of entering a store, evacuating, returning and evacuating again.

Getting the shopping done has become a nightmare for Volodymyr Bovsunovskyi, who recounts a recent family trip to a mall to buy clothes for his nearly 4-year-old daughter. They had been inside for about 20 minutes when the alert sounded. They rushed out and saw smoke rising nearby.

They never got to purchase the clothes.

"A lot has changed in the last seven days," he said. Like many residents, he hopes the attacks will relent. But, they have not yet, as Ukraine struggles to find an effective way to counter them.

Train journeys that would normally take a few hours have stretched much longer. In some cases, passengers have found themselves walking for hours through grassy fields after trains stopped on the tracks, carrying their belongings while one air-raid alert followed another.

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The same uncertainty extends to getting around the city.

When GPS signals are disrupted to jam drones, using a taxi app becomes an absurd process. A car that appears to be nearby can suddenly appear to be on the other side of the world.

A pickup that seemed imminent suddenly shows an arrival time of thousands of minutes.

Life's biggest moments are interrupted

One Kyiv couple went ahead with their wedding despite the sirens. On Wednesday morning, when Iryna Baranova, 38, returned home from hair and makeup to finish getting ready, explosions were sounding across the city.

"We heard two explosions, the alarm ended, we got together and went to the registration ceremony," she said, wearing a white satin gown with strands of pearls draped around her neck.

Afterward, she and Evhen Mytsyk walked hand in hand in a botanical garden in the city.

Mytsyk, 40, said the attacks did not diminish the day.

"If you wake up in the morning, you have to make the most of that day, because there might not be another chance," he said. "At a time like this, you appreciate life and the love of your family more, and you give love more openly yourself."

In the same garden, Tetyana Shevchenko meditated inside a small wooden gazebo modeled on a Buddhist prayer space. She has practiced for years, and she says it helps her remain calm even as air raids sound around her.

"When the air raids first started, we couldn't stand the sound at all. It was very loud, disturbing, depressing," she said. "The body works in a way, it gets used to everything, including nighttime attacks, spending the night on the floor in the corridor, and insomnia."

Meditation has also helped her stay calm as she navigates the tedium of bureaucracy, made even more difficult by the attacks.

Shevchenko has been trying to obtain documents to recover state funds owed to her mother, who died last year. While she waited in a long line for an appointment on a recent day, an air-raid alert sounded, causing her to miss her slot. She was sent to the back of the line and forced to start the process again.

"In this period of adjustments and grieving all of us are united, united in our suffering," she said.

As she spoke, a siren blared. Moments later a thud was heard in the distance.

A week of relentless attacks has some considering leaving the city

Ivan Datsiv, an IT worker, was in his apartment in Kyiv's Podil district when a Russian drone tore through the floor on Tuesday, charring the ceilings and walls of his apartment and completely destroying the one next door.

Datsiv tries to joke about it, saying he had been meaning to repaint the walls anyway.

The alerts have become so frequent that he no longer sees the point of repeatedly going to a shelter. At this rate, he said, the only alternative would be to live in the basement.

"The alarms sound constantly," he said. "You don't even have time to go down and come back up. It's just a waste of time running back and forth."

He is thinking of leaving Kyiv. "I'm thinking of living in another city, somewhere quiet and without this danger," he said.

From the blown-out apartment next door, the view looks down onto a playground and basketball court where children are still playing.

Then a siren sounds again. Minutes later, the white zigzagging trail of an intercepted drone can be seen against the sky.

Bovsunovskyi is also considering leaving the city for a while, hoping to give his family — including his pregnant wife — a chance to rest.

The kindergarten his daughter attends must move the children to a shelter whenever an air-raid alert sounds. The alerts have become so frequent that he now simply picks her up halfway through the day.

"There is no stability," he said.

Argentina's Milei escalates Falklands dispute, seizing on Trump comments and oil tensions

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Argentine President Javier Milei escalated his country's dispute with Britain over the Falkland Islands on Thursday, vowing new measures to halt an oil project near the British-controlled archipelago and praising U.S. President Donald Trump for saying Washington could reconsider its neutral stance on the islands' sovereignty.

Milei cast Trump's comments as proof that his close relationship with the U.S. president — criticized by political opponents as overly deferential — was paying dividends.

"The United States is considering this change in position because it knows that Argentina has a reliable partner, aligned with Western values, in a strategically important position that can be a valuable ally in the decades to come," Milei said in a nationally televised speech.

The Argentine leader then announced sweeping actions aimed at stopping the development of the deep-sea Sea Lion oil project, about 220 kilometers (140 miles) north of the islands, where British company Rockhopper Exploration and Israel's Navitas Petroleum plan to begin drilling in the coming months and start pumping oil in 2028. Argentina considers the project an illegal exploitation of resources in waters it claims as its own.

He threatened tougher sanctions against companies involved in the offshore drilling and announced new funding for a naval base in Argentina's southernmost province of Tierra del Fuego to bolster the country's military presence near the islands, known in Argentina as the Malvinas.

"Argentina will not stand idly by," Milei said. "Any further advance on the Malvinas Islands will be considered a violation of our national security."

U.K. Defense Secretary Wes Streeting said Britain's commitment to the Falkland Islands was "unshakeable."

"Milei's statement overnight tells us more about domestic politics in Argentina than it does about the Falkland Islands," Streeting wrote on X.

Milei's effort to refocus attention on the Falklands are a striking turn for a leader who has faced criticism at home for warming ties with Britain and professing admiration for Margaret Thatcher, the British prime minister detested in Argentina for leading the campaign to retake the archipelago during the 1982 Falklands War.

The two-month conflict, which killed 649 Argentine troops, 255 British service members and three islanders, remains a sore point in Argentina over four decades later.

The sovereignty claim is enshrined in Argentina's constitution and frequently invoked as an expression of national identity, from banknotes to World Cup soccer chants. It is also one of the few causes that cuts across the country's stark political divides, giving Milei, who is up for reelection next year, a welcome political opening as his approval ratings slip and the economy sputters.

"We can argue about my style. We can disagree over fiscal or exchange-rate policy," Milei said. "But there are causes that rise above any political difference. The Malvinas is one of them."

Some were skeptical.

"He wants to use the legitimate sovereignty claim over the Malvinas Islands to regain ground ahead of the election year and serve U.S. interests in its dispute with Britain," said Nicolás del Caño, a leftist opposition lawmaker.

Trump questions US support for British sovereignty

Argentina maintains that it inherited sovereignty over the islands from its former colonizer, Spain, and that Britain has illegally occupied them since 1833. Britain rejects that claim, citing the islanders' desire to remain a British overseas territory.

For decades, successive U.S. administrations have remained neutral on the competing claims while recognizing Britain's de facto administration of the islands. Any departure from that position would be a major diplomatic affront and inflame already high trans-Atlantic tensions.

On Monday, Trump stirred concern in Britain when asked whether his administration was reviewing its

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stance on the decades-old dispute. "I always review every position," he replied. "That's just one of many."

Then, in an interview aired Thursday with British broadcaster GB News, Trump dodged directly answering a question about whether the U.S. would "come to the aid" of Britain in another conflict over the Falklands. Instead, he repeated past complaints that Britain had not provided sufficient support for the U.S.-led bombing campaign against Iran.

"Your country was not there to help me," Trump said, recalling Britain's former prime minister, Keir Starmer, telling him the country did not have ships to contribute to the campaign. "It was pretty sad, the whole thing."

The Trump administration has floated the Falklands as leverage before: An internal Pentagon email leaked in April first raised the prospect of Washington reconsidering its position on the islands as one possible way to punish NATO allies that declined to join the U.S. war on Iran.

His comments forced Downing Street to insist that Britain would not yield sovereignty over the Falklands.

"Sovereignty rests with the U.K., and the islanders' right to self-determination is paramount," British Prime Minister Andy Burnham's spokesman, Tom Wells, said earlier this week, pointing to a 2013 referendum in which the roughly 4,000 people living in the Falkland Islands voted overwhelmingly in favor of remaining a British overseas territory.

Milei rallies Argentines around the flag

Under pressure from Argentina's populist opposition, which accuses him of neglecting Argentina's sovereignty claim, Milei has grown more vocal on the Falklands as plans for large-scale oil production around the islands raise the economic stakes of the dispute.

In his speech, Milei warned that the Sea Lion project could usher in a broader Falklands oil boom, enriching the islands with resources Argentina claims as its own and further entrenching Britain's presence.

"If we allow it, we will be creating an incentive for the British government to deepen the occupation of the islands and the exploitation of our resources," Milei said.

He vowed to fast-track sanctions against companies involved in oil projects around the islands and extend penalties to suppliers, shareholders and directors. His proposed legislation could also bar companies tied to such projects from operating or signing contracts in Argentina.

Despite slashing public spending elsewhere as part of his austerity drive, Milei also pledged more money to build a naval base in Tierra del Fuego and upgrade Argentina's telecommunications capabilities there to strengthen the country's presence in the South Atlantic.

"A poor country without armed forces can hardly make effective progress on its sovereignty claims," he said.

Vance says Iran fight isn't a 'war' as Trump tries to navigate unpopular conflict as election nears

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President JD Vance on Thursday rejected the use of the word "war" to describe the U.S. fighting with Iran as he steered clear of predicting that the 6-month-old conflict would be over by November's midterm elections, in which Republicans are trying to hang on to their narrow majorities in Congress.

"I wouldn't call it a war," Vance said after being asked during a White House press briefing about whether the fighting could end before voters cast their ballots in the Nov. 3 congressional elections. "Right now, there is no active shooting."

Vance's assertion came even as Iran fired at U.S. Gulf ally Kuwait on Thursday as it continued to retaliate for rounds of U.S. strikes on Iran earlier in the week.

The vice president said the U.S. had a "responsibility" to carry out this week's strikes because Iran continued to target commercial vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

Vance's attempt to minimize the intensity of the fighting illuminates the difficult task at hand for Trump

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and his administration as he tries to persuade American voters to keep Republicans in control of Congress, even as the unpopular conflict — one the White House said at its outset would last a matter of weeks — has driven up gas prices and left consumers grappling with higher inflation.

Vance said he didn't want to set "artificial timelines."

"But when you ask, 'When will this end?' You're asking me a question like, 'When will the Iranians stop shooting at ships?'" Vance said. "I think the reality is, I don't know the answer to that question. You would have to ask the Iranians."

The administration in July faced scrutiny after it reclassified four fallen soldiers as well as dozens of wounded troops in its Defense Casualty Analysis System, which Pentagon officials have repeatedly pointed to as the definitive source on the numbers of dead and wounded from the conflict. Those killed or wounded in fighting after a brief ceasefire between the U.S. and Iran fell apart were classified in a new category called "Overseas Operations" after initially being tallied in the totals from the war.

White House insists more oil is getting out of Gulf, but prices remain high

Brent crude prices hovered above \$95 per barrel Thursday. The international benchmark was around \$72 per barrel the day before the conflict began.

Still, Trump and his aides have sought to push that the U.S. Navy is in control of the Strait of Hormuz, where about 20% of the world's traded oil passed before the war. They insist a near prewar level of Gulf oil is now making its way out of the critical waterway.

Vance at Thursday's press briefing said the U.S. escorted about 15 million barrels of oil on Wednesday. This was after Energy Secretary Chris Wright told CNBC on Wednesday that 17 million barrels were carried through the strait on Monday with assistance from the U.S. Navy. About 20 million barrels of Gulf oil flowed through the strait prior to the start of the war.

But ship traffic through the strait remains well below prewar levels, according to independent firms that track marine traffic.

There were 102 transits last week and 126 the week before, according to shipping data company Lloyd's List Intelligence, compared with 130 or more per day before the war.

Over the past 28 days, 5 million barrels a day have exited the strait on average, according to TankerTrackers.com. Other recent estimates have varied from 2 million barrels per day to 6 million barrels per day.

Trump has tried to soothe volatile markets

Over the course of the war, Trump has repeatedly reported progress in negotiations or called off threats of military action at the last moment when global markets have become jittery. And markets have reacted swiftly to his public signals of peace or hints of progress.

"The administration is still jawboning oil markets," said Rosemary Kelanic, Middle East director at Defense Priorities, of the administration's claims of dramatically increased flows of oil. "And they appear to be doing it again to keep prices from going too high, so that they can extend the timeline before there's a worse price spike."

With Iran's refusal to back down in the face of the U.S. military campaign, Trump has settled on a dual-prong approach that combines economic pressure with threats of an escalation in force, if necessary.

Trump has consistently emphasized that the campaign launched by the U.S. and Israel has been devastating for Iran's navy and air force. Iranian officials have said the country has suffered \$270 billion in direct and indirect damage. Israeli military strikes in the first weeks of the war wiped out much of the theocratic government's leadership structure, including its Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Still, Iran has found leverage through its own strikes on the strait and Gulf allies of the United States. But the administration has sought to make the case that the waterway will become less important by the day, even as it asserts that more oil is getting through.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a Fox Business interview this week that the Strait of Hormuz will become a "worthless piece of water" within two years as new land pipelines planned for the region bypass the energy chokepoint. Trump himself took to social media on Thursday to highlight a news report about Syria's effort to transform the port of Baniyas on the Mediterranean coast into a westward route to international markets for Gulf exporters.

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Meanwhile, Iran and Oman have recently discussed a phased approach to jointly managing ship traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump settles into holding pattern before midterms, analysts say

The administration maintains it's making progress economically choking off Iranian hard-liners, including the powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. At the moment, it would be a leap for Trump to agree to any plan that puts Iran in position to claim control of the strait, analysts say.

"I find it hard to believe the president would agree to anything that hands back any modicum of IRGC control over the strait that has been wrested away," said Richard Goldberg, who served as a senior adviser on Iran policy in Trump's first administration.

Aaron David Miller, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said Iran does not appear ready to "let Trump out of the box" despite the massive pain being inflicted on its economy.

At the same time, Miller said, Trump seems to have settled into a holding pattern ahead of the midterms — one in which he avoids both a return to the full-throttle bombardment of Iran and making any accommodations to Tehran on the Strait of Hormuz.

"The White House doesn't want a massive war, and they don't want to be seen as offering massive concessions," Miller said. "The tack they are taking avoids both of those things."

Eala, Osaka and Zverev advance, while No. 3 Auger-Aliassime falls at the US Open

By BRIAN MAHONEY AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Alex Eala and her fans are headed to the weekend at the U.S. Open, along with two-time champion Naomi Osaka and 2023 winner Coco Gauff.

So are Madison Keys and men's top seed Alexander Zverev — just barely — but not No. 3 Felix Auger-Aliassime, who became the highest-seeded player knocked out of the tournament thus far. No. 6 Alex de Minaur losing in straight sets to Botik van de Zandschulp made it four of the top-10 seeded men's players to get eliminated before the third round.

Zverev survived another early scare, but nothing about his second match was easy. He needed five sets and more than 4 1/2 hours to beat Quentin Halys 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (3), 6-7 (3), 6-3 in the nightcap that stretched well into Friday morning.

Osaka recovered after a mid-match lapse to advance to the third round with a 6-2, 5-7, 6-1 victory over Katerina Siniakova on Thursday, before Eala beat Oleksandra Oliynykova 6-1, 6-4.

Doubles play also began, though Serena and Venus Williams won't play their first-round match until Friday night against Hao-Ching Chan and Maya Joint, who beat Serena in singles play at Wimbledon this summer.

Eala, the No. 17 seed from the Philippines, gave her passionate backers reason to cheer immediately by winning the first nine points against her Ukrainian opponent, who had won their only previous meeting.

"I think everybody represents something in their own way; I'm Filipino and I proudly represent that," Eala said. "And a lot of the crowd here today is Filipino and I'm sure they share in that sentiment."

Osaka wore silver and white under her long white jacket with a white visor as she arrived for her match in Arthur Ashe Stadium, three days after she was dressed in black with her hair done in cornrows under a headband in a tribute to former NBA superstar Allen Iverson for her opener at night.

The No. 13 seed won the first set in 30 minutes and then opened a 4-2 lead in the second. But her level of play took a substantial dip, with 20 unforced errors in the set after only four in the first.

Osaka quickly regained control, breaking for a 2-0 lead in the third before finishing a 19-shot rally with a volley for a winner en route to taking the next game, appearing more relieved than excited by her nice touch.

"The match was definitely really tough and I don't know, I just felt like I had to fight," Osaka said. "I definitely had a couple opportunities in the second set and I think I was a little bit too hard on myself. So I took the bathroom break, regrouped a little, came back and just tried to have no regrets."

Auger-Aliassime tumbles out and Keys barely hangs on

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Auger-Aliassime said he was feeling dizzy and seeing spots and couldn't recover, falling to Karen Khachanov 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

"Karen is a great player. Look, I cannot beat him or anybody in this draw feeling the way I felt today," the Canadian said. "If I cannot move, we're not talking about tennis here."

The highest seed to fall so far had been No. 4 Novak Djokovic, who lost in the first round at the U.S. Open for the first time in the 24-time Grand Slam champion's career.

Keys, the 2017 runner-up, also was on the verge of an early exit before erasing five match points and edging Anna Bondar 5-7, 6-4, 7-6 (10-5).

"That was something, huh? No stress, though, we all knew I had it right?" Keys joked to the fans afterward.

Other winners included 2022 champion Iga Swiatek and 2025 runner-up Amanda Anisimova. Taylor Fritz, the 2024 men's runner-up, eased to 6-0, 6-1, 6-1 victory over Mattia Bellucci, while fifth-seeded Flavio Cobolli defeated Tristan Schoolkate 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, 7-5.

Gauff and Zverev move on in prime time

Gauff, who won her first major title at Flushing Meadows three years ago, moved on by beating Paula Badosa 6-4, 7-6 (5) under the lights on Ashe. Badosa was playing for a third consecutive day, forced to finish her first-round match Wednesday after play was suspended Tuesday because of rain that hampered the tournament for multiple days.

"Paula's a tough player," Gauff said. "I don't think there was too much I did wrong. I feel like she really stepped it up."

Zverev was hoping for an easier time after needing five sets to edge Lorenzo Sonego on Tuesday. Instead, he became the first top-seeded man to play back-to-back five-set matches to start a major in the Open Era, which dates to 1968.

Spending more than nine hours on the court through two rounds, Zverev avoided the earliest exit by a No. 1 seed since Andre Agassi in 2000. Concluding at 2:15 a.m., it is the second-latest second-round finish in U.S. Open history.

Before the clock struck midnight, Gael Monfils lost to No. 14 Learner Tien in what is expected to be the 40-year-old Frenchman's final Grand Slam match before calling it a career.

Gloria Steinem lived to see a powerful backlash against her vision of feminism

By ALEXANDRA OLSON and CLAIRE SAVAGE The Associated Press

It was the fight for abortion rights that launched Gloria Steinem into feminism.

