

Groton Daily Independent

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Community Calendar

Wednesday, Sept. 9

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.;
League, 6:30 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, Sept. 10

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, mashed potatoes with gravy, broccoli, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Scones.

School Lunch: Chicken nachos.

Groton Invitational Golf Meet, 10 a.m.

JH Golf at Sisseton, 1 p.m.

Volleyball hosts Aberdeen Roncalli (7th/C at 5 p.m., 8th/JV at 6 p.m., Varsity to follow)

Groton Daily Independent

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

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Friday, Sept. 11

Senior Menu: Hot pork sandwich, oven roasted potatoes, California blend, fruit.

School Breakfast: Omelet.

School Lunch: Mac and cheese, green beans.

Football at Clark, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 12

JH Volleyball at Matchbox Tournament, 9 a.m.

Soccer hosts Vermillion (Girls at 1 p.m., Boys at 2:30 p.m.)

Fall Citywide Rummage Sale

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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.

Canada Tariffs Begin

Canada's retaliatory tariffs of 15% to 50% on roughly \$20B of US imports took effect yesterday, targeting hundreds of products, including steel, dairy, appliances, clothing, agricultural equipment, and electronics.

The measures follow stalled trade negotiations and match US tariffs on Canadian goods imposed last month; Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has pushed to reduce Canada's reliance on its largest trading partner. Canada is the top customer for exports from 27 US states—see the top global trade partner for your state—and the affected goods account for roughly 6% of the \$334B the US exported to Canada last year.

Separately, Canada, France, and the UK announced a ban on imports from Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, saying expansion threatens a two-state solution. Israel responded by closing the British consulate in east Jerusalem and barring several officials. See how Israeli settlements in the West Bank have expanded since 1967.

9/11 Air Quality

New York City officials yesterday released more than 170,000 pages of previously unseen documents detailing poor air quality and health risks after the 9/11 attacks.

Mayor Zohran Mamdani (D) ordered the files' release as part of a \$34M initiative. The trove includes a 2001 memo showing officials feared lawsuits arising from people claiming toxic exposure. Taken together, the records suggest New Yorkers were advised to return to the area before it was safe, with officials finding evidence of asbestos as far as half a mile from Ground Zero at least 10 months after the attack. Asbestos exposure can cause lung tissue scarring and cancers, including mesothelioma and lung cancer. Researchers also found that roughly 25% of kids exposed to 9/11 dust developed asthma, compared with 16% of their peers.

The toxins largely came from pulverized building materials and smoldering fires fueled by jet fuel.

👉 Humankind: Hearing specialists adopt a deaf blue heeler puppy and use their expertise to train her with visual commands. (w/photos)

French Museum Heist

Two thieves made off with a pair of Renoir paintings yesterday from a museum in southern France.

The alarm system for Cagnes-sur-Mer's Renoir Museum went off at around 5:48 am local time, with police reportedly arriving on the scene within five minutes. By that time, robbers had broken a hole in the garden fence and cut through bolts holding several paintings' frames, making off with some of the loot. The paintings they stole were the 1886 "Young Woman at the Well" and a 1910 portrait of French actress Colonna Romano. Two other portraits were found abandoned in the garden. The incident marks the latest in a series of European museum heists; a small Spanish museum was robbed late last month.

The Renoir Museum was impressionist artist Pierre-Auguste Renoir's last home before he died in 1919. It houses more than a dozen Renoir pieces and other belongings, including his wheelchair and personal letters.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Mid-American Conference appeals outcome of Michigan-Western Michigan game; Michigan drops out of college football top 25 rankings.

Snoop Dogg biopic taps little-known recording artist Swayvotwain to play influential East Coast rapper The Notorious B.I.G.

LIV Golf files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy to begin restructuring league after Saudi Public Investment Fund pulled funding.

Star golfer Jon Rahm hints at uncertainty about his future.

Science & Technology

Apple to host annual product announcement today, expected to unveil its first foldable iPhone.

OpenAI claims one of its internal models cracked a notoriously difficult math problem about how liquids and gases move.

The problem is one of six unsolved Millennium Prize Problems, whose solutions each award \$1M.

Hidden immune cells found to play a key role in keeping the uterus healthy, potentially leading to new treatments for infertility, miscarriages, and IVF failure.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -0.6%, Dow -1.2%, Nasdaq -0.3%) as oil prices rise and investors await key inflation data due Friday.

Qualcomm shares rise 3.2% after the Nvidia competitor strikes an AI chip deal with Amazon valued at up to \$60B; Amazon can buy up to \$4B in Qualcomm stock.

Amazon is sued over alleged discrimination against pregnant employees.

NextEra Energy receives \$1.9B federal loan to revive Iowa nuclear power plant; Google plans to purchase power from the plant for AI and cloud infrastructure.

Politics & World Affairs

Houthis attack energy and civilian sites in Saudi Arabia with missiles and drones, wounding more than 70 people; comes after Houthis accuse the kingdom of an airstrike Monday.

US officials downplay Iran's seizure of an American submersible, calling it unmanned and devoid of sensitive or classified data.

Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie Bunch resigns from leading the world's largest museum and research complex amid White House allegations of political activism.

Iceland summons US envoy after President Donald Trump posts map covering the country—as well as Greenland, Mexico, Canada, and Cuba—with US flag (More, w/image)

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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Groton Area netters beat Webster in NEC contest

Groton Area picked up a Northeast Conference volleyball victory Tuesday night, sweeping the Webster Area Bearcats 3-0 on the road.