The idea that women couldn't reach equality without the ability to decide whether or when to have children was central to the feminist movement of the late 1960s, which Steinem came to embody until her death at age 92 on Wednesday.

The victories of that movement dramatically transformed American culture and family life, leading to a surge of women into the workforce, even as advocates continue to fight against a persistent gender wage gap, sexual harassment and unequal representation at the top ranks of companies and political office.

But Steinem lived to see the rise of a powerful backlash against her vision of feminism, with reproductive rights, motherhood, childbearing and gender roles once again at the center of the country's culture wars.

In 2022, Supreme Court overturned the 1973 ruling Roe v. Wade, eliminating the constitutional right to abortion; 13 states have since instituted total or near-total bans. Another four bar it after about six weeks of pregnancy, which is often before women realize they are pregnant.

Steinem called it a setback for democracy. But for Christian conservative activists, it was a huge victory and helped embolden a movement to encourage men and women to embrace traditional gender roles while often blaming feminism for the decline in birthrates, a rise in divorce and a devaluation of marriage and motherhood.

Family versus career

Through policies and rhetoric, Trump administration officials — including Vice President JD Vance — as

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well as influential conservative groups have launched a campaign to encourage young women to marry quickly, have more children and prioritize family over career.

"Feminism did a grave disservice to women, and men by extension, by promoting the idea that marriage and family are lesser pursuits and should be deprioritized," said Delano Squires, a co-author of the Heritage Foundation's report, "Saving America by Saving the Family," which lamented that "the disruptions to American family life caused by bad public policy in the 1960s were exacerbated by cultural upheavals that radically changed social norms around sex, sexuality, marriage, children, and gender roles."

The report, which among other ideas proposes that Congress create investment accounts with a \$2,500 deposit for men and women who marry before the age of 30, was also co-written by Emma Waters, a Heritage Foundation analyst who has emerged as an influential voice for young conservative Christians criticizing what they see as a career-first culture created by feminism to the detriment of female happiness.

In a recent article, Waters took a dig at "Ms." — both the title and the magazine founded by Steinem.

"Today, the most countercultural thing a 28-year-old woman can do is take her husband's name and be open to the gift of motherhood," she wrote.

Surge of women in the workforce

Steinem herself never had children, a decision she said she never regretted while calling it a great choice for others. And she continued to fiercely advocate for reproductive choice as a cornerstone of women's empowerment.

Steinem pivoted into activism in her 30s after attending a meeting in 1969 where women discussed abortion rights and hearing stories that empowered her to speak up about the secret abortion she had in London at age 22.

At the time, abortion was illegal in most of the U.S. The Supreme Court had only recently guaranteed the right to birth control in the 1965 landmark *Griswold v. Connecticut* ruling.

Fewer than 50% of women were in the labor force back then, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. It was legal to fire a woman for becoming pregnant, remaining so until the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978. Banks routinely asked for a male co-signer when women applied for credit cards. There were only 11 women serving in Congress.

The landscape is drastically different today. About 58% of women 20 and older are in the labor force, and that number jumps to 77% for women at prime working ages between 25 and 54. The Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974 — championed by the small number of women then serving in Congress — made it illegal to deny credit cards and loans to women on the basis of sex. There are now 152 women serving in Congress.

Many of those hard-fought rights, at least in principle, remain unassailable even among staunch conservatives. Squires, of the Heritage Foundation, said he would never question the right of women to own property, credit or be able to vote or work, even as he champions traditional gender roles.

Still, even the most radical ideas have been amplified by some in power. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, for example, reposted a video about a Christian nationalist church that included various pastors saying women should no longer be allowed to vote, sparking widespread outrage.

For those on the religious right, feminism upends the "godly" ideal of a father who leads and protects the household and encourages women to put their own needs before those of their husband and children, according to Beth Allison Barr, a women's history professor at Baylor University. "It makes it directly oppositional: that to be a good Christian, you can't be a feminist."

Unfinished business

Women's advocacy groups warn that both the curtailing of reproductive rights and the characterization of feminism as an attack on families are at their core attempts to disempower women and limit their freedom to choose their own life paths.

Fatima Goss Graves, CEO of the National Women's Law Center, said progressive proposals — such as expanded and longer paid family leave and better access to affordable child care — are in fact about championing families and making childrearing easier without pushing women to abandon careers and financial independence.

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"We are really in a bigger cultural fight about who we are going to be as a nation and what women's role will be," said Goss Graves.

Despite setbacks like the reversal of Roe v. Wade and unfinished business such as the campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment, Stanford University women's history professor Estelle Freedman said feminism in the United States is so embedded in modern life that its momentum "may be unstoppable."

The economy, for one thing, now depends on women continuing to work, she said.

The feminist movement since the early 19th century "has gone through periods of mobilization and gains, and periods of backlash and losses," but throughout "there has been continuous reorganization, rethinking to get stronger," Freedman said.

Steinem, Freedman said, lent the movement crucial continuity for more than half a century.

"The visibility that she's given will help people not forget it's a long haul. And it's work that just has to continue," Freedman said. ____

The Associated Press' women in the workforce coverage receives financial support from Pivotal Ventures. AP is solely responsible for all content. Find AP's standards for working with philanthropies, a list of supporters and funded coverage areas at AP.org.

Flock surveillance cameras become midterm campaign target as voters balk at tech companies' power

By SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Wisconsin's candidates for governor want to limit them, while Pennsylvania's say they support a ban. A Michigan congressional candidate called them "un-American." A Florida Senate candidate is selling merch opposing them.

Across the country and up and down ballots, candidates from both parties are increasingly on the attack over Flock cameras, the AI-powered nationwide network of automated cameras that record license plates and other characteristics of all passing vehicles, allowing law enforcement agencies to search and share that data. Although police say the cameras are an invaluable crime-fighting tool, some critics say their pervasiveness amounts to unconstitutional warrantless mass surveillance.

The cameras sold by Atlanta-based Flock Safety, which the company has said are running in 6,000 communities in every state but Alaska, have become a new campaign issue that candidates and strategists see as part of a backlash against powerful technology companies, connected to broader debates over the future of artificial intelligence and the associated boom in data center construction.

"We've seen candidates running on banning them, cutting off funding, or requiring warrants. That's a credit to activists across the country who have raised concerns about their use," Michael Soyfer, an attorney for the Institute for Justice, a public interest law firm litigating over the technology, said in a statement.

In response to questions about the cameras as a campaign theme, a Flock spokeswoman emphasized the company's claims about the power of its technology, saying it helped "solve approximately one million crimes and helped reunite roughly 10,000 missing people with their families."

"We ask anyone weighing in on this issue to engage with the facts and the record: the crimes solved, the families reunited, the safeguards already in place, and what our technology actually does," said MoMo Zhou, the company's vice president of communications. "We ask them to work with the communities using this technology to decide what rules should govern it and not to spread misinformation or ban a critical public safety tool outright that is helping to make communities safer."

Flock opponents cite privacy concerns

License plate reader technology is decades old, and Flock was founded in 2017. But the company has faced a growing backlash this year — one that's crescendoed in recent weeks. It has come as awareness has grown about the sweeping reach of Flock's network, litigation has unfolded over constitutional questions related to the use of the cameras, and news media have documented cases of officers misusing the technology to stalk personal connections.

James Talarico, the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in Texas, recently declared, "Flock cameras

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have no place in Texas." His Republican opponent Ken Paxton's campaign didn't respond to a request for comment.

Josh Shapiro, the Democratic Pennsylvania governor seeking reelection and considered a potential contender for the White House in 2028, said this week he would support a statewide ban. His Republican opponent, Pennsylvania Treasurer Stacy Garrity, said in a statement, "Flock cameras are an intrusive invasion of privacy and they should be banned."

In Wisconsin, the issue dominated the governor's race this week.

Democratic nominee David Crowley, who is taking hits over his past comments in support of making Wisconsin a global AI and data hub, highlighted that he had issued an order limiting the use of Flock cameras in Milwaukee County, where he serves as county executive. He said that as governor he would "implement strict transparency and accountability laws that ensure Wisconsinites are not spied on."

His Republican opponent, U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany, said in a statement that he would pause state funding for Flock cameras and create a task force to establish stronger privacy protections, penalties for misuse, limits on data retention and sharing and "safeguards against Communist China and foreign adversaries."

The Wisconsin Democratic Party responded by posting a clip of Tiffany in April saying in response to a question about Flock cameras that he didn't know what they were. Then the state Republican Party hit back, saying "Big Brother Crowley" had a long record of previously supporting police surveillance technologies.

The issue has also infiltrated Rhode Island's gubernatorial race, where Democratic Gov. Dan McKee paused the installation of new cameras just weeks before the state's Sept. 9 primary, citing privacy and transparency concerns. His primary opponent, former CVS executive Helena Foulkes, has questioned McKee's motives for stopping the rollout so close to the election but agreed a review of how the data is being used was needed.

In Michigan, self-described democratic socialist William Lawrence, a Democratic nominee for the U.S. House, recently addressed the cameras by calling them "the most un-American thing I can imagine." A spokesman for his opponent, incumbent Rep. Tom Barrett, noted that Barrett is a co-sponsor of legislation intended to ban federal agencies from using Flock cameras or other surveillance technology and to prevent state and local governments from using federal funds to buy them.

In Florida, where outgoing Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis's administration this week ordered the removal of automated license plate readers from state highway rights-of-way, Democratic Senate nominee Angie Nixon's campaign is selling a T-shirt that reads, "FLORIDA NEEDS TO GET THE FLOCK OUT."

Law enforcement groups support the technology

While calls for bans or restrictions have mounted, other candidates have expressed more supportive or nuanced views, and policing groups have reiterated their strong backing for the company and its tech.

Mitchell Davis III, chief of police in Hazel Crest, Illinois, and the president of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, said in an interview that technology like Flock's is "invaluable" and that the conversations around it have become "disturbing."

"The disturbing thing for me right now is I'm seeing these communities that are telling their police departments that we're no longer using these (automated license plate readers) in our communities, and that, I believe, that's a huge mistake. Talk about the proverbial throwing the baby out with the bathwater," he said. "Instead of focusing on eliminating the cameras, make sure that there's proper guidelines and proper accountability for misuse of the cameras."

President Donald Trump said recently at an Oval Office event that his administration was studying the issue and would have more to say soon.

Cayce Myers, an attorney who teaches courses that touch on public relations, political communications and privacy issues at Virginia Tech University, said Americans are increasingly living in a world where they are interfacing with new technologies like Flock cameras whether they want to or not.

"I think there's a real synergy between the camera systems that we're talking about and also this greater societal discomfort with AI and technology in general," he said, adding that it seems obvious that new surveillance technologies will continue to become a major political issue.

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For Josh Chavez, Flock cameras are one of his concerns about the intersection of emerging technologies and civil liberties in his stretch of West Texas where data center projects are proliferating. Chavez, an HVAC installer, is outspoken enough on data centers that he was invited to participate in a recent roundtable on the subject with Democratic gubernatorial candidate Gina Hinojosa, who is also a Flock critic.

"This is the government seeking more power, right?" Chavez said of the cameras. "In a partnership with Big Tech, who is seeking more money, all at the expense of us."

Maria Bartiromo out at Fox News after more than a decade; no reason specified

By The Associated Press undefined

Fox News Media has parted ways with politically influential financial journalist Maria Bartiromo after more than a decade, the company announced Thursday hours after Fox Business Network aired the final episode of the show that bears her name. The company did not specify the reasons for her separation.

"We thank Maria for her work over the last 12½ years," a Fox statement read, "and wish her all the best on her next chapter."

There was no immediate reaction from Bartiromo. Her X account still showed a banner photo Thursday afternoon encouraging people to "grab yourself a cup of coffee, and join us every morning for Mornings With Maria."

On his Truth Social platform late Thursday, President Donald Trump wrote: "I can't believe Maria Bartiromo is no longer going to have her great show(s) on FoxNews/Business. Three different shows, always number one. Maria is a total professional, and a true warrior. Her fans, of which there are many, will not be happy. God bless you, Maria!"

Other high-profile, on-air personalities that have left Fox News Media in recent years include Tucker Carlson and Bill O'Reilly. Former Fox personality Pete Hegseth left the network in 2024 after being nominated as Trump's secretary of defense.

Bartiromo hosted "Mornings with Maria" on Fox Business Network, the last episode of which aired Thursday morning, as well as "Maria Bartiromo's Wall Street."

The first show will be renamed "Mornings with Fox Business" and will feature rotating anchors, the company said in its statement. The second will be renamed "FBN's Wall Street" and will also use rotating anchors. Additionally, Bartiromo's weekly Fox News show "Sunday Morning Futures" will be hosted by Jason Chaffetz for the time being.

Bartiromo has frequently earned praise from Trump, who has granted her multiple interviews over the years. He has called her a "great reporter." Vice President JD Vance, talking with reporters Thursday afternoon, was asked about her departure but said he had not talked to her and didn't know the back story.

"I love Maria. I think she's an amazing person, an amazing talent," Vance said. "Whatever she does, she's gonna do great, and I wish her all the best. She's a very, very dear friend."

In 2025, a lawsuit against Fox News by voting technology company Smartmatic alleged that Bartiromo spread false rumors about claims of election fraud on the air — a notion she had vehemently rejected.

Bartiromo had said before an earlier lawsuit involving Fox and Dominion Voting Systems that it's "absurd" to think that she personally lobbied former Attorney General William Barr to aggressively investigate Trump's charges of voter fraud during the 2020 election. Instead, she said she was doing a journalist's job in asking follow-up questions. That case was settled in 2023.

Before Fox, Bartiromo worked for CNBC for 20 years as a financial journalist. Previously to that, she worked for CNN. At CNBC, she pioneered daily live reporting from the floor of the New York Stock Exchange and won an Emmy Award for a documentary about Google.

Trump administration pushes to remove tax exemption for private colleges with DEI policies

By COLLIN BINKLEY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration is proposing a new rule that would strip private schools and colleges of their tax-exempt status if they provide targeted help to students based on their race, a significant escalation in the White House's campaign to eradicate diversity programs directed at Black, Hispanic and other minority students.

The Treasury Department proposed the change Thursday in a new regulation that, if made final, would kick in after May 2027. The rule is broadly aimed at ending any policies or programs that help students because of their race, and it specifically says such benefits in admissions, scholarships and facilities "would be incompatible" with the rule.

It's the latest attempt by the Trump administration to pressure schools and colleges to weed out diversity, equity and inclusion policies that had become common before President Donald Trump returned to the White House with a promise to end them. Trump officials have used Civil Rights-era laws to unwind the policies, saying they discriminate against white and Asian American students.

Higher education leaders criticized the proposal.

"The administration's latest rules changes are its most blatant attack to keep working class Americans and people of color from accessing higher education and a better life," Mike Gavin, Alliance for Higher Education president and CEO, said in a statement. "By claiming that efforts to increase fair opportunity for all students are discriminatory, the administration is trying to gaslight the American people into believing that up is down and black is white."

Thousands of colleges could be affected

Scores of universities have shut down or rebranded their DEI offices and ended scholarships and clubs designed for minority students under pressure from the White House. In a statement announcing the proposal, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent suggested that even policies that are no longer under the banner of DEI could be targeted.

"Schools rebranding race-based preferences as equitable, inclusive, or diversity-enhancing does not change their discriminatory nature," Bessent said.

The Treasury Department and IRS estimate that up to 18,000 private schools, colleges and other education institutions could be affected by the proposal.

America's private universities have been exempt from many taxes for more than a century because they provide a public good. The benefit saves many universities millions of dollars every year.

Trump has seen the tax-exempt status as a lever to pull in his pressure campaign against colleges that he describes as hotbeds of "wokeness." He threatened to cut the benefit for Harvard University last year during his battle with the nation's oldest college. In a response, Harvard officials said there was no legal basis for doing so and argued it would force cuts to financial aid and crucial medical research.

In the 1970s, a college lost tax-exempt status over a ban on interracial dating

It's incredibly rare for the federal government to go after a college's tax-exempt status, but there's one notable precedent. Bob Jones University, a small Christian school in South Carolina, lost the benefit in the 1970s over a ban on interracial dating and marriage on campus. The Supreme Court upheld the IRS's decision to deny the school its exemption. The school has since ended the ban and regained tax-exempt status in 2017.

Laws forbid the IRS from targeting individuals and organizations for ideological reasons, and federal officials are not allowed to direct IRS investigations.

To maintain nonprofit status, which allows donations to be tax-deductible, organizations must follow IRS rules on lobbying, political campaign activity and annual reporting requirements, plus other obligations.

The Trump administration describes the new proposal as a move toward restoring merit in the nation's education systems.

Marjorie Hass, president of the Council of Independent Colleges, said the change would most likely

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impact donations, which are often earmarked for scholarships.

The uncertainty around the proposal also will create challenges for schools, said Tim Powers, a vice president of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

"Our institutions are committed to complying with applicable civil rights laws and maintaining safe and supportive campuses free from discrimination," Powers said. "However, the proposed rule may create new compliance burdens and legal uncertainties for institutions of higher education that are already operating in line with existing nondiscrimination rules."

Revoking tax-exempt status has required a 'high bar'

The Justice Department has separately opened investigations into several medical schools that it accuses of favoring Black and Hispanic students in admissions. Trump officials say any such favoritism violates Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a federal law that forbids discrimination in education and was created to fight segregation and its impact.

A statement from IRS Chief Executive Officer Frank J. Bisignano said private schools that promote discriminatory practices will no longer be exempt from taxes.

"Today's proposed regulations put institutions on notice and schools that continue to engage in racial discrimination should expect to lose that status," he said.

Both political parties have long viewed nonprofit status as requiring "a really high bar to mess with," said Preston Cooper, a senior fellow who studies higher education policy at the conservative American Enterprise Institute.

A decade ago, before Trump first became president, it was conservative colleges whose leaders were worrying about losing nonprofit status. Religious leaders raised concerns that Christian schools could someday lose accreditation or tax-exempt status over their codes of conduct barring same-sex relationships.

What happens with this newest Trump administration push will likely determine how Democrats respond, Cooper said.

"If the Trump administration were to use this regulation to start revoking tax-exempt status from colleges right and left, I think that would represent a really serious escalation and would be potentially something the Democrats would want to retaliate against when they return to power," he said. If the regulation ends up being merely a warning to schools, he said, "that's a different conversation."

ICE whistleblower warned of 'unprecedented lowering of standards' during hiring spree

By RYAN J. FOLEY Associated Press

A supervisor overseeing background checks warned last year that Immigration and Customs Enforcement was hiring many new officers who had not undergone basic vetting, violating federal rules and putting the agency at risk of misconduct, a newly released whistleblower complaint shows.

The official was a unit chief in ICE's Office of Professional Responsibility, where background checks were backlogged as ICE added thousands of new officers to carry out President Donald Trump's mass deportation campaign.

ICE's human resources division was making final job offers before preliminary vetting steps had been completed, including fingerprints, identity verification and credit checks, the official's complaint warned.

"This unprecedented lowering of standards sacrifices proper risk mitigation for expediency, placing DHS at risk of infiltration and insider compromise," the official wrote in a memo to the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General dated August 2025.

The New York Times first reported on the whistleblower complaint Thursday. The Associated Press obtained the complaint and a related memo from the now-retired ICE official's lawyer, Kevin Owen. The official's identity was redacted from the complaint. The Times said the official was a 17-year-agency employee and longtime Republican who had voted for Trump in 2020 and 2024.

ICE announced in January that it had hired 12,000 new officers in less than one year, a spree financed by a \$75 billion infusion from Congress to increase the agency's arrests and deportations.

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The rapid pace of the hiring, fueled by a \$50,000 signing bonus, raised concerns about the quality of the new employees. An investigation by The Associated Press found that some of the new hires had serious financial problems in their backgrounds, had been accused of misconduct in prior jobs, and had checkered employment histories.

In July, Tom Homan, the White House border czar, said ICE would investigate apparent shortcomings in the vetting of an officer who shot and killed a 25-year-old motorist in Maine.

The whistleblower complaint said that "systemic breakdowns in vetting" violated several federal rules and standards designed to ensure candidates are suitable for sensitive law enforcement and national security positions.

The complaint said the lack of vetting created "increased vulnerability to insider threats, infiltration and foreign influence," undermined ICE's law enforcement operations and eroded public confidence in the agency.

It asked the inspector general to investigate the personnel vetting failures and for the agency to immediately suspend the improper practices, hold accountable those responsible for the violations and to review all recent hires to identify potential "insider threats."

The Office of Inspector General has previously announced that it is investigating ICE's hiring and training process, as well as security clearances granted to contractors and political appointees.

In a statement, ICE said Thursday the whistleblower was no longer with the agency.

"The ICE Office of Professional Responsibility diligently applies the proper personnel vetting regulations, including guidelines for national security, and evaluates all available information for every applicant based on these factors," the statement said.

As the AP previously reported, ICE acknowledged that some applicants received "tentative selection letters" after their initial applications and interviews. Some were allowed to begin training before their background investigations were completed.

The whistleblower is the second insider to call out ICE's rush to put more officers on the streets as reckless.

A former agency lawyer and instructor at the ICE academy, Ryan Schwank, said the agency cut training on the use of force, firearms safety, and the rights of protesters last year. The Department of Homeland Security has since increased the amount of training for new officers.

Trump names Adam Telle as acting Army secretary following the departure of Driscoll

By JONATHAN J. COOPER and BEN FINLEY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Thursday named Adam Telle, a civilian leader in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as the acting Army secretary following the departure of Dan Driscoll amid widespread reports of tensions with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

Telle is currently the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works. But he spent more than 20 years working for Republican senators as well as in the White House during Trump's first term, serving as the president's chief liaison to the Senate, according to an Army bio.

"He is a Great Patriot, who is respected by all," Trump wrote in a Truth Social post.

Hegseth echoed that in his own post on X.

"Huge congrats to Adam. Strong and whip smart," Hegseth wrote. "He is indeed a great Patriot — and will be an immediate asset to the @USArmy."

Driscoll gave no explanation for his decision to quit this week as the Army's top civilian official. His clashes with Hegseth have been widely reported, and some of Driscoll's allies in the Army were ousted this year by Trump's Pentagon chief.

Telle has been at the Army Office of Civil Works since August 2025, according to Legistorm, a website that tracks lawmakers and Capitol Hill staffers. Before that, Telle worked as chief of staff for Republican Sen. Bill Hagerty of Tennessee from 2021 to 2025.

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Telle spent 18 months working in the White House during Trump's first term and 10 years working for the late Republican Sen. Thad Cochran of Mississippi, according to Legistorm.

Telle also worked as the chief staff member on the Senate Appropriations Committee's Homeland Security Subcommittee, according to Hagerty's remarks when Telle was nominated for the civil works job in May 2025.

In his most recent job, Telle focused on matters involving commercial navigation, flood damage reduction and permitting under the Clean Water Act. Telle issued a statement in August about the approval of a company's plans to reroute an aging oil pipeline around a Wisconsin tribal reservation. In May, he was quoted in a story in The Forum, a newspaper in Fargo, North Dakota, about a \$3.2 billion flood control project that will protect more than 200,000 people.

Telle will now be overseeing the nation's largest fighting force at a time when the U.S. is still engaged in conflict with Iran and significant Army forces are stationed in the Middle East.

The war has significantly contributed to the U.S. military's shortfall in critical weapons like the Patriot and THAAD defense missile interceptors systems, which are operated by the Army.

Driscoll, an Army veteran who served in Iraq, is a friend of Vice President JD Vance and had good relationships with both Republicans and Democrats in Congress.

His allies in the Army who were ousted by Hegseth included its top uniformed leader, Gen. Randy George. Gen. Christopher LaNeve took over as the Army's acting chief of staff and recently pulled the plug on a drone modernization program that Driscoll had championed.

Driscoll spoke with Trump on the current state of the Army before he submitted his resignation, The Associated Press has reported.

Driscoll did not allude to any problems in the only public statement on his departure, saying Tuesday that it has been "the honor of a lifetime" to serve as Army secretary under Trump and Hegseth.

Democrats and Republicans lamented Driscoll's departure, with some blaming Hegseth directly.

Sen. Thom Tillis, a North Carolina Republican who is retiring and sometimes has clashed with Trump, said on social media that Hegseth "is creating a leadership void at the top of our military ranks."

The gunman in a deadly Minneapolis shooting had left a long trail of warning signs

By MARK VANCELEAVE, HALLIE GOLDEN, R.J. RICO and TIM SULLIVAN Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The man who carried out Wednesday's deadly shooting in a Minneapolis apartment building had threatened his neighbors, repeatedly showed off his pistol and warned he was planning to shoot people, according to building residents, court documents and law enforcement officials.

The building's owners were trying to evict him. At least one person had asked for a restraining order to be placed on him. The police investigated him in June for displaying a weapon, but the county attorney's office decided not to file any charges.

Late Wednesday afternoon, Carlton Johnson shot and killed two of his neighbors and left five more people — two police officers, an ex-girlfriend and two building employees — injured. He was killed, officials said, by police officers who raced into the building just 2 minutes and 26 seconds after the first call to the city's 911 system.

In Johnson's building, he was known for his drinking, his anger and the pistol he kept tucked into his waistband.

"As soon as I heard the shots I knew who it would be," said Chris Miller, who lives in the building on the edge of downtown Minneapolis, in a dense neighborhood where luxury highrises bump up against low-income residences. Miller said Johnson, 35, had showed him his pistol a few days earlier, saying he planned to shoot his ex-girlfriend and two building managers because of the eviction threat. Miller reported the threat to building managers, though it's not clear what happened after that.

The shooting began about 4:30 p.m. just outside the building's entrance during an arranged custody handoff, when Johnson shot and wounded a woman believed to be the mother of his child, said Drew

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Evans, superintendent of the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. The child was not injured.

Johnson then shot two building employees and took an elevator to the 9th floor where he killed two building residents before police killed him. Evans said it was unclear if Johnson was targeting the residents or had simply encountered them in the hallway. Two Minneapolis police officers were hit by gunfire.

It was unclear how many of the injured victims remained hospitalized Thursday afternoon.

"This is once again a situation where domestic violence is central to a really terrible situation," Evans told reporters.

Court documents say Johnson was facing eviction and had threatened a fellow resident with a gun in the months leading up to the shooting.

Earlier Thursday, Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty said Minneapolis Police had investigated a June 25 encounter where Johnson had displayed a weapon but kept it in his waistband. The police said he had a legal permit to carry the weapon, and the office decided not to file the charges because there was "insufficient evidence to prove a charge beyond a reasonable doubt."

Moriarty's office also declined to pursue an emergency order to remove Johnson's weapon.

Court records show that at least one woman who had a child with Johnson filed a restraining order against him. In 2023, the woman accused Johnson of threatening to kill her in expletive-laden text messages after she told police that he had sexually assaulted her two years earlier. In the restraining order, which was granted, the woman said Johnson used over 10 different cell phone numbers to contact her and repeatedly impersonated a police officer to try to coerce her into sharing her location. The woman who filed that restraining order did not appear to be the same woman shot Wednesday.

Interim Police Chief Bill Peterson defended the police response to Johnson's record and said they only recently knew of many of the incidents.

"Hindsight is 20/20," he said. "We're dealing with these incidents and the large volume of cases that are coming in, and we're trying to pick and choose which ones we investigate, how much time, energy and resources we commit to it."

Residents, though, knew Johnson well.

Julius Bailey was sitting with a friend just outside the building entrance when he heard gunshots and saw Johnson holding a pistol. He began running after he heard a woman screaming, counting eight shots as he headed for safety.

Bailey, who moved into the building in June, said he went out of his way to avoid Johnson.

"I could tell he was trouble," he said.

ICE officer charged with lying about shooting turns himself in to feds, AP source says

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer charged with lying to investigators about the events leading up to the shooting of a Venezuelan man during the Minneapolis immigration crackdown turned himself in Thursday to federal authorities, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press.

Christian Castro was taken into federal custody on charges of making false statements to investigators about the shooting of Julio Cesar Sosa-Celis in January, said the person, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the case.

The federal charges follow Castro's release from jail last week after Texas' governor refused to immediately sign an extradition warrant to hand him over to Minnesota authorities, who have charged him separately with assault and false reporting of a crime related to the same shooting.

Federal authorities had initially accused Sosa-Celis and another man of beating an officer with a broom handle and a snow shovel during the confrontation. But federal prosecutors dropped charges against the men after video evidence showed the officers may have lied about the encounter, and officials opened an investigation.

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Charges stem from nonfatal shooting during Operation Metro Surge

Castro is the first federal immigration officer to be prosecuted by the Trump administration related to actions taken during the massive Operation Metro Surge in the Twin Cities that began in January 2026. No attorney is listed for Castro in the case brought by Minnesota and it was not immediately clear if he had a lawyer to speak on his behalf.

Thousands of officers were sent to the Minneapolis and St. Paul area by the Department of Homeland Security in what was its largest immigration enforcement operation ever. The shooting deaths of U.S. citizens Renee Good and Alex Pretti by federal officers drew condemnation and raised questions over officers' conduct, prompting changes to the operation.

Earlier this week, a federal prosecutor working on the case told lawyers for Sosa-Celis and other victims that Justice Department officials blocked the prosecutor's push to bring a more serious civil rights charge against the officer for the shooting, ProPublica reported on Wednesday.

But the person familiar with the investigation disputed the prosecutor's characterization, saying the civil rights probe is continuing and there has been no final decision on whether to bring additional charges. The prosecutor, Matthew Evans, has been fired and is under investigation for alleged obstruction of a grand jury probe, the person said.

An automatic email response from Evans' Justice Department account said he was on leave. Other attempts to reach him were not immediately successful.

An attorney for Sosa-Celis said the Justice Department has "grossly undercharged this case," adding that Castro's statements were made to "cover up the fact that he shot my client through the door of an occupied house without a self-defense justification."

"Mr. Sosa Celis wants Mr. Castro to be held fully accountable for his crimes," said the attorney, Robin Wolpert. The American Liberties Union of Minnesota said Thursday that Sosa-Celis also plans to seek damages from the federal government.

Castro is also facing charges from Minnesota authorities

Castro was initially arrested in May in the Minnesota case, and he was held in custody in Brownsville, Texas, a city bordering Mexico, while Minnesota officials sought his extradition. But Texas Gov. Greg Abbott refused to immediately sign off, citing continuing investigations of fraud in government social service programs in Minnesota, which Trump used to justify his immigration crackdown there.

Minnesota officials had sought to stop the sheriff in Cameron County, Texas, from releasing Castro, out of fear that he would flee to Mexico. According to a lawsuit filed by Minnesota, Castro had a conversation with a woman, while he was incarcerated, where he spoke about marrying her and buying a house in Mexico after his release.

But Castro was released a week ago after a federal judge refused to order Texas to extradite him.

The Department of Homeland Security previously called Minnesota's prosecution of Castro "unlawful and nothing more than a political stunt," saying only federal authorities have jurisdiction in the case.

Castro was placed on leave during the federal probe

Castro was suspended from ICE without pay in February while federal authorities conducted the investigation.

"The men and women of ICE are entrusted with upholding the rule of law and are held to the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and ethical conduct," ICE's acting director at the time, Todd Lyons, said then. "Violations of this sacred sworn oath will not be tolerated. ICE remains fully committed to transparency, accountability, and the fair enforcement of our nation's immigration laws."

Minnesota officials alleged that Castro, 52, fired through the front door of a home and shot Sosa-Celis in the thigh.

Castro and another officer had chased a different man, Alfredo Alejandro Aljorna, to the Minneapolis apartment duplex where he and Sosa-Celis lived. Minnesota prosecutors said the officer then falsely accused Sosa-Celis and another man of attacking an ICE officer with a broom handle and a snow shovel.

Maryland's top court allows Democratic-backed congressional redistricting measure on November ballot

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

Maryland voters will get to decide in November on a congressional redistricting amendment being pushed by Democrats as part of a nationwide battle for control of the U.S. House in future elections.

The Maryland Supreme Court ruled Thursday that the proposed constitutional amendment must be placed on the November ballot, reversing two lower court rulings that had blocked it from going to voters. But the court directed the ballot summary to be rewritten.

The decision marks a notable victory for Democrats, who are trying to counter a Republican redistricting movement advanced by President Donald Trump.

"Winning in court was only the first step," said Ned Miller, chief strategist for Fight Back MD, which supports the ballot measure. "We are building the statewide campaign to educate voters, organize supporters and build the coalition necessary to stand up to Donald Trump and pass Question 3 in November."

Democrats already hold seven of Maryland's eight U.S. House seats. The proposed amendment would not change voting districts for this year's midterm elections. But if approved by voters, it could free Democratic lawmakers to draw new congressional districts that give the party a shot at a clean sweep in the 2028 elections.

State Senate Minority Leader Steve Hershey, one of several Republican lawmakers who sued, said he appreciated that the court found the ballot wording to be unfair. But he said it wasn't the role of the judiciary to rewrite what lawmakers had done.

"The Court ultimately provided political cover for the General Assembly by allowing this misleading constitutional amendment to remain on the ballot," Hershey said in a statement.

Maryland amendment would sidestep a prior court case

Democratic Gov. Wes Moore called lawmakers into a special session in August to refer the amendment to the November ballot.

The amendment would undo the foundation of a 2022 court ruling that struck down a previous Democratic redistricting plan as a "product of extreme partisan gerrymandering." That judge said a constitutional provision requiring compact districts that respect "natural boundaries" applied to congressional districts. But the proposed amendment would apply those parameters only to state legislative districts.

That could allow lawmakers to draw congressional districts that cross the Chesapeake Bay, potentially reshaping a district held by U.S. Rep. Andy Harris, the state's only Republican representative and the chair of the conservative House Freedom Caucus.

Supreme Court overrules claims on missed deadlines

Lower courts ruled that lawmakers didn't abide by their own requirements when referring the amendment to the ballot.

At the heart of the case was a law passed earlier this year that set a July 1 deadline for the secretary of state to certify information about statewide ballot questions to the Maryland State Board of Elections. The same law also set a 15-day public comment period.

Those deadlines had already passed by the time lawmakers approved the redistricting amendment on Aug. 4.

Lawyers for Democratic Attorney General Anthony Brown argued that those deadlines didn't matter. They said that law didn't apply to the redistricting amendment because lawmakers wrote their own ballot summary for it, using their constitutional authority. The Supreme Court ultimately ruled that the lower court got it wrong.

Republican lawmakers who sued also had won in lower courts on claims that the ballot question wording was misleading and that the amendment violated a single-issue requirement in the state constitution by including a provision giving original jurisdiction over congressional redistricting lawsuits to the state Supreme Court.

The state Supreme Court rejected the multiple-subject argument but concurred that the ballot wording

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was misleading. However, the court said that wasn't enough to prevent the amendment from going to the people. It instead directed a change to be made to the ballot wording that voters will see.

Maryland could join a national redistricting effort

Redistricting typically happens near the beginning of each decade, after new census data is released. But a mid-decade redistricting battle broke out last year after Trump urged Republican-led states to redraw congressional districts in the hopes that it might help Republicans hold onto a slim House majority in this year's midterm elections.

Republicans had hoped to gain as many as 16 additional seats this year from new U.S. House districts enacted in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee and Texas. But the Missouri Supreme Court on Thursday blocked new congressional districts from being used in the November election. Instead it ordered a statewide vote in November on whether to uphold or reject the maps in response to a citizens' petition seeking a referendum.

Democrats hope to gain as many as five congressional seats from new districts this year in California and Utah.

In May, the Virginia Supreme Court struck down a redistricting effort that could have helped Democrats win up to four additional seats. It ruled that the Democratic-led legislature violated procedural requirements when placing an amendment on the ballot.

Trump again appeals to Supreme Court on mail-voting restrictions with midterm elections looming

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST, MICHAEL CASEY and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The Trump administration on Thursday asked the Supreme Court to reject an order by a federal judge that halts it from implementing a new rule regulating mail ballots, hours after being unable to tell that judge whether the computer system that would govern the entire project was operational yet.

The administration filed its appeal the afternoon before mail ballots were scheduled to be sent out by North Carolina, which on Friday kicks off a wave of states shipping ballots out for the rapidly approaching midterm election. Its appeal was part of a flurry of last-minute litigation as the federal government struggles to implement President Donald Trump's restrictions on mail ballots before the midterm elections in November, and came even as legal wrangling over Trump's executive order continued in lower courts.

The high court's conservative majority previously allowed the president's plan to move ahead, but they have not decided whether it is legal.

Under Trump's executive order, the U.S. Postal Service could refuse to deliver ballots from states that do not follow a uniform envelope style and submit lists of eligible voters to an online portal that was apparently still inactive Thursday.

During a hearing in Boston, U.S. District Court Judge Indira Talwani repeatedly questioned Department of Justice attorney Michael Velchik about whether the Postal Service could actually implement Trump's plan from an executive order he issued last spring. The key piece is the online portal, which would track tens of millions of mail ballots. States would be required to upload their list of mail voters to the portal to have ballots delivered, and if the data there didn't match what was on the envelopes, the ballots would not be sent.