The Tigers won by scores of 25-19, 25-18 and 25-23.

Webster stayed with Groton early in the opening set, tying the score at eight before the Tigers began to pull away. Groton built a 16-11 advantage and maintained control from there for the 25-19 victory.

Tevan Hanson led the attack in the first set with five kills and two ace serves, while Chazney Weber contributed three kills, two ace serves and a block.

The second set was tied four times early with one lead change before Groton broke things open with an eight-point run to take a 13-5 lead. The Tigers went on to win 25-18.

Taryn Traphagen had three kills and a block in the second set, while Hanson added three kills and an ace.

Webster made Groton work for the sweep in the third set. The teams were tied 10 times and exchanged the lead six times before the Tigers scored the final two points for a 25-23 victory.

Hanson had four kills in the final set and Abby Fjeldheim added three.

Groton Area coach Chelsea Hanson said Webster's strategy, particularly from the service line, created some problems for the Tigers.

"They served short all game long, and that really disrupted our serve-receive pattern," Hanson said. "It was really good execution for them to put the ball in a position where our setters are trying to run and our hitters are running routes."

Hanson said it took the Tigers much of the match to adjust to Webster's approach.

"It took us a long time to adjust to that, up until the last three points," she said.

Webster's Mallory Steiner also presented a challenge, finishing with a match-high 15 kills. Hanson noted that the Bearcats were even willing to attack with Steiner from the back row.

"Back-row attacks are hard, so I give credit to them for attempting that," Hanson said.

Still, Hanson felt many of Webster's opportunities came from Groton's own mistakes.

"For us, it was just staying clean and knowing that we were the reason they were close," she said. "For the most part, it was our mistakes and us being out of system doing things that make scoring hard."

Tevan Hanson finished the match with 12 kills, two ace serves and 17 digs for Groton. Kinsley Rowan recorded 11 digs, while Sydney Locke had two assists, two aces and 13 digs.

Traphagen finished with six kills, one solo block and one assisted block. Weber had six kills, two aces, one solo block and one assisted block. Elizabeth Cole added five kills, Fjeldheim had three kills, Kella Tracy had two kills and Tori Schuster served two aces. Libby Althoff directed the offense with 24 assists and also contributed three kills.

Coach Hanson said the Tigers were able to spread the offense around when their passing allowed them to get their middle hitters involved.

"We had pretty balanced scoring," she said. "Our outsides are having to take a ton of swings when we're not passing well. As soon as we could get our middles involved, that's when we were passing well."



Sydney Locke gets ready for the ball. Also pictured is Tevan Hanson #3. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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For Webster, Steiner had 15 kills and an ace. Sarah Zubke finished with two kills and a block, Chloe Mamminga had a kill and an ace, Jaden Lorensberg had three kills and an ace, Marley Dornbusch had two kills and three aces, and Callie Shoemaker recorded two kills and two aces.

Groton also came away with a hard-fought victory in the junior varsity match, winning 2-1.

Webster took the opening set 25-19 after breaking a 7-7 tie with a five-point run. The Bearcats later led 22-15 before closing out the set.

The second set was tied eight times and featured three lead changes. The final tie came at 16 before Groton put together a three-point run and eventually built a 21-17 advantage on the way to a 25-19 victory.

The deciding third set was tied 10 times with seven lead changes and went beyond the regulation 15 points before Groton prevailed 17-15.

Neely Althoff led the Tigers with eight kills and an ace. Kinley Sandness and Brooklyn Spanier each had five kills, with Spanier adding two aces. Brynlee Dunker had four kills, Fjeldheim recorded three kills and an ace, Makenna Krause had two aces and Tori Schuster contributed a kill and an ace.

For Webster, Braelynn Breske and Quinn Matthews each had four kills. Breske added an ace and Matthews had two aces. Chloe Kvern- evig finished with three kills, two aces and a block.

Webster won the C match in three sets.

Groton took the opening set 25-21 after leading throughout, but Webster answered with a 25-22 victory in the second set. That set was tied nine times and had eight lead changes, with the final tie coming at 22.

The Bearcats then jumped out to a 7-1 lead in the deciding set and went on to win 15-10.

Maycee Moody led Groton with 10 kills and an ace. Charli Jacobsen had four kills and an ace, Brynlee Dunker added three kills, a block and an ace, Sophia Fliehs had two kills and two aces, Arianna Dinger served two aces and Mya Moody had one kill.

Groton Area will return home Thursday to host Aberdeen Roncalli in a matchup Hanson expects to provide a much tougher test.

"I think Roncalli is a very, very good team, a very athletic team," Hanson said. "They have a lot of girls that can score. I expect a lot of energy, a lot of noise. The girls will be tired when it's done."

The teams met during summer camp, and Hanson said even that matchup was intense.

"That's what we want," she said. "We want to play good competition. We want to go out and get better, and I know we're going to get better whether we win or we lose against Roncalli on Thursday."

For Tuesday night, though, Hanson was pleased to leave Webster with another win.

"We did what we needed to do to get the win tonight," she said. "We'll take it for now."



Chesney Weber hits the ball over to the Webster side. Also pictured are Liby Althoff (18) and Sydney Locke (4). (Photo by

Paul Kosel)



Liby Althoff does a reverse hit