Unclear if key system has been set up

"I don't even have a declaration from the Postal Service: 'This is how it will work.' I don't have it. I have nothing," Talwani said, adding later that it felt like the government was running an "experiment" to see if the system would work in the upcoming election.

"As you sit here today, you can't tell me the government has a program ready to go?" Talwani asked.

Velchik repeated that the Postal Service would "fully implement the rule" that it published last month, triggering the latest round of litigation. He argued the main issue is whether Talwani has the legal power to stop it.

"The \$64,000 question is, is this authorized by the statute?" Velchik said.

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Talwani is considering whether to extend her temporary order barring the Postal Service from requiring use of the system through Sept. 10. The first state to send out all its mail ballots, North Carolina, is scheduled to begin shipping them out Friday, with other states quickly following.

Talwani has been here before. In June, she prohibited the administration from implementing Trump's executive order for the November election, ruling the changes came too close to voting for the federal government to embark on such a project.

But the Supreme Court late last month ruled that Talwani's order was premature because the Postal Service had not yet published regulations governing how it would apply Trump's order. The agency did so just before the high court ruling came down, prompting Democrats and voting rights groups to swiftly re-file their lawsuits.

They counter that the president has no authority to set election rules, which is a power designated by the Constitution to the states and, in some cases, to Congress.

Tangled legal fight goes up to election deadlines

They won an initial victory with Talwani's 14-day restraining order. In a sign of the pressures on the administration, its lawyers already appealed that order to the 1st Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston, but they added the Supreme Court appeal Thursday and urged the top justices to act quickly.

Illustrating the challenge, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, the high court justice designated to deal with appeals from the region, set a Sept. 8 deadline for the plaintiffs to file their arguments, likely pushing any decision into the middle of next week at the earliest.

Trump has long opposed mail voting and falsely blamed it for his 2020 election loss to Democrat Joe Biden, even though he often uses that method to cast his own ballot.

Election officials say there's simply no way they can comply with the Postal Service directives, which could require a complete overhaul of their operations. Before it delivers mail ballots for any state, the Postal Service would have to approve the design of the envelopes that contain them and have the state upload a list of voters receiving them to an online portal.

Some ballots have already gone out. A few municipalities in Wisconsin opted to send mail ballots to voters earlier this week, but Friday marks the full kickoff of voting as North Carolina starts shipping its mail ballots to all voters who requested them.

The administration has contended the changes are relatively minor and legal.

"While the States have primary authority to regulate the manner of elections, they cannot choose to use the federal mails to carry out their elections but then insist that their election-related mail is somehow exempt from the Postal Service's rulemaking authority, conferred by Congress, to regulate envelope design and addressee information," Trump's solicitor general, John Sauer, wrote in the appeal.

Sophia Lin Lakin of the ACLU, one of the organizations that sued to block the plan, said the administration is simply generating more uncertainty.

"The only emergency here is the one the administration created," Lakin said in a statement. "The court's temporary order preserves the voting procedures Americans have relied on for years, and it should stand."

No red states have said they'll use system

Thursday's hearing before Talwani focused more on practicalities — especially that the portal was still not active, while most election offices have already printed their envelopes and ballots.

Velchik told the judge that the federal government is offering states the choice to opt into the system, but the Postal Service has yet to identify a single state that has done so. None of the 12 states that intervened in the lawsuit to argue the Trump administration has the right to require the program have announced that they have voluntarily opted into it.

Talwani scolded Missouri Solicitor General Lou Capozzi for arguing on behalf of the project.

"You want the voters in your states to be disenfranchised," Talwani said. "I don't understand the interest."

Capozzi said that was misinformation: "There is no risk that people would be disenfranchised."

A whistleblower report made public this week warns that the postal system's requirements could lead to millions of mail ballots never being sent. The new rule requires all ballots to be physically brought to post offices before being mailed to voters. But if a single one's bar code registers an error, the whole batch

gets thrown out, even if it contains tens of thousands of legitimate ballots.

Missouri court blocks Trump-backed US House map and orders it to be put to a vote

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — The Missouri Supreme Court has unanimously blocked new congressional districts backed by President Donald Trump from being used in the November election and ordered a statewide vote on whether to uphold or reject the new map.

The decision Thursday marks a rare setback for Republicans in a national redistricting battle. Republicans had hoped Missouri's new congressional boundaries could help them win an additional seat and hold onto their slim House majority in the midterms.

Missouri Attorney General Catherine Hanaway, a Republican, said she would immediately appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, asserting that the decision "has thrust our state into a full-fledged constitutional crisis."

Missouri's new districts were used in the August primaries. But the state Supreme Court said they cannot be used in the November general election — or ever again, unless voters first uphold the new districts passed by the Republican-led Legislature.

The court ruled that the new districts were effectively placed on hold in December, when opponents submitted over 300,000 petition signatures seeking to put the map to a vote of the people. Republican Secretary of State Denny Hoskins waited until primary election day in August to reject the petition. He asserted that the referendum process cannot be used for congressional redistricting. A lower court agreed, but the Supreme Court overturned Hoskins' decision.

"The referendum petition was legal, sufficient, and timely, and the secretary incorrectly concluded otherwise," the court said in its ruling. The legislation containing the new districts "did not go into effect and will not go into effect unless and until approved by the voters." As a result, the congressional map adopted after the 2020 census "remains in full force and effect for the November 2026 general election."

Hanaway, whose office represented Hoskins, called the ruling an unprecedented violation of federal law. So did Republican Gov. Mike Kehoe, who proposed the new congressional map to lawmakers.

"Never before in American history has a court overturned a congressional map after a primary and before a general election," Hanaway said in a statement.

Court ruling hinged on referendum rights

The Missouri Constitution does not specifically say a referendum petition can be used for a congressional redistricting law passed by the Legislature. But the Supreme Court ruled that a constitutional provision allowing a referendum on "any act" of the Legislature encompasses congressional redistricting.

It rejected assertions from Hanaway's office that federal law prohibits referendum petitions on congressional redistricting.

"This is what democracy looks like," said Richard von Glahn, executive director of People Not Politicians Missouri, which sponsored the referendum petition. "The people of Missouri demanded a voice, and the court just confirmed what we've been saying all along. People, not politicians, will have the final say."

Hoskins, acknowledging the loss, vowed to continue "the war to preserve our constitutional republic."

The ruling, which capped a year of political maneuvering and legal wrangling, was one of two to go against Republican officials Thursday. The Supreme Court also ruled that Hoskins had wrongly rejected a petition for a ballot proposal making it difficult for politicians to change measures enacted by voters through citizen initiatives. The court also ordered that measure to be placed on the November ballot.

Missouri redistricting targeted longtime Kansas City lawmaker

Missouri currently has six Republicans and two Democrats in the U.S. House.

After Trump urged Republicans to redraw congressional districts to their advantage, Kehoe called lawmakers into a special session last year to dramatically reconfigure the 5th Congressional District, held by Democrat Emanuel Cleaver.

Cleaver, who was unopposed in the August primary, has carried the Kansas City-based district with at

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least 60% of the vote in each of the past two elections.

Republican state Sen. Rick Brattin won an August primary in the reshaped 5th Congressional District, which had been stretched eastward to include rural Republican areas. About 59% of the district's voters were new under the revised map, according to an Associated Press estimate.

Cleaver had not posted campaign signs in many of the new rural areas, explaining that he was waiting for the Missouri Supreme Court's decision. But he had vowed to continue his reelection campaign regardless of the outcome.

"Despite the cynical and deeply shameful attempt to silence many of our neighbors, the people fought back and won," Cleaver said in a social media post Thursday.

Brattin, a Marine veteran and founding member of the conservative Missouri Freedom Caucus in the state Legislature, said the decision disenfranchises thousands of primary voters who now will be shifted to different districts with candidates they didn't get to choose.

The court "handed Democrats a decision they desperately needed in their effort to help national Democrats retake the U.S. House of Representatives," Brattin said in a statement.

Redistricting battle spread to over a quarter of states

Congressional districts typically are redrawn at the start of each decade, based on new census data. But Trump's quest for a midterm election advantage triggered an unusual mid-decade redistricting battle that spread to more than a dozen states — and triggered a dozen lawsuits in Missouri alone.

The Missouri Supreme Court ruling was one of only a few nationally to go against Republicans' redistricting plans.

Prior to its latest ruling, Missouri's top court already had rejected claims that the special session was illegal, mid-decade redistricting isn't allowed and the new districts aren't compact enough.

After the Supreme Court heard arguments Wednesday, a couple hundred people chanted "Let us vote!" while rallying outside the courthouse. Grant Christensen, of Jefferson City, said he had signed the referendum petition to put the map to a vote.

"Gerrymandering is the same as voter suppression," Christensen said. "Cutting up districts in order to steer them to vote one way or the other is not fair."

Gloria Steinem, defining symbol of women's movement and eloquent advocate for equality, dies at 92

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Gloria Steinem, the celebrated author and activist who became the most visible symbol of the U.S. women's movement and remained a fierce and eloquent advocate for equality for six decades, has died. She was 92.

With her trademark streaked hair parted down the middle and large aviator glasses, Steinem, a co-founder of Ms. Magazine, was a hugely recognizable presence wherever she went. And she went everywhere: Much of her life as an advocate was spent on the road, speaking at college campuses and community centers, at rallies and marches.

"You can't do it on the phone or on the web," she told The Associated Press in a 2015 interview. "You have to be there with all five senses. It should be obvious that people can't empathize with each other unless we're in the same room."

Steinem, who had been in declining health, died Wednesday at her home in New York City, according to a post on her social media page. She had recently completed a memoir, to be released this fall.

"Gloria's greatest gift was her ability to listen to others, to make others feel seen and heard," the post said. "Her words, actions, and example gave people permission to be their truest selves."

Though Steinem had recently become more frail physically, her wit and humor remained totally intact. Her friend and fellow activist, Abigail Disney, said she'd visited Steinem's Manhattan home a bit over a week ago, as those close to her gathered by her side. "She was just as funny and just as sharp as I have

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ever known her," Disney said. And, she said, generous.

"Everything Gloria did was rooted in kindness," Disney said. "It flowed through her political activism."

Steinem changed her career path after a start as a journalist

Steinem began her career as a journalist, notably reporting in 1963 on degrading conditions in Hugh Hefner's Playboy empire — an undercover assignment she later came to regret. She credits a meeting six years later, where women spoke out in favor of abortion rights, with changing her career path.

"That speak-out was the beginning of activism for me," Steinem, who had undergone a secret illegal abortion herself at age 22, told the AP in an email in 2022, reflecting on the reversal of Roe v. Wade. "Either our control over our own bodies is equal, regardless of sex or race, or we're not living in a democracy."

Those who watched Steinem denounce discrimination for so many years likely never suspected that she'd had to overcome a deep fear of public speaking. She would have simply stuck to writing, she said, if only editors at the time had been willing to let her write about the women's movement.

But they weren't interested, she told the AP in 2015. "So I ended up going out and speaking, which was my nightmare," she said. "I mean, I was terrified. But I'm grateful, even though I still get scared even now."

Steinem's visibility endured throughout her life

Time hardly slowed Steinem down; through her 80s, she was traveling the globe and speaking out on issues of importance to her. These included everything from genital mutilation to Korean reconciliation, but it was equality for women that took precedence. "Being a feminist means that you see the world as whole instead of half," she once said. "It shouldn't need a name, and one day it won't."

As the years went on, Steinem's visibility endured. A few days after her 85th birthday, she was leading a women's "talking circle" at an off-Broadway play celebrating her life, where one by one, women in the audience — many fighting tears — rose to thank her and tell their own stories of discrimination. In 2020, her life was the subject of a feature film, "The Glorias."

And at 91, she collaborated on a picture book with Liberian peace activist and Nobel laureate Leymah Gbowee aimed at inspiring young people to change the world. "Rise, Girl, Rise: Our Sister-Friend Journey. Together for All" was published in February.

The constant visibility came with a price; even into her older years, Steinem expressed frustration that despite her accomplishments, she was often described as beautiful or glamorous. A 1992 Vanity Fair profile even noted her "spectacular racehorse legs."

"Nobody ever called me beautiful until I was publicly a feminist, and that was in my mid-30s," she told AP in a 2011 interview. "It was clear that label was being assigned to me. The most hurtful part is that you work very hard, and people say it's because of your looks."

Steinem often responded to hostility with humor

Of course, Steinem also had to deal with hostility — sometimes from surprising places. Appearing on Larry King's talk show on CNN in 1990, she was visibly stunned when a female caller greeted her cheerfully, then told her to "rot in hell" because she had ruined "the beautiful American family."

But by then, she noted, at least people were taking feminists seriously. That wasn't the case in 1972 when she co-founded Ms. Magazine and many commentators — especially male — dismissed it as ridiculous, predicting an early demise.

Among Steinem's detractors was President Richard Nixon, who was caught on an Oval Office tape ridiculing both her and the "Ms." title. The ridicule was mutual: In a 1972 National Press Club speech, Steinem called Nixon "the most sexually insecure chief of state since Napoleon."

It was just one example of Steinem's trademark wit. Before she married at 66, she often explained her singlehood by saying "I can't mate in captivity." Laughter, she wrote, was "the only free emotion — the only one that can't be compelled."

Steinem had an unconventional childhood

Gloria Marie Steinem was born on March 25, 1934, in Toledo, Ohio. Her father was a traveling antique salesperson; she spent her early years on the road with her parents, not attending regular school. "I just read everything I could get my hands on," she told an audience at Manhattan's 92NY earlier this year.

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In 1944 her parents divorced, and 10-year-old Gloria was left to take care of her mother, a once-promising journalist who struggled to combine her work with running a household and who eventually suffered a nervous breakdown.

As a young girl she excelled at tap dancing — it was even going to be her “ticket out of Toledo,” she said. That particular career did not materialize, though, and she attended Smith College in the 1950s — a time when, she said, women were being educated to be mothers and wives.

But marriage was not on Steinem’s mind. “I was engaged to a very nice man. It wasn’t his fault, but I just didn’t want to get married,” she told her 2026 audience. Instead, she took a modest fellowship to travel to India. After that, Steinem headed to Manhattan, where she couldn’t rent her own apartment because landlords assumed if a single woman “could earn enough, you must be a hooker.”

She wanted to write about politics. But editors gave her assignments on food, fashion, and, in what she jokingly called “the low point of my life,” an article about textured stockings. Even more demoralizing was her experience with an editor who, she said, gave her a choice one day: Spend the afternoon in a hotel with him, or mail his letters on the way out.

She chose to mail the letters. “There was no word for sexual harassment then,” she has said. “It was just life.”

But one assignment in 1963 sounded compelling: posing as a Playboy Bunny for an exposé in the now-defunct Show magazine. Steinem auditioned, assuming she’d be weeded out. But she was given her bunny costume — “so tight, it would give a man a cleavage” — and worked at the job for about a month.

“I could not have made a bigger mistake,” she told the AP in 2011. “It was personally and professionally a disaster. In the short term, it was much harder to get assignments, and in the long term it’s been used to ridicule me.”

Steinem’s writing became more political in her 30s

Steinem was in her 30s when she joined the editorial board of New York magazine, and her writing became more political. In 1969, she went to cover an abortion rights hearing. She had never told anyone about her illegal abortion at 22, in London. That was the moment, she has said, that triggered her career as a women’s rights activist.

Steinem founded the National Women’s Political Caucus in 1971 along with Betty Friedan, Shirley Chisholm and Bella Abzug.

Unlike her friend Abzug, however, Steinem was not comfortable in front of a crowd. Gradually, with her early speaking partner Dorothy Pittman Hughes, a Black feminist and child welfare advocate, she found her footing. The two formed a powerful partnership at a time when feminism was viewed as largely a white, middle-class movement. In an iconic photo, the two raise their right arms together in the Black Power salute.

As she grew more famous, Steinem drew attention not just for her work but for a glamorous Manhattan life. Asked once about her streaked hair and aviator glasses, she explained that the hair was inspired by Holly Golightly, the free-spirited character in “Breakfast at Tiffany’s.”

The glasses? They were “more about hiding,” she said.

When reaction was hostile, Steinem would try to reason that it was a step above ridicule. But sometimes it stung, like a snarky Esquire profile in the early ’70s, so hurtful that she cried, and colleagues called a news conference to defend her.

Steinem co-founded Ms. Magazine and stayed with it as an adviser

Then came Ms. Magazine in 1972. “I was so obsessed with the fear that it would fail and be a disgrace to the movement,” Steinem said later. And opponents hoped that would happen. TV newsman Harry Reasoner, an especially tart critic, later apologized on air. Steinem continued with Ms. until it was bought in 2001 by the Feminist Majority Foundation, and remained an adviser.

Steinem never had children, and said she never regretted it. “No, not for a millisecond,” she told the AP. “It’s important that some of us not have children, to show that we have a choice.”

In 2000, Steinem made a choice she’d never planned to: She got married, at 66, to British activist and businessman David Bale, whom she met at a fundraiser. Bale was the father of actor Christian Bale.

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"I thought, 'I haven't changed, marriage had changed,'" Steinem said. "David and I wanted to be together, we loved each other. He needed a green card." They married at a Cherokee ceremony in Oklahoma. Several years later, he became ill with brain lymphoma, and Steinem cared for him until his death in 2003.

Steinem said she had few regrets in life, but did miss being present when her father died. She received word that he'd been in a serious car accident, but did not respond in time, and he died alone. "I had taken care of my mom as a child, and I feared I'd never come back," she explained.

She was also sorry that she didn't become closer to her mother. "I was so fearful of becoming her," she said in an HBO documentary, "Gloria: In Her Own Words."

Steinem wrote about life on the road — though she never learned to drive

Steinem's books included the 2015 road memoir "My Life on the Road" — but she wryly noted at the time that she'd never learned to drive. It would have taken away, she said, from her ability to converse with hosts who picked her up from airports or train stations. And, she noted, she always loved to chat with taxi drivers.

On Jan. 21, 2017, when hundreds of thousands of women gathered in Washington in their pink "pussy hats" for the historic Women's March, it surprised nobody that the keynote speaker, and the most rousing, was Steinem.

"We are linked," she told the crowd. "And this is a day that will change us forever because we are together."

For many women, Steinem was the galvanizing voice that day. She would go on to advocate fiercely. But, though many saw her as a singular figure in history, she often liked to say that if she hadn't come along, someone else would have accomplished the same things.

By the same token, she said, it was less important that younger people listen to her, and more important that they listen to themselves.

"The primary thing is not that they know who I am," she said, "but that they know who THEY are."

Excavation work on Trump's arch in Washington to begin over next 2 weeks, administration says

By JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press

The Trump administration said Thursday that excavation work will start over the next two weeks on the site where it plans to build a towering, gilded arch, a project that is facing a lawsuit and that critics say will disrupt historic sightlines in Washington, D.C.

The proposed arch is one of several projects the Republican president is pursuing to leave his lasting imprint on Washington, including renaming and renovating the Kennedy Center, building a huge new White House ballroom, refurbishing the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool and rebuilding a golf course in East Potomac Park that could significantly reduce the public's access to running and biking paths.

"This will be one of the Great Pieces of American Architecture," Interior Secretary Doug Burgum wrote on X, "befitting the most powerful Capital in the World."

Along with the announcement on X, Burgum posted artistic mockups of the planned 250-foot-tall (76-meter) memorial arch, which will stand between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery.

The renderings showed a towering, white arch with gold detail, stamped with "ONE NATION UNDER GOD." On its top is a Lady Liberty-like gold figure with wings and a torch, as well as gold eagles, their wings spread outward.

The arch design, proposed by President Donald Trump, has already received early approval from the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, whose commissioners were all appointed by the president.

The groundbreaking is set to begin without the arch having received final approval from the National Capital Area Planning Commission, which greenlit the site and preliminary plans at its July meeting. The commission is expected to take up the matter again this fall.

A National Park Service report released Friday backed the project, though it said there would be adverse effects to the sightlines between a host of iconic landmarks, disrupting the historical significance of dozens

of nearby sites.

Many of Washington's monuments, buildings and sites have been carefully planned over decades to reflect significant moments in the nation's history and to evoke symbolism through sightlines that connect them to other landmarks.

A lawsuit filed by three veterans and an architectural historian argues "congressional authorization is necessary and lacking for this project," said Nicolas Sansone, an attorney with Public Citizen Litigation Group representing the plaintiffs.

"We believe that construction cannot and should not proceed apace, and we are prepared to inform the court that it needs to, at this juncture, needs to step in," he said. Sansone did not specify what their next court filing would be, but he added that he's "very confident" that they'll find success.

Burgum, in a series of posts on X, defended the arch's construction on historical grounds, arguing that the idea for a monument had been bouncing around for more than a century, citing old reports of congressional attempts at and discussions of a monument in the circle.

"Despite Congress's intent, the site became and remains today a barren traffic circle lacking any monumental treatment and significant historic value," he wrote, adding that over 70 cities worldwide had "beautiful arches" but now the U.S. will have the "most spectacular and beautiful arch of them all!"

The court case is ongoing, with the Department of Justice filing a new document Thursday arguing that the lawsuit should be thrown out.

Lindsay Clancy trial ends without a verdict for a sixth day after drama in the courtroom

By LEAH WILLINGHAM and MIKE CASEY Associated Press

PLYMOUTH, Mass. (AP) — The deadlocked jury in the Lindsay Clancy trial went home without a verdict Thursday in a dramatic sixth day of deliberations, after the jury's foreperson sent the judge a note saying a single juror won't follow the court's instructions about reasonable doubt.

Details of the jury room conflict weren't revealed by the judge and only briefly discussed in open court, but they raised the possibility that a single holdout was standing in the way of a verdict on whether the Massachusetts mother is criminally responsible for killing her three children.

The jury will return Friday to see if it can reach a decision. Before sending the jury home, the judge refused the defense's request to remove one of the jurors following heated discussions among the parties.

Clancy, a 36-year-old former labor and delivery nurse, doesn't deny strangling her children in the basement of their home in 2023 before trying to take her own life. Her attorney argues that postpartum psychosis led to her actions, while prosecutors say she knew what she was doing when she killed Cora, Dawson and Callan Clancy, ages 5, 3 and 8 months.

Clancy's livestreamed trial has generated intense interest, with reporters and spectators packing the courtroom. The case has also sparked deep public divisions over her culpability and the issues around maternal mental health after childbirth.

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.

Lindsay Clancy trial takes a new twist

While the jury has twice sent the judge notes saying it couldn't agree on a verdict, this is the first time it has indicated possible tension or acrimony in the deliberation room.

Clancy's attorney Kevin Reddington said in court that the jury foreperson sent another note Thursday complaining to the judge that one juror was refusing to listen to the law on reasonable doubt.

Judge William Sullivan, after receiving the jury's note, brought in each juror individually and questioned them in private. The judge then reread his instructions on reasonable doubt before sending them back to continue deliberating. Reddington told the judge he should have dismissed the juror from the case.

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"If we come back here in a half-hour with a mistrial because of a juror that has just spurned the instructions of this court, it's a shame — it's a real shame," Reddington said, referring to a possible deadlocked jury.

Reddington said afterward outside the courthouse that the juror would be questioned by the judge Friday. "There's a person who has doubt but will not listen to the judge's instructions," he told reporters.

Prosecutor Jennifer Sprague said in court that she believed Sullivan's instruction was appropriate and no further action was necessary.

Sullivan said removing a deliberating juror is a sensitive undertaking.

"I don't feel it is proper for me to side with one side or the other of the deliberations," the judge said. "I don't feel it's appropriate for me to say, 'I agree with one juror or the 11.' I have asked if they are able to follow my instructions. They swore earlier that they could."

At one point and for the first time in the trial, Clancy was brought to join a sidebar conversation with the judge. Paralyzed from the waist down after her suicide attempt, Clancy uses a wheelchair, which Reddington himself pushed to the front of the courtroom.

"She has a right to know what's going on," he later told reporters.

Lindsay Clancy's jury twice said it was at an impasse

Signs there was a growing chance of a hung jury and the trial ending without a resolution surfaced on Wednesday when Sullivan explained to the courtroom that jurors were stuck for a second time.

Sullivan told the jurors not to abandon their own convictions just to reach a verdict, but urged them to seriously consider opposing views and reassess their positions if appropriate.

Lindsay Clancy could go on trial again

If the jury ultimately can't agree on a verdict, the judge could declare a mistrial. Prosecutors would then have to decide whether to put Clancy on trial again, drop the charges or try to negotiate a plea deal with her lawyer.

If the jury decides Clancy was criminally responsible for her actions, it could convict her of either murder or manslaughter. If she is acquitted, a judge could still order her confined to a mental health facility if an evaluation determines that she poses a danger to the public.

Throughout the trial, Clancy has received letters of support "from all over the world," defense attorney Kevin Reddington said Thursday. "It's just amazing. She reads them all."

The evidence against Lindsay Clancy

Jurors have heard testimony from relatives and doctors about how Clancy's mental health declined in the months before the killings and how her treatment included several medications and a short stay in a psychiatric hospital.

Medical experts hired by the prosecution and the defense reached sharply different conclusions about her psychiatric state when she killed the children.

Patrick Clancy has said in interviews that he forgives his now ex-wife, whom he views as ill rather than evil.

Clancy strangled the children with exercise bands in their home's basement, then cut herself and jumped from a second-floor window. Her lawyers say she heard a voice telling her to kill the children so she could end her own life.

The prosecution argues she deliberately sent her then-husband on errands to get him out of the house, and prosecutors have questioned the seriousness of her suicide attempt.

Teenager arrested and 5 others sought in deadly July 4 fire in Washington state

EAST WENATCHEE, Wash. (AP) — An 18-year-old in Washington state has been arrested for the investigation of manslaughter and arson in connection with a deadly July 4 fire, a county sheriff said Thursday.

The teen from Kent was among a group of people setting off illegal fireworks from the back of a truck when one landed in roadside brush, igniting the fast-moving blaze, Douglas County Sheriff Tyler Caille said. He said authorities were also seeking arrest warrants for five others.

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The Chelan Hills Fire burned roughly 15.6 square miles (40.4 square kilometers), destroyed more than 100 structures, including 19 homes, and left one person dead, he said.

The victim was identified earlier this week as Robert Lister, a 69-year-old Orondo resident, whose vehicle had slid off the road and was consumed by the flames.

In a statement read aloud by a detective during a news conference Thursday, Lister's family said the arrest allows them to begin healing.

"Rob's life was taken far too soon, and he will continue to be loved, missed and remembered by all," the statement read.

Caille urged the others accused of launching illegal fireworks to turn themselves in, or "we will come find you." He said all are over 18 and are "complicit with the same crimes."

"This is complete recklessness that led to billions of dollars of loss, loss of Mr. Lister's life and, unfortunately, everybody involved in that is going to have to pay those consequences," Caille said during the news conference.

Washington has had a severe fire season, with blazes scorching more than 1,125 square miles (2,914 square kilometers) across the state.

Another man was charged last month with starting the Old Trails Fire in Spokane, one of three fires in the area that burned more than 850 buildings and destroyed whole neighborhoods. He is also charged in connection with four smaller fires ignited in the summer of 2025 and last month.

Trump administration stalled a survey of PFAS in wastewater, former EPA officials say

By MICHAEL PHILLIS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration has stalled a study that would help regulators understand which industries dump harmful forever chemicals with their wastewater, according to two former agency officials who were involved in its development.

A public notice shows the first of its kind survey of wastewater treatment plants was submitted to the White House for approval nearly two years ago during the Biden administration — a far longer wait than is typical.

Many wastewater treatment plants receive PFAS-contaminated waste. A nationwide survey of hundreds of plants would help identify the source of that PFAS and could inform new regulations to limit their spread, according to Robert Wood, director of the engineering and analysis division in the EPA's Office of Water before his retirement in 2024.

"If we can determine the top one, the top two, the top three" industries that dump PFAS, said Wood, "then we start work on the detailed studies and the regulation to get after nationwide limits on PFAS for the predominant industrial dischargers."

Researchers have linked the family of chemicals called PFAS to increased risk of certain cancers, developmental effects in children, resistance to vaccines and other health problems. The man-made chemicals once commonly used in products like waterproof shoes and nonstick pans are also widespread in the environment and hard to remove, making them an especially challenging public health threat. Wastewater treatment plants, for example, typically aren't equipped to separate them from waste, which means they are released back into rivers and onto soil.

The survey was submitted to the White House Office of Management and Budget, which must approve it, in October 2024.

"This is sufficiently unusual and a very long period of time that it is worth asking the question: Is OMB just sitting on it?" said Stuart Shapiro, a former OMB staffer and dean at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University-New Brunswick in New Jersey. He said reviews typically take around 60 days.

The EPA and OMB did not respond to requests for comment.

The Trump administration's nuanced — and at times controversial — stance towards PFAS

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The Trump administration has promised to combat PFAS. They've kept tough Biden-era limits on two common types of PFAS in drinking water and support work to find new ways to remove the chemicals from the environment.

They've also faced criticism from environmentalists and the Robert F. Kennedy Jr.-aligned "Make America Healthy Again" movement over what they see as an agency approach to chemical regulation that's too industry-friendly. Trump officials have delayed the most significant drinking water limits and scrapped a Biden-era effort to reduce PFAS in the wastewater of certain chemical manufacturers, restarting the regulatory process themselves.

The Biden-era EPA said that good data on PFAS in industrial wastewater is typically inaccessible, incomplete or inconsistent. With the new survey, officials sought to ask hundreds of wastewater treatment plants questions about their practices and to sample the industrial sources of the waste they treated.

If the work had started quickly, officials would already have some of the results, according to Betsy Southerland, a leader of the EPA's Office of Water until 2017.

"It makes you wonder if they really want to stop PFAS — or if efforts to truly find out who is discharging is just too big a disruption for the chemical industry," she said.

Officials also would have collected information on PFAS in biosolids, which are the treated solids water treatment plants produce in massive quantities. Those treated biosolids are often spread on farm fields as fertilizer. Officials wanted to survey biosolids to figure out the prevalence of PFAS.

Although concerns have been raised for years, officials have only recently studied the health implications of growing food on fields where PFAS-contaminated biosolids have been spread. The Biden-era EPA issued a draft report raising some concerns — a report Trump officials said had serious flaws. Agency officials, in their own draft document, said one of those flaws was that the agency had failed to conduct a national survey of PFAS in biosolids to better understand their occurrence and associated risks.

David Andrews, chief science officer at the nonprofit Environmental Working Group, said the Trump administration had created a logical paradox.

"The biosolids risk assessment was criticized by this administration for not including an EPA-run national occurrence study, and that exact survey has been sitting unapproved at OMB for nearly two years," Andrews said.

Some states have already taken a look

A group representing public wastewater agencies questioned the need for the survey, saying that a lot of new data has been collected on PFAS in wastewater in recent years. That information is enough to take steps to regulate the industries that need to be addressed, and a new survey for more expensive sampling wouldn't be useful, according to Cynthia Finley, director of regulatory affairs at the National Association of Clean Water Agencies.

"We would rather EPA look at what data is available already because there is a wealth of PFAS discharge information out there now," said Finley.

Michigan is one of the states that has collected similar data on its own. The state had already limited the amount of certain PFAS wastewater treatment plants could dump into rivers and lakes several years ago when treatment plants started sampling the industrial waste they received.

With data in hand, "The treatment plants told their industries, 'Hey, you have to either stop discharging PFAS or reduce the amount of PFAS you are discharging to us,'" to avoid violating limits on PFAS in rivers and lakes, according to Anne Tavalire, who works for the state on reducing PFAS at wastewater treatment plants.

She said the work helped achieve substantial reductions in PFAS released into the environment and in biosolids.

A "Make America Healthy Again" activist said it was good that the Trump administration had previously announced plans to tackle PFAS. But for their efforts to work, officials can't let polluters off the hook and must know where the pollution is coming from, according to Kelly Ryerson, whose social media account "Glyphosate Girl" focuses on agriculture and health.

The survey or a similar effort "is urgently needed data to help decrease toxic exposures and ultimately

the chronic disease epidemic. We have no more time to waste in addressing these harmful exposures, especially on behalf of bureaucratic interests," she said.

Gloria Steinem in her own words on women's rights, abortion politics and being called the B-word

By The Associated Press undefined

Author and feminist icon Gloria Steinem was famously quotable, balancing blunt talk with a wit that could be cutting and disarmingly self-effacing.

In interviews and emails with Associated Press reporters over the decades, Steinem insisted that sexism "is not inevitable," declared "there is no democracy" without abortion rights and concluded that the correct way to respond when called the B-word was to say: "Thank you."

It's no surprise that Steinem titled a 2019 compilation of some of her most famous quotes: "The Truth Will Set You Free, But First It Will Piss You Off!"

She also refused credit for things others said first. While the quip "a woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle" has often been attributed to Steinem, she wrote to Time magazine in 2000 to point out that it originated with Australian writer and activist Irina Dunn.

Here are examples of Steinem, who died Wednesday at age 92, in her own words.

On being judged by her looks, even as a feminist

"Nobody ever called me beautiful until I was publicly a feminist, and that was in my mid-30s. It was clear that label was being assigned to me. The most hurtful part is that you work very hard, and people say it's because of your looks." (August 2011)

On concrete changes she saw in her fight for feminism

"We know sexism is not inevitable. It's only about controlling reproduction and therefore controlling women. If we have reproductive freedom, that is the ability to decide for ourselves when and whether to have children and what happens to our bodies, it can be reversed." (May 2016)

On America's lack of a female president

"We live in a democracy that's one of the few in the world that's never had a female elected leader. That's kind of ridiculous. I mean, we're choosing from half the country's talent" (March 2026)

On supporting abortion rights

"It's obviously ridiculous to say somebody is 'pro-abortion.' Nobody wakes up in the morning and says, 'I think I'll have an abortion. It's a pleasurable experience.' The question is not pro-abortion or anti-abortion, the question is who makes the decision: a woman and her physician, or the government." (May 2017)

On the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade

"Obviously, without the right of women and men to make decisions about our own bodies, there is no democracy." (June 2022)

"Women have always taken power over our own bodies, and we will keep right on. An unjust court can't stop abortion, but it guarantees civil disobedience and disrespect for the court." (June 2022)

On being called the B-word

"It took me years to learn what to do when someone calls you a bitch. Just smile in a calm triumphant way, and say, 'Thank you!'" (July 2020)

On deciding to marry at age 66

"I hadn't changed — marriage had changed." (August 2011)

On whether she regretted not having children

"No, not for a millisecond." (August 2011)

On the early years of the women's rights movement

"When people were saying, 'You're all bra-burners and all that,' we had to work very hard to be taken seriously. We were still having to prove that women were being discriminated against." (August 1987)

On the success of Ms. Magazine, which Steinem co-founded in 1972

"It's the result of letting women tell the truth to each other and not pretending that we're all white,

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skinny, beautiful, that we're only interested in 101 different ways to cook hamburger, being superwoman or whatever." (August 1987)

On taking advocacy on the road to campuses, marches and rallies

"You can't do it on the phone or on the web. You have to be there with all five senses. It should be obvious that people can't empathize with each other unless we're in the same room." (October 2015)

On going undercover as a Playboy bunny for a 1963 magazine exposé

"I could not have made a bigger mistake. It was personally and professionally a disaster. In the short term it was much harder to get serious assignments, and in the long term it's been used to ridicule me."

On inspiring others to embrace activism

"I want people to realize that if a very imperfect person did this, maybe they can, too!" (August 2011)

On wanting to debunk her rich girl image in 1970

"Say that I have always worked for a living, my own living, that I buy my dresses off the rack. I have never been to Acapulco and I don't go away for ski weekends." (April 1970)

On how her education didn't include normal schooling until 6th grade

"In the wintertime, my father always put the whole family in a house trailer and we were working our way, buying and selling antiques and so on, to Florida or California. I think my family thought because I was always reading books in the back seat, that was enough." (March 2026)

On her work as a writer

"I know I'm doing the right thing by writing, because it's the only thing I do that doesn't make me feel guilty." (April 1970)

"If you're a writer and you really care about writing, you put it off. You wax the floor." (October 2015)

Tech stocks lead a rally on Wall Street as bond yields ease some more

By ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writer

Stocks on Wall Street closed higher Thursday as a recent run-up in bond yields eased further and big technology companies rallied, helping the market recoup its losses from earlier in the week.

The S&P 500 rose 1.1%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 1.2%, and the Nasdaq composite closed 1.4% higher. The indexes are now on track to post a gain for the week. The mixed start to September follows a mostly positive August during which every major index notched a gain for the month.

Big technology and communication services stocks accounted for a large share of the rally. Their huge valuations tend to give them more influence over the broader market's direction.

Microsoft rose 2.7%, Apple gained 1% and Meta climbed 3%.

Giant chip maker Nvidia, whose high-end chips have emerged as AI's best building blocks, rose 1.8% after saying it would buy the artificial intelligence platform Hugging Face for \$13 billion.

Oil prices initially ticked higher as the six-month long U.S. war with Iran intensified, but ended up little changed.

Iran fired at Kuwait on Thursday in retaliation for U.S. bombardments earlier in the week. The fighting between the U.S. and Iran heated up after the U.S. hit Iranian rocket launchers Sunday on an island in the Strait of Hormuz, saying Iran was planning to use them to send mines into the waterway.

The renewed fighting has sent U.S. crude prices sharply higher this week, though the momentum cooled Thursday. After rising in the early going, the price of Brent crude, the international standard, fell 0.1% to settle at \$95.52 per barrel. Benchmark U.S. crude edged up 0.3% to settle at \$91.30 a barrel.

Rising oil prices have added to existing inflationary pressures and exacerbated a bond-market sell-off earlier this week.

But bond yields have shown signs of stabilizing.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury, which influences mortgage rates, dropped to 4.77% from 4.79% late Wednesday. It has been rising steadily throughout the year and was as low as 4.20% at the beginning of 2026.

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The yield on the 2-year Treasury, which closely tracks expectations for Federal Reserve moves on interest rates, slid to 4.34% from 4.39%. It remains significantly higher for the year, though, and was as low as 3.50% at the beginning of 2026.

It's likely some investors took remarks Thursday by Federal Reserve governor Christopher Waller as a sign that perhaps the Fed isn't as likely to raise its short-term interest rates at its next policy meeting in two weeks as previously expected.

Waller said that if new data next week shows inflation is cooling, he "would be inclined" to keep the Fed's benchmark interest rate unchanged. Should the data show hotter inflation, however, Waller noted he would consider a rate hike.

After the remarks, investors were betting on a 50.4% chance that the Fed will raise rates at its upcoming meeting, down from a 63.2% chance on Wednesday, according to CME FedWatch.

"The market probably assumes that the Fed is going to hold this month," said Ross Mayfield, investment strategist at Baird. "That's bullish and kind of goes hand-in-hand with the pause or the stabilization in bond yields."

Traders also had their eye on several companies following their latest quarterly snapshots.

Snowflake jumped 16.6% after its quarterly profit and revenue blew past analysts' estimates. The company noted that artificial intelligence continues to be a strong driver for its business.

Other tech companies echoed the theme of strength in AI-related demand, but that didn't always translate into a stock price boost.

Broadcom's results beat Wall Street's estimates and the chipmaker forecast that its AI chip revenue would double in its fiscal year that ends in 2028. But its stock fell 2.7% after its revenue outlook fell short of expectations.

Hewlett Packard Enterprise also raised its guidance for cloud and AI demand strength as it reported quarterly results that topped analysts' estimates. The stock was in the red much of the day, but finished with a 5% gain.

Elsewhere in the market, Tyson Foods fell 7.3% after the meat company lowered its guidance for revenue and operating income for its fiscal year, citing margin compression due to volatile cattle prices amid a severe U.S. cattle shortage.

And Victoria's Secret slumped 13.2% after its latest quarterly earnings beat Wall Street estimates, but its revenue fell short of expectations.

In economic news, the Labor Department reported Thursday that more Americans filed for unemployment benefits last week, but layoffs are still rare and jobless claims remain at historically low levels.

On Friday, the crucial U.S. employment report for August is released. The previous report for July showed that the jobs market stalled, with employers cutting positions.

Both inflation and the jobs market have been key focuses for Wall Street and the Federal Reserve.

The Fed is trying to balance its tasks of supporting employment and taming inflation. Wall Street expects the central bank to raise interest rates before the year ends in an effort to cool inflation, which remains well above 3%. The Fed has a stated goal of cooling inflation to a target of 2%.

The government will release August inflation figures Sept. 11, shortly before the Fed's policymaking committee's next meeting, which ends on Sept. 16.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 81.11 points to 7,747.71. The Dow gained 624.16 points to 53,686.11, and the Nasdaq added 366.23 points to finish at 26,584.06.

Markets rose in Europe, but ended mixed in Asia.

Volkswagen board approves cutting 50,000 more jobs and ending production at 4 plants

By DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Volkswagen's board of directors on Thursday approved a sweeping cost-cutting plan that would cut 50,000 jobs, slim the company's model line by half and end auto production

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at four German plants.

The plan put forward by CEO Oliver Blume to counter low-cost competition in China and headwinds from U.S. tariffs overcame resistance from employee representatives and the regional government, which holds a stake in the company.

"This is a strong signal for the future of Volkswagen Group," Blume said in a statement. The plan would "make our iconic brands even more attractive, stronger and competitive."

The plan foresees reducing the number of models by around 50%. The company said it had excess production capacity of 500,000 vehicles in Europe and that "a competitive future production allocation ... cannot be secured" for plants in Emden, Zwickau, Hanover and Neckarsulm, although alternative uses will be explored. The board statement said there would be an "adjustment of the employee numbers of around 50,000 positions," including management jobs.

Slimming the number of models would mean higher volumes per model, lowering fixed costs.

The plan also calls for "leaner leadership structures and shorter lines of decision."

Thursday's news release was accompanied by a statement from chief employee representative Daniela Cavallo that the plan was "a necessity for our company to move successfully into the next decade without the associated undertakings coming only on the side of the employees."

Cavallo had been strongly critical of the plan when it was presented over the summer. Worker representatives have half the seats on the board, while the government of the Lower Saxony region where Volkswagen is headquartered has two seats.

The governor of Lower Saxony, Olaf Lies, said that the company was facing "enormous" challenges and that the plan represented "a shared path toward the necessary transformation."

Volkswagen, which has around 650,000 employees, reported a 30% drop in after-tax earnings for the first half of the year as sales took a hit in China. In addition to the core Volkswagen brand, its other nameplates include Audi, Skoda, Porsche and SEAT.

FACT FOCUS: Trump claims US banks cannot operate in Canada. That's not true

By MELISSA GOLDIN Associated Press

Asked about the trade war with Canada on Wednesday, President Donald Trump falsely claimed that U.S. banks are not allowed to do business with its neighbor to the north.

The allegation came during a meeting with U.S. travel executives in the Oval Office, after a reporter asked Trump whether there are plans for renewed trade talks between the two countries.

Experts say that although they may face restrictions, U.S. banks are not forbidden from operating in Canada.

Here's a closer look at the facts.

TRUMP: "They have their banks here, Bank of Canada, all of their big banks — big, beautiful banks. I think they have six or seven major banks here. We don't have our banks there. You know why? They don't allow it."

THE FACTS: There are currently 15 U.S.-based banks operating out of Canada, either as branches or subsidiaries, according to a spokesperson for the Canadian Bankers Association. Certain restrictions can make it difficult for U.S. banks to compete north of the border, experts say, but they are free to enter the market. There are eight Canadian banks operating in the U.S., according to the Federal Reserve's most recent data. The Bank of Canada is not one of them — it is Canada's central bank, equivalent to the Federal Reserve in the U.S., not a commercial enterprise.

"I think some confusion arises from the differences between the U.S. and Canadian regulatory systems," said James Thompson, a professor of finance at the University of Waterloo in Canada's Ontario province. "U.S. banks are certainly permitted to operate in Canada, but how they choose to enter the Canadian market affects what they can do."

There are three categories of banks in Canada — Schedule I, Schedule II and Schedule III. Canadian-

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owned banks are Schedule I. There are six major Schedule I banks whose combined assets eclipse those of the 28 smaller banks in the country.

Foreign entities can choose to operate as either Schedule II or Schedule III banks. Schedule II banks are foreign-owned subsidiaries incorporated in Canada that fall under essentially the same banking framework as banks owned domestically. Schedule III banks are branches of foreign banks that are not incorporated in Canada and therefore face regulatory restrictions such as high deposit minimums. Most U.S.-owned banks operate in Canada as Schedule III institutions.

Nathalie Bergeron, a spokesperson for the Canadian Bankers Association, said that U.S.-based bank branches and subsidiaries operating in Canada have combined assets of approximately \$124.6 billion in Canadian dollars (US\$904 million) — more than half of all assets held by foreign bank subsidiaries and branches.

"These banks specialize in a range of financial services, including corporate and commercial lending, treasury services, credit card products, investment banking and mortgage financing," she said. "They serve not only customers with cross-border business activities, but also Canada's domestic retail market."

Among the U.S. banks doing business in Canada are J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, Citibank, Bank of America, Capital One, and Wells Fargo.

Both Schedule II and Schedule III banks face restrictions due to Canadian banking regulations. Jeremy Kronick, a financial and monetary policy expert who is president and CEO of the Canadian C.D. Howe Institute think tank, explained that Schedule III banks cannot accept deposits below \$150,000 (US\$72,529). This means most people won't be able to use them as their retail bank. He added that since Schedule II banks are separate legal entities from their foreign parent company, they need their own local capital and liquidity structures — an inefficient option from the bank's perspective.

Such restrictions may be the reason the majority of U.S.-owned banks choose not to do business over the border. There are more than 3,700 domestically-owned commercial banks in the U.S., according to the Federal Reserve, compared to the 15 with a presence in Canada.

"Canada is a relatively small market, and incumbent Canadian banks are already very large institutions with established brands, extensive branch networks and longstanding customer relationships," said Thompson. "For a U.S. bank contemplating entry, building the infrastructure necessary to compete for Canadian retail customers would be expensive, while initially capturing only a small share of an already relatively small market."

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

AP Exclusive: Hundreds of thousands of eligible kids are waiting for childcare assistance

By MORIAH BALINGIT and LAUREN COFFEY Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — There's the mother of two who needs a full-time job to keep up with the bills, but can't afford full-time childcare. There's the medical technician who stopped buying groceries and turned to food banks so she could pay for her infant's care.

There's the baby who remained in foster care, even after his mother completed the steps to bring him home. She had found a job, as the state required, but couldn't afford his childcare.

It's hardly news that childcare is expensive, straining the budget of even middle-class parents. But these families all qualify for government-funded childcare assistance, intended to drastically reduce the childcare bills of needy parents so they can work or go to school. Instead, Indiana's program, which had run short on funds, wait-listed them.

Hundreds of thousands of children were sitting on childcare assistance waitlists in 23 states and the District of Columbia as of this spring, according to an analysis by The Associated Press. In three more states, many eligible families who applied were simply turned away.

Childcare assistance, funded by the federal government with help from states, is supposed to aid working parents who are low-income, homeless or caring for foster children. But waitlists have ballooned since

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2023, when eight states had them, according to the AP analysis. Reporters collected waitlist and enrollment data from 47 states and the District of Columbia.

Many of the waitlists first started after \$28 billion in pandemic aid expired in the fall of 2024. The Republican-led Congress declined to extend the extra money. Some states have increased funding to try to fill the gap, but families' need for childcare assistance has only grown, as they've faced mounting costs for food and gas.

While eligible families sit on waitlists, untold numbers of adults are sidelined from education or the workforce because they can't afford childcare. Those parents who remain in school or keep working make difficult tradeoffs. In interviews, parents described forgoing necessities, falling behind on bills or relying on acquaintances to watch their children. Unable to find viable childcare, some have resorted to bringing their children with them to work or class.

One parent works every day. The other can't afford to take a job

For Meygan Maloney's family in rural Indiana, waiting for childcare assistance means month after month of falling short financially. Maloney was working as a caregiver for adults with disabilities before she had her second child in 2023. Around the same time, the family took emergency custody of a close relative's newborn daughter.

The next three years were marked by deepening financial struggles. Maloney only received \$300 a month to care for her foster daughter, and both toddlers were put on a waitlist when she applied for childcare vouchers for 2025.

While the girl returned to her family in the fall, Maloney and her husband are still behind on bills. They recently refinanced their home, and her husband is working seven days a week as a tire technician and delivery driver. A local childcare provider gave her a steep discount, allowing her to leave her son four mornings a week so she can clean at a local hospital.

"We're trying to get out," Maloney said. "But for us to get out, we need the assistance."

Indiana started its waitlist in December 2024, a few months after pandemic aid ran out and it became clear the state would struggle to support families already in the program. Until May of this year, it put virtually everyone who applied on the waitlist, including foster parents. By spring 2026, nearly 37,000 children were waiting for assistance.

Foster parents left to cover costs for childcare

Maloney and other Indiana foster families feel like they were misled by the state, which had for many years paid for childcare for foster children. Malinda Cox, an Indianapolis mom who took in a newborn last year, said she was forced to dip into her family's savings to pay for the baby boy's childcare so she could return to work. At one point, she considered giving up custody of the boy because her family could not afford his childcare bill.

In the meantime, the boy's biological mother was completing the requirements she had to satisfy to take him home. She had taken parenting classes and gotten a job. But she could not afford daycare, and because the boy could not get childcare assistance, he had to remain with Cox.

"He should be home with his mom, but (because of) this massive system upset, he's not," Cox said.

In April, Indiana Gov. Mike Braun, a Republican, announced the state would send \$200 million in surplus funds to the state's childcare assistance program. So far, the money has allowed it to move roughly 8,000 children off the waitlist. The state says it plans to use the funds to give assistance to an additional 6,000 children.

Who should pay for childcare?

There are stark differences of opinion on whether the government should provide help with childcare — or how much. This year, 40 congressional Republicans called for "robust" funding of the federal program that underwrites childcare assistance. Instead, it received the same money as the year before. President Donald Trump said during his campaign that he could make childcare more affordable by using tariff revenue, but this spring he told a White House audience that paying for childcare should be up to states.

"We're fighting wars," Trump told people gathered for an Easter luncheon. "We can't take care of daycare."

You got to let a state take care of daycare, and they should pay for it, too.”

On a rainy May day in Indianapolis, Cox bundled up her foster son and delivered him to a social worker. The boy’s biological mother still had not gotten childcare assistance, but Cox had negotiated a deal with a childcare provider to offer a massive discount. When even that was out of the mother’s reach, Cox agreed to pay half.

She arrived at the boy’s new home to watch him reunite with his mother. She felt a mix of grief over parting with him and elation over seeing his delight with his mother.

Three weeks later, the mother got notice: He had finally been approved for a voucher.

Report finds holes and delays in how Secret Service updates its protection policy

By JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press

The U.S. Secret Service dealt with several drone-related incidents without adjusting its protection policies or documenting why it didn’t, according to a government report released Thursday. That information may have helped illustrate the emerging threat of civilian drone use before one was used in the 2024 assassination attempt on then-candidate Donald Trump in Butler, Pennsylvania.

The report from the Government Accountability Office found delays and holes in how the Secret Service updates its policies regarding threats, and arrives after a few turbulent years for the agency charged with the president’s protection.

The would-be assassin in Butler positioned himself on a roof left unsecured, nicking the president’s ear with a bullet. Months later, a man with a rifle got surprisingly close to Trump at his West Palm Beach golf course. And in April, an armed man got beyond security barriers at the White House Correspondent’s Dinner, where the president sat.

The report found that between 2015 and 2025 the Secret Service dealt with 83 security incidents and that they updated their protection policies in response to 25 of them. Among the incidents was a drone that made contact with President Barack Obama’s motorcade in 2015 and another flown about 200 feet (60 meters) over a rally for then-presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.

Failing to document why the Secret Service decided not to change their policy is the concern, said Nathan Tranquilli, acting director of the Government Accountability Office, adding that the drone incidents were a “compelling example” of that.

“Some of the missing information has been relevant to subsequent attacks,” the report read. It cited the Butler incident, where the culprit flew a drone for 11 minutes over the crowd, which helped him position himself to get clear shot at Trump.

The Secret Service also failed to update eight of 22 protection policies within a required time frame of four years. A memorandum of understanding between the Secret Service and the Diplomatic Security Service, which designates each agencies’ responsibilities for the president’s overseas security, hasn’t been updated since 1991, even though an annual review and update is required. As a consequence, the memorandum doesn’t address newer threats, such as drones.

“When you look at the Secret Service and you look at their mission, really it’s a zero fail mission, and they’ve got a ton of challenges,” said Tranquilli. “When decisions were being made about where to put time and energy, some of these things fell to the side, and, as a result, there were some delays.”

The report recommended three fixes, including that the Secret Service revise its policy to require that, when a security incident doesn’t warrant a policy update, that the rationale is documented.

A spokesperson for the Secret Service did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but the report stated that the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the Secret Service, agreed with all recommendations and plans to implement changes.

A pair of spacecraft draw closer to Mercury after nearly decade-long voyage

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Two Mercury-bound spacecraft left their mother ship behind on Thursday and headed down the home stretch of their nearly decade-long voyage to the solar system's smallest and closest-to-the-sun planet.

The linked European and Japanese spacecraft separated as planned from their cruiser, but controllers had to wait two anxious hours to receive confirmation via radio signals. The crucial operation was broadcast from the European Space Agency's control center in Germany, more than 124 million miles (200 million kilometers) away.

"It's a brilliant moment," said lead project scientist Geraint Jones.

If all goes well, the conjoined spacecraft known as BepiColombo will enter orbit around Mercury in November and split from each other in December to map and study the entire planet from different altitudes. As of Thursday, the spacecraft still had 2 million miles (3.3 million kilometers) to go before reaching its destination.

Launched in 2018, the BepiColombo mission is named for the Italian mathematician who took part in NASA's Mariner 10 mission to Mercury in the 1970s. Only one other spacecraft, NASA's Messenger, has explored the puzzling, scorching planet that is just a little bigger than our moon.

"How tiny Mercury is and still it holds some of the biggest mysteries of our solar system," mission manager Santa Martinez said earlier this week.

Added Jones: "There's a huge amount still left to be learned."

BepiColombo already has traveled more than 6 billion miles (10 billion kilometers) on its roundabout route, according to Martinez.

It needed nine planetary flybys to reduce its energy enough to be caught in Mercury's orbit. The last flyby, in January 2025, yielded stunning photos of Mercury's impact craters and volcanic plains.

Beginning next spring, a slew of science instruments on the European and Japanese spacecraft will study the magnetic field that envelops Mercury, the planet's dense interior, and the geologic processes at the surface, including the hollows, or depressions, that scientists believe are being eaten away by minerals vaporizing from rocks.

It's a strange world of contrasts. On a planet where the temperature can top 800 degrees Fahrenheit (427 degrees Celsius), the poles are frigid with deep, permanently shadowed craters packed with ice.

Given Mercury's proximity to the sun, engineers had to design the spacecraft to withstand "extremely punishing" conditions, said the European Space Agency's Ignacio Tanco, a mission operations chief.

"It's essentially equivalent to operating with a very hot pizza oven running right on your back," he said.

Science observations should begin next spring, with the European Space Agency covering most of the mission's \$2 billion (1.7 billion euros) cost.

Democrats are promising a big agenda. Their unity is already being tested

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Beginning on Day One, House Democrats plan to "hold the crooks accountable."

That's the promise House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries has made, previewing an ambitious agenda with oversight of President Donald Trump's administration and legislation to address the high costs of living, if Democrats seize majority control from Republicans in the midterm elections.

But first, the Democratic leaders have to ensure they can keep their own politically diverse — and sometimes rebellious — big-tent caucus in line, which was tested this week. Two go-their-own-way Democrats bucked the party on a routine procedural vote, angering colleagues and raising a red flag about potential party divisions to come.

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"His greatest challenge will be governing," Ashley Etienne, a former top aide to Nancy Pelosi during her historic tenure as House speaker, said of Jeffries.

The House majority is expected to be decided by a handful of seats in a shrinking number of competitive districts, potentially creating a similar political dynamic to the past four years under GOP control, a chaotic new era in Congress.

In the House, the size of the majority matters. When the majority is slim, any single lawmaker can become a kingmaker, determining whether a party's agenda sinks or soars. House Speaker Mike Johnson is tested by his narrow majority almost daily, and his predecessor, Kevin McCarthy, was the first in history to be booted from office, ousted by a small number of opponents from his own side.

Jeffries, who is poised to become the House speaker if his party wins power and would be the first Democrat to wield the gavel since Pelosi, faces a party at a crossroads. It has a new generation of candidates, some far-left from the Democratic Socialists of America, and they are eager for change.

The Democratic leadership team responded swiftly to the slight from the two centrist lawmakers this week over the thwarted procedural vote, sending a message that they will not tolerate the kind of disruptions that have often left Republicans in disarray.

But the damage had been done.

"It was disappointing," said seasoned Rep. Jim McGovern of Massachusetts, the top Democrat on the Rules Committee. "It makes us look as bad as them."

Jeffries on Thursday said he had a "productive, forward-looking conversation" with one of the dissenting lawmakers, centrist Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez of Washington, about moving forward on shared priorities.

He praised the conservative Blue Dog Democrat for "fighting hard for her district," which is a region that Trump carried, and said McGovern also spoke with her about resolving differences.

"We value every single member in our caucus — progressives, new Dems and Blue Dogs," Jeffries said. "The entirety of the House Democratic caucus understands what the stakes are in terms of defeating MAGA extremism in November and then, as Democrats, getting off to a fast start in January."

Questioned about his grip on party unity, Jeffries listed the many times Democrats, in the minority, have been able to force legislation over Johnson's objections. Those times included a war powers resolution to stop the U.S.-led attacks on Iran and a bill that would have reinstated enhanced tax credits many people rely on to buy insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

"Res ipsa loquitur," he said. "That's Latin for: The thing speaks for itself."

A routine procedural vote becomes anything but

The procedural rule vote, which sets the terms for debate, was long a nonissue in the House. The party in power voted for it, the minority party voted against. But conservative Republicans have routinely bucked their own GOP majority on the votes, tanking the agenda.

As the tally Tuesday was teetering, it appeared Johnson once again had a revolt on his hands. Then two Democrats, retiring Rep. Jared Golden of Maine and Gluesenkamp Perez, voted with the Republicans, salvaging the outcome and the week's agenda.

Golden was working to ensure passage of his bill on the lobster industry. Gluesenkamp Perez, often an ally, had joined.

Democrats were livid. Some were eager for a reprimand. Others expressed the angst coming from voters who want the party to stick together to fight Trump. The Pelosi-ism, "Unity is our strength," was revived.

"The challenge is, that if you don't have the numbers, all of a sudden a few people can be very decisive," said Rep. John Larson, D-Conn., a former party leader who recently lost his own primary bid for reelection.

"You can never ask people to vote against their own interest," he said. "But you also have to emphasize the camaraderie and concept of working together as a team."

A cautious Democratic leader faces new challenges

Jeffries is known as a careful leader and, as he says himself, chooses calm over chaos at a time when many Democrats prefer a quicker, attention-grabbing reaction.

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In office since 2013, Jeffries is confronting the party's quickly changing climate, as he works to hold together what is arguably the most diverse party caucus in U.S. history.

Two weeks ago, Jeffries ran into trouble with progressives after having accepted a meeting with Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, an outside adviser to the White House. It was largely seen as the Trump administration hedging its bets if Democrats win control, but liberals questioned why Jeffries would even meet with those close to Trump.

"He asked for a meeting, and I took it," Jeffries said in a defiant video the next day.

The Democrats have established five working groups to tackle affordability as part of next year's agenda — in housing, healthcare, childcare, groceries and gas and utilities. The top Democrats on the Oversight and Judiciary committees are preparing to root out corruption.

Jeffries also has sketched out the pillars of a Democratic legislative platform: repealing Republican Medicaid cuts, restoring the ACA, repealing Trump's tariffs and ending the Iran war.

"These are issues that we know unite Democrats," Jeffries said. "But I don't want to get out ahead of the caucus, because there are a whole host of things that need to be worked on."

Billionaire Leon Black skips Epstein deposition and sues House panel over subpoenas

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Billionaire investor Leon Black refused to appear for a sworn deposition before Congress on Thursday and instead sued the House Oversight Committee, asking a federal court to block subpoenas issued as part of its investigation into disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein.

The House Oversight Committee served Black with two subpoenas during a closed-door voluntary interview in June after lawmakers said he refused to answer questions about nondisclosure agreements. One subpoena demanded Black produce nondisclosure agreements and other documents, while the other compelled him to return for a deposition before the committee.

Black's lawsuit argues the subpoenas exceed the committee's authority by seeking private information unrelated to Epstein or any legitimate legislative purpose. It asks a federal judge to declare the subpoenas invalid and prevent the committee from enforcing them.

"The Committee is on a fishing expedition that oversteps its authority and completely ignores its responsibility," Black's attorney, Susan Estrich, said in a statement. "This is no longer about finding the truth about Epstein. It is about trying to destroy Mr. Black."

Top Oversight lawmakers threaten to hold Black in contempt

The top Republican and Democratic lawmakers on the committee both criticized Black's lawsuit and said they planned to discuss later Thursday whether they would hold him in contempt of Congress.

"This is unacceptable. We're very disappointed," said House Oversight Chair James Comer. "Of all the powerful billionaires and political people we've brought in for interview and depositions, this is the first time anyone's filed suit."

Rep. Robert Garcia, the top Democrat on the committee, called the lawsuit "laughable" and that Black is "trying to slow the process down of getting us the information."

"Today, the process of contempt has to begin," Garcia said.

Being held in contempt opens up a witness to criminal prosecution. If the House approves a contempt resolution against Black, it would fall to the Justice Department to decide whether to bring charges against him.

Black paid Epstein over \$150 million during their yearslong relationship

Black is the co-founder and former chief executive of the private equity firm Apollo Global Management. He stepped down in 2021 during the fallout over his ties to Epstein.

Lawmakers have alleged that Black paid Epstein \$180 million during their yearslong relationship.

A 2021 review commissioned by Apollo found that Black paid Epstein \$158 million from 2012 to 2017,

after Epstein pleaded guilty in 2008 to soliciting prostitution from a minor. The review said the payments were for "bona fide tax, estate planning and other related services."

Black is among a number of influential figures to appear in the investigation into Epstein and the web of wealth and influence around him. Other figures to have appeared for the investigation include former Democratic President Bill Clinton, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates.

Black is mentioned repeatedly in files that the Justice Department has released related to the Epstein investigation. He also appears in a collection of birthday messages sent to Epstein that were released by the House committee last year, including a poem attributed to Black that refers to "Blond, Red or Brunette, spread out geographically."

Before the June 26 appearance before the committee, Black maintained that he was not aware of Epstein's "nefarious activity" until 2019 and that he paid Epstein for legitimate purposes, in part due to his "unrivalled network of relationships" with influential figures.

A Lebanese man held prisoner in Israel is released and handed over to Lebanon

By ABBY SEWELL, KAREEM CHEHAYEB and KORAL SAEED Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A Lebanese man who had been held prisoner in Israel was released Thursday, the first such handover since the outbreak of the latest Israel-Hezbollah war six months ago, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Lebanese officials said.

The office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement that Israel had agreed to release five Lebanese civilians detained by Israeli forces in southern Lebanon after Lebanon provided assistance in searching for the bodies of Lebanese Jewish leaders who were "abducted and murdered by terrorist organizations" in the 1980s, during Lebanon's civil war.

The first released prisoner, identified as Malek Ghazi, was handed over to the Lebanese army via the Red Cross, a Lebanese security official said. A second official said they were anticipating the release of the other four prisoners Friday. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly.

Ghazi was handed over to the ICRC at the border crossing in the coastal town of Naqoura on Lebanon's southern frontier and was then transferred to a Lebanese army intelligence office in the city of Tyre, Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported.

Netanyahu's statement said the five Lebanese captives after interrogation were found not to be "members of a terrorist organization" or "involved in terrorism."

Prisoner release after US mediation

Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam thanked the U.S. and its ambassador to Lebanon, Michel Issa, for assisting in the release.

"We will continue working until all our prisoners are released, the fate of the missing is revealed, and a complete Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory is achieved," he said in a statement.

In Washington, the U.S. State Department said the releases were the "result of U.S.-led mediation between two legitimate governments" and were finalized during Issa's recent trip to Israel.

"We commend the Government of Israel and the Government of Lebanon for demonstrating good faith through these initial steps, and hope this will serve as the basis for expanded discussions on other civilian issues," it said.

Dozens of Lebanese prisoners are believed to be held in Israeli detention centers, including civilians as well as Hezbollah militants captured during fighting in southern Lebanon.

The circumstances of Ghazi's capture were not immediately clear, but one of the Lebanese officials said he was a civilian.

On the same day as the prisoner release was announced, Israeli forces took more Lebanese citizens captive.

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Lebanese state media reported that Israeli forces had entered the town of Halta in southern Lebanon earlier Thursday and seized three men "after the force surrounded several houses and prevented residents from leaving." The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A step forward for Lebanon-Israel negotiations

The prisoner release came as talks between Lebanese and Israeli officials had appeared to reach an impasse. Lebanon and Israel in June signed a U.S.-mediated framework deal under which Israeli forces were to withdraw from areas they are occupying in southern Lebanon in exchange for disarmament of the Iran-backed Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, but little progress has been made in implementation on the ground.

Another round of talks is expected to take place in Rome later this month.

"However difficult the negotiation process may seem, we will continue to mobilize all necessary efforts to safeguard Lebanon's rights and the interests of the Lebanese people," Salam's statement said.

An official involved in the negotiations said Lebanon had not made its participation in the next round of talks conditional on the prisoner release, but that the release of captives was an "integral part of the implementation" of the Lebanon-Israel agreement.

The Lebanese "are actively searching for the bodies of the Lebanese Jewish leaders," including in Jewish cemeteries, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly.

Lebanon once had a thriving Jewish community. As many as 15,000 to 22,000 Jews lived in Lebanon in the mid-1960s, but the various Arab-Israeli wars and Lebanon's own 1975-90 civil war caused waves of emigration and today, almost none are left in the country.

Hezbollah weapons, Israeli withdrawal, remain issues

While the release of the prisoners marks a step forward in the negotiations, other issues remain difficult to resolve.

Hezbollah is not a party to the Lebanon-Israel talks and has said it will not give up its weapons in any area north of southern Lebanon's Litani river. Israeli officials, meanwhile, have said they will not withdraw unless Hezbollah is disarmed throughout the country.

The Lebanese state has been reluctant to attempt to forcibly disarm the militant group, which is also a political party and social services provider with a large popular base in the country's Shiite Muslim community.

Lebanon fought a brutal civil war from 1975 to 1990, and many fear that any clash between the Lebanese army and Hezbollah could spiral into another devastating civil conflict.

Hezbollah and Israel have fought a series of wars since the militant group was founded with Iranian support in the 1980s to combat Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon at the time. Their latest war began on March 2, when Hezbollah fired missiles over the border, two days after the U.S. and Iran attacked Iran.

Across US history, the AP has watched, chronicled and helped people understand a complex world

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Precisely 180 years ago, a handful of New York news executives looking to save money on coverage had an idea. Today, it is called The Associated Press.

Five newspaper publishers in New York City agreed in 1846 to pool resources in order to speed the delivery of news about the U.S. war with Mexico using a pony-express relay through Alabama to a telegraph office. Those beginnings gave birth to an organization that in many ways became the backbone of the news industry. The AP claims some 4 billion people, nearly half of the world's population, see news produced by the company on a typical day.

Many don't realize that.

For most of its history, the AP has effectively been a utility, providing material for other news outlets

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to print, broadcast or carry online, its journalists largely anonymous. AP reporters weren't even identified with bylines until World War I. But the company has chronicled the nation's big moments for much of the 250-year history of the American republic.

Although horses long since gave way to the internet, the journalism remains. Here are some stories behind the stories the AP has chronicled.

Covering Mr. Lincoln: The Gettysburg Address

Absorbed by the message President Abraham Lincoln delivered at the Nov. 19, 1863, dedication of a cemetery at the Civil War battlefield in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania — as generations after him would be — 21-year-old AP reporter Joseph Ignatius Gilbert momentarily forgot his job.

"I unconsciously stopped taking notes," Gilbert recalled later, "and I looked up at him as he glanced from his manuscript with a faraway look in his eyes as if appealing from the few thousands before him to the invisible audience of countless millions whom his words were to reach."

That was a problem. There were no tape recorders or video cameras yet. So if Gilbert didn't capture Lincoln's words, they would reach fewer people.

Gilbert recovered, and perhaps saved his job, when the president allowed him to borrow the paper upon which he wrote the memorably short, 272-word speech, and to copy it. The reporter's presence also insured that people would remember precisely how Lincoln delivered the address, beyond the words.

Consider Lincoln's conclusion: "We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Many who read the speech later put emphasis on the words "of," "by" and "for" in his final lines. Instead, Gilbert insisted that Lincoln emphasized "the people" in each clause.

A major scoop: The end of World War II

An AP correspondent scored a major scoop reporting that Germany surrendered to Allied forces in France on May 7, 1945, ending the European portion of World War II. For that, he lost his job.

Edward Kennedy was one of 17 reporters transported by the U.S. military to a former school in Reims, France, to witness the middle-of-the-night ceremony. In return for being there, the journalists agreed to keep the news secret until military censors gave the go-ahead to report it.

The journalists figured they would have to keep the secret for a few hours. Instead, they learned the "embargo" was for 36 hours and the delay had nothing to do with keeping people safe. Rather, it was to give Russian allies the time to stage a second surrender ceremony, according to Kennedy's memoir, published in 2012.

"The absurdity of attempting to bottle up news of such magnitude was too apparent," Kennedy wrote. "I know from experience that one might as well try to censor the rising of the sun."

Less than 12 hours after the secret ceremony, German officials announced on a radio broadcast that they had surrendered. The broadcast originated from a French city already controlled by the Allies. To Kennedy, that meant that the same U.S. military censors that had told him to keep the news secret had authorized the Germans to make their announcement. If they hadn't, soldiers unaware that the war was already over might have lost their lives.

Kennedy called the chief American censor to say there he couldn't hold the news since the military had already broken its part of the deal. The censor refused to lift the embargo, but Kennedy called a story in to the AP's London bureau, where editors knew nothing about the embargo, and a bulletin announcing the big news went out to the world.

Competitors and the military, which briefly suspended the AP's ability to report news from Europe, were furious. The AP had the news exclusively for a day. But its bosses, under pressure, said Kennedy had been wrong to break the agreement. His AP career was over. He pressed for vindication, but it wasn't to come before he died in a car accident in 1963.

After publication of Kennedy's memoir, the AP apologized to his family for how he had been treated. "It was a terrible day for the AP," the company's then president and CEO, Tom Curley, told reporter David Caruso. "It was handled in the worst possible way."

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Being there: The Civil Rights Movement

The importance of being on the scene, steadily and dependably, during a long-running story paid off for AP reporter Kathryn Johnson during coverage of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s.

On the night of April 4, 1968, Johnson was on a date in Atlanta when the car radio broke in with news that the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. had been assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. Johnson's companion instinctively asked if she wanted to be driven to the King family home.

She did, and arrived to see a reporter from The New York Times on the porch being told he was not welcome. The door opened, however, and the new widow Coretta Scott King saw Johnson and told the police officer guarding the home, "Let Kathryn in."

She wasn't a stranger. As former King aide and future U.S. Ambassador Andrew Young wrote in an introduction to Johnson's later book, "My Time With the Kings": "Kathryn always observed scrupulously the highest standards of her profession while reporting on one of the most important continuing struggles in our country with objectivity, thoroughness and fairness."

She spent days inside the Kings' home, providing exclusive reports while being sensitive to what the family was going through. Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis visited the home and saw Johnson helping to prepare a meal, mistaking the reporter for a white maid. Speaking in code to avoid angering some visitors who were suspicious of her presence, Johnson called an AP bureau to confirm a story she had pre-written about the expected visit.

The day after King's murder, Johnson asked if she could have a seat on the plane that was taking the new widow to Memphis to bring his body home. Young agreed, and when other reporters protested, he told them, "Kathryn and I've been through the wars together."

Incredibly, Young telephoned her boss, who told her she couldn't go. She was needed in the office. "I've no doubt that had I been male, my boss would have been delighted for me to go," she later wrote.

Johnson went on to complete a fellowship at Harvard University and returned to the AP. When she was assigned tasks like taking dictation and reporting sports scores, she left for jobs at U.S. News and World Report and CNN.

Prematurely dead: Bob Hope

When can a the simple pressing of a wrong button inadvertently illustrate the reach of a news organization? The AP once encountered a two-word answer for that: Bob Hope.

Large news organizations frequently prepare obituaries in advance for notable public figures, so when the death occurs they can move quickly with a story that puts the person's life and achievements in perspective.

Hope certainly merited the attention. The comedian was 95 years old on June 5, 1998, when an AP editor was doing some work on the "prep" copy. In an error, that incomplete story was inadvertently sent to thousands of news outlets and others who subscribed to the AP's news wire. The story didn't actually say Hope died — there were blank spaces left in the copy to fill in future details — but the format was enough to fool House Majority Leader Dick Armey. Congress was in session, and Armey asked a colleague to announce Hope's "death" and say a few words in sympathy.

The AP's central role in the news ecosystem was such that the false news spread with lightning speed. Another news service, Reuters, moved a bulletin saying that Hope had died, attributing it to the member of Congress, according to a Washington Post account.

Out in California, Hope was getting up, feeling good enough to go out and hit a few golf balls. His family had to set the record straight. "Some folks were a bit too quick to thank Bob Hope for the memories," Post writer Howard Kurtz quipped, a reference to Hope's signature song.

The comic made it past his 100th birthday before dying on July 27, 2003. Honest.

Bush vs. Gore: The election that wouldn't end

On one memorable night, the AP made a mistake and covered itself in glory by avoiding an even bigger one.

The presidential election night of 2000 won't be forgotten by anyone involved in it. Certainly not by journalists who saw predictions of a tight race between Republican George W. Bush and Democrat Al Gore come true.

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Shortly after polls closed in the critical swing state of Florida, TV news networks and the AP "called" that state's race for Gore, using a combination of exit poll results, actual votes and instinct grounded in knowledge of the state's history. But there was an error: Gore was reported to have won one county by 42,000 votes, when the margin was actually 4,200.

That made the state, in the journalists' interpretation, too close to call so they retreated from their declaration and put Florida back in the undecided column. As the night wore on, it became increasingly clear that the entire presidential election was going to come down to who won Florida's electoral votes.

After 2 a.m. the morning after the election, Fox News made its call: Bush had won Florida and thus would be next president of the United States. ABC, CBS, CNN and NBC quickly followed suit. But the AP did not, believing too many votes remained uncounted in traditionally Democratic areas that could swing the race.

The tension was very real in the AP newsroom that night. Editors from across the country were angrily calling in, noting the network calls and wondering why the AP was holding out. What were they going to put on the front pages of their newspapers?

"It was simply too close for AP to call," recalled Sandy Johnson, AP's then-Washington bureau chief, in a 2020 podcast on C-SPAN. "Believe me, we wanted to call it. Nobody wants to be the last calling a presidential race. We were crunching the numbers like mad, trying to figure out what the networks saw that we didn't. But the lead just kept getting closer."

In the pre-dawn hours, the networks retracted their Florida calls for the second time that night. It was a major embarrassment. One blown election call could cost a journalist's job, but calling the same state wrong twice and prematurely declaring the winner for the entire election? Network chiefs were hauled before Congress in the aftermath to explain themselves.

The election remained undecided for three more weeks before a U.S. Supreme Court decision effectively made Bush the winner.

Getting news first — a scoop — is a bragging point for any journalist. A mistake completely undermines that, hence the AP mantra "get it first, but first get it right." It's a lesson that is repeated often in a fast-moving world. Just this spring, AP editor Ted Anthony steered the organization away from reports that a gunman at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner had been killed, wanting multiple sources even though other outlets were saying it.

It wasn't true. Sometimes an outlet's highest moments are what it doesn't report.

9/11: 'The Falling Man'

The AP's most memorable journalism has often been delivered through a photographer's lens.

It takes barely a few words to bring some historic AP images instantly to mind: Joe Rosenthal's picture of U.S. Marines raising the American flag on Iwo Jima in 1945; Eddie Adams' 1968 photo of a prisoner being executed with a gunshot to the head on a Vietnam street; Evan Vucci's shot of a bloodied Donald Trump raising a fist in defiance following a 2024 assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania.

One of AP's best-known images has arguably been talked about more than seen.

Richard Drew was photographing a fashion show in New York City's Bryant Park on Sept. 11, 2001, when a message alerted him to a plane flying in to the World Trade Center downtown. He hopped on a subway and when he emerged, began recording the horror before him on his camera.

He fixed upon people who had jumped or were falling from the still intact but burning towers. One image he captured immediately stood out: a man, one leg bent, the other straight, as he fell headfirst to his death. He lined up so perfectly against the metallic lines of the tower behind him that the picture almost seemed choreographed.

Drew's picture was carried in a handful of newspapers the next day but not many, for the same reason that television networks did not show video of people falling. It was deemed too disturbing.

But it so moved Esquire magazine's Tom Junod that he wrote an entire cover story about it. "In the picture, he departs from this earth like an arrow," Junod wrote. "Although he has not chosen his fate, he appears to have, in the last instants of life, embraced it. If he were not falling, he might very well be flying."

Singer Elton John bought a copy of "Falling Man," calling it "probably one of the most perfect photo-

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graphs ever taken." Drew, still working for AP at age 79, attended an exhibition in Paris this spring where the photo was on display.

It wasn't the only journalism to come from the AP that day that echoed long afterward. Jerry Schwartz, who wrote the story of the day's disaster, was the first to coin the phrase "ground zero" to refer to the World Trade Center site.

But "Falling Man" has lingered. Drew believes it will be seen more in years to come as the event recedes into history. He doesn't find the photo macabre. "I made a photographic record of someone living the last moments of his life," he wrote five years ago. "And every time I look at it, I see him alive."

Junod and others have investigated to try and identify the man, believed to be a worker at the restaurant Windows on the World. But it's still not clear who he was, and may never be. Drew likens "Falling Man" to the remains buried in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington.

"He's going to remain unknown and that's OK," Drew said in a recent interview. "He's a symbol for all of the people who died that day."

Hikers describe intense rain and wind before floodwaters ravage Grand Canyon

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

Like clockwork, clouds build up in the afternoon, the wind starts to swirl and the skies darken. Then the rain comes.

Sometimes it is just a few drops. But on this August afternoon, the monsoon kicked into high gear, setting its sights on a remote section of the Grand Canyon's North Rim. Down below, dozens of hikers were setting up camp along Bright Angel Creek and admiring the towering walls they eventually would have to traverse on the way back up.

It wasn't long before muddy water came rushing down the creek. The sound was deafening as it crashed against the rocks, carrying with it tree branches, sediment and other debris.

Violent thunderstorms and subsequent flash flooding are nothing new during the summer months in the southwestern United States. Those in the canyon last Saturday knew the risks, but this storm packed an extra punch, washing out key footbridges and doing more damage to infrastructure than previous decades of turbulent water.

Two people died and at least one is still missing. More than 80 people were airlifted out of the canyon, and the National Park Service is assessing the damage.

Forecasts warned of severe storms and flood risks

A storm of generational proportions — that is how some of the hikers described it in interviews with The Associated Press. Some talked about scrambling to higher ground as the rushing water approached. Others hunkered down under a ledge to avoid falling rocks.

"It was for sure some of the worst acute fast-forming weather I have ever seen in my time, whether it's in the mountains or marine environments or in the desert Southwest," said Drew Harrell, an emergency medicine physician with University of New Mexico Hospital who was on a training mission at the time as medical director for Grand Canyon National Park.

Harrell is no stranger to working in austere environments and has hiked rim-to-rim more than a dozen times. He and his team had checked the weather before starting their annual trip. They were more worried about afternoon temperatures stretching into the triple digits rather than rain.

But this storm, Harrell said, seemed to come out of the blue just as his six-member group entered "The Box," the final 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) before Phantom Ranch, an oasis at the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

"It went from relatively clear skies to blowing winds in the time frame of about a minute," he said, estimating the gusts at 40 mph (64 kph).

Hikers had little time to act

Within minutes, torrential rains, gusting winds and even hail enveloped hikers along the creek.

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"We were concerned that there would be rocks and just flooding coming down from both sides of the canyon on top of us," said Parth Desai, another physician who was with the group.

As emergency room doctors do, they weighed their options and calculated the risks as conditions changed around them.

"We saw basically the flood, waterfalls coming up out of nowhere, boulders, mud, landslides happening everywhere," Desai said. "And then we were concerned about a lightning strike."

They made another run for it, heading down the trail toward Phantom Ranch. They maneuvered around cottonwood trees brought down by the first microburst when they saw more debris rushing toward them. They scrambled through cactus to reach higher ground.

Floodwaters overtake what is usually a shady oasis

Up the creek at the Cottonwood Campground, Mike Sumaruk and his friend were relaxing after a nearly 7-mile (11-kilometer) hike down into the canyon. The wind started howling, and the rain intensified.

"I jumped into my tent because I thought it was going to blow away and was trying to hold it down," he said in a phone interview Tuesday.

Then he heard this roar.

"I thought it was like thunder in the distance, but it wasn't going away. And I said, that's not thunder, and I unzipped the tent and got out and saw the huge wall of water," Sumaruk said. "We just left everything."

The Tulsa, Oklahoma, resident has hiked plenty of mountain peaks over the years, but this was his first time in the Grand Canyon. It was gorgeous, he said, lamenting that he wasn't able to see more of the natural wonder.

Sumaruk used an emergency phone at an unstaffed ranger station to contact park authorities, telling them he and about a dozen others were stranded. A park ranger traveling on foot eventually reached the group, and they waited until Sunday to be airlifted to the South Rim, where the Red Cross was waiting and counselors were on hand to help.

Harrell shared Sumaruk's appreciation for the park staff, particularly the rangers down in the canyon. He credited them with moving dozens of people at Phantom Ranch to safer areas before water took out the bridges.

"They mitigated the opportunity for there to have been more serious loss of life or injuries," Harrell said.

The trail turned into a river

Tom Monroe and two friends set out early Saturday from the North Rim. Knowing it was monsoon season, and after seeing light rain the day before, they tried to keep an eye on the weather — though scant cellphone reception made that difficult.

Monroe said they decided to proceed after one hiker they met told them the forecast looked mild. Another who had just climbed the trail reported the way was clear.

They were aiming for Cottonwood Campground. In the first mile, it started sprinkling.

"Then it started just opening up, holy hell raining on us," said Monroe, 59, of Flagstaff, Arizona, who runs a business making custom food-storage bags for campers.

The trio kept going, figuring it would let up. The downpour continued, mixed with thunder and lightning. Runoff started funneling down the trail. It looked almost like a river, Monroe said.

One friend took shelter in a small alcove in the canyon wall. Monroe huddled under an overhang that protected him — not just from the water but also from sand, mud and rocks falling with it.

"On either side you could see rocks the size of footballs or beach balls coming down the cliffs from the top," he said.

The friend who was farther ahead had to scramble up a steep slope, where he grabbed tree roots to keep from getting swept away.

The 20-minute downpour seemed to last forever, Monroe said.

"None of us can really stop thinking about it," Monroe said in a phone interview Wednesday, safely back home in Flagstaff.

Flooding doesn't dampen hikers' outdoor plans

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Monroe and his friends already were planning to head outdoors again this weekend, just staying a little closer to home and doing some car camping.

And Sumaruk is thinking about a return trip to the Grand Canyon whenever hikers are allowed again. He will be watching and waiting as the National Park Service begins the arduous process of rebuilding a key water-supply line that was severely damaged, fixing the miles of trail that were washed out and replacing the footbridges.

He said he understands “weather happens” and it will take time for the canyon to recover. Years of research went into his first trip along with months of planning and training, and he is not giving up.

“I’m definitely going to give it another shot,” he said.

Ukraine’s drone attacks caused turmoil for Russians throughout summer

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

There were long lines at gas pumps, turning each fill-up into an ordeal. Flights to vacation destinations were canceled, delayed or rerouted. Online orders were disrupted as e-commerce hubs were set ablaze by buzzing drones.

It’s been a difficult summer for Russians — a season of almost daily turmoil, frustration and anxiety.

The war that President Vladimir Putin unleashed on Ukraine 4½ years ago has come home and is harder to ignore. Nightly swarms of drones closed Russian airports, struck oil refineries or set ablaze the warehouses of retail giants Wildberries and Ozon.

Over 43,300 Ukrainian drones were intercepted over Russia and illegally annexed Crimea in June, July and August, according to Defense Ministry data compiled by The Associated Press, although some clearly hit their targets. In the same period last summer, about 7,700 were intercepted, the ministry said.

“We were living a normal life, and then suddenly it’s like this,” retiree Margarita Terekhova said about waiting in line to refuel her car in Moscow, part of the nationwide gas crisis from refinery attacks that persisted into August.

As the calendar turns toward autumn, increased awareness of the war and its consequences comes at a challenging time for the Kremlin. A parliamentary election takes place Sept. 18-20 — the first since the full-scale invasion.

While there’s little doubt about the outcome of the tightly controlled balloting that features few opposition candidates, analysts say it still holds potential for political volatility.

“Elections are a time when people should reflect on themselves, the country, where it’s going and what to do about it,” said Nikolay Petrov, senior research fellow at the NEST Centre, founded by exiled tycoon and opposition figure Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

Even in a strictly controlled environment, “things that are unexpected, inconvenient (and) painful for the authorities” can happen, Petrov said.

Russia’s mood shifts

The summer’s first major attack came June 3, when an oil terminal outside St. Petersburg was struck just as Putin’s signature economic forum there got underway. Since then, Ukraine hit refineries, along with Wildberries and Ozon warehouses — from Moscow to Yekaterinburg in the Ural Mountains, to Omsk in Siberia.

That intensified campaign — with its expanded geography and a growing number of drones — shocked Russians, says Denis Volkov, director of the country’s top independent pollster, the Levada Center.

Ukraine has not disclosed how many drones it launches, but President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has talked about expanding the strikes, which he calls “long-range sanctions.” Officials in Kyiv say they will continue trying to pressure Russia into ending the war, even as Moscow intensifies its bombardment of Ukraine.

The attacks have remained the most noteworthy topic for two months this summer, Volkov told AP.

Social media documented gas station queues or travelers stranded by canceled flights. Tearful entrepreneurs

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neers told followers their inventory was destroyed at the stricken warehouses.

Images of massive fires at oil refineries and warehouses showed up online despite restrictions on publication of content detailing the attacks.

Asked if Russians should get used to fuel shortages, Putin said Thursday in Vladivostok that "we must be prepared for anything, and our preparedness for everything will signal to those who want to harm us that it's better not to do it."

While the shock over this summer's events has since eased, Volkov said, there is a longer-term downward trend that sociologists have tracked since last year: a worsening assessment of Russia's economic situation and declining approvals of top politicians.

Putin's traditionally high approval rating has fallen somewhat this year. Data from the Levada Center showed it at 76% in August, down from 87% in September 2025.

Chris Weafer, CEO of the Macro-Advisory Ltd. consultancy that works in Moscow, said there's more awareness of the war and less complacency about it.

"People are grumbling more, they're talking more," he said, with a striking level of pessimism, especially in the business community, about the prospects for its end.

Rumors of a possible mobilization

There also appears to be nervousness fueled by persistent rumors of an impending troop mobilization — like the widely unpopular one in September 2022 that drafted 300,000 men.

Zelenskyy and other Ukrainian officials maintain Russia is planning another mobilization after the State Duma election. Putin rejected the claims, saying they were "an information attack by the enemy."

Still, the prospect has prompted some Russians to leave the country. One 23-year-old Muscovite told AP she left last month with her husband, worried he might be drafted.

The young woman, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of concerns for her safety, also mentioned fear of Ukrainian attacks. She believes many feel exhaustion from the war, which now can affect "the life of any person in any corner of the country," she said.

Volkov said worries over a new mobilization have long lurked in the background but flared up slightly last year after U.S.-led peace efforts stalled with no end to the war in sight.

People "don't want (the conflict) to expand and more people to be dragged into it against their will, and this breeds certain concern, anxiety," he said.

Authorities don't want a war debate

Volkov and Weafer said this increased awareness and the dampened mood aren't translating into anti-war demonstrations, public unrest or even enough protest votes to affect the balloting.

But things like turnout and "debate ahead of the election" still matter to authorities, Weafer said, even with an all-but-certain outcome.

Petrov pointed to the Yabloko party, the longtime voice of the liberal opposition that campaigns for an end to the war. It initially was allowed onto the ballot, and its young supporters flooded social media with videos promoting the party.

But on Aug. 10, the Supreme Court kicked Yabloko off the ballot, leaving it to compete only in single constituency races. Ten days later, the head of its Moscow office, Kirill Goncharov, said the party, with about 4,000 members, got 8,000 new applications.

"The context of the summer of 2026 is that there is a demand for peace," Goncharov said.

Yabloko's slogans resonated with young voters, and that "upended the Kremlin's calculation" of giving people a relatively safe outlet for their discontent, Petrov said.

Tatiana Stanovaya of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center said Yabloko's removal showed that authorities did not want the election to become a debate "for and against peace."

Petrov said the Kremlin needs elections "as a demonstration of its great legitimacy." It doesn't care so much about the results, since it largely controls all the parties.

"Elections, like in Soviet times, should demonstrate the complete loyalty of all citizens," he said, adding that the vote should signal that Putin and the Kremlin have everything under control, and that people are ready to do "whatever authorities ask of them."

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Ukraine plans more turmoil for Russia

Russians interviewed in Moscow this week about how they spent their summer recounted contented moments, but they also described living with the effects of daily drone attacks.

Natalya Bazhenova from Chita in Siberia told AP she waited two full days in line for gasoline. Visiting the Voronezh region near the Ukrainian border, she got constant texts warning of drones but heard no explosions.

Ksenia Smirnova said her family canceled a flight to a Black Sea resort and is going by train instead.

On Tuesday, Zelenskyy ominously warned airlines in Russia that the risks could continue.

"Although the Russian authorities are not properly informing people about this, Russian airspace will effectively be closing — the war started by Russia is closing its skies," he said. "For now, the skies over Russia are for drones — not for civilian aviation."

Today in History: September 4, the 1949 Peekskill Riots

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, Sept. 4, the 247th day of 2026. There are 118 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 4, 1949, more than 140 people were injured following a performance by singer Paul Robeson in Peekskill, New York, as an anti-Communist mob attacked departing concertgoers.

Also on this date:

In 1781, Los Angeles was founded by Spanish settlers under the leadership of Gov. Felipe de Neve.

In 1886, Chiricahua Apache leader Geronimo surrendered to U.S. troops in present-day Arizona after more than two decades of fighting to protect his homeland.

In 1888, George Eastman secured a patent for a hand-roll camera and registered the trademark Kodak.

In 1944, during World War II, British troops liberated Antwerp, Belgium.

In 1957, Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus ordered National Guardsmen to prevent nine Black students from entering all-white Central High School in Little Rock.

In 1972, U.S. swimmer Mark Spitz became the first to win seven medals at a single Olympic Games, winning a seventh gold at the Munich Olympics in the 400-meter medley relay.

In 1972, the longest-running game show in U.S. history, "The Price is Right," debuted on CBS.

In 1974, the United States established diplomatic relations with East Germany.

In 1998, Google was founded by Stanford University Ph.D. students Sergey Brin and Larry Page.

In 2016, elevating the "saint of the gutters" to one of the Catholic Church's highest honors, Pope Francis canonized Mother Teresa, praising her radical dedication to society's outcasts and her courage in shaming world leaders for the "crimes of poverty they themselves created."

In 2018, the Senate Judiciary Committee began confirmation hearings for future Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh on a day that saw rancorous exchanges between Democrats and Republicans.

In 2024, a 14-year-old student opened fire at a Georgia high school northeast of Atlanta, killing four people and sending students scrambling for shelter.

Today's Birthdays: Golf Hall of Famer Raymond Floyd is 84. Golf Hall of Famer Tom Watson is 77. Actor Lawrence Hilton-Jacobs is 73. Actor Khandi Alexander is 69. Actor-comedian Damon Wayans Sr. is 66. Baseball Hall of Famer Mike Piazza is 58. DJ-musician-producer Mark Ronson is 51. Actor Wes Bentley is 48. Actor Max Greenfield is 47. Singer-actor Beyoncé is 45. Actor-comedian Whitney Cummings is 44. Actor-comedian Kyle Mooney (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 42. Actor Victoria Moroles is 30. Singer Mackenzie Sol is 26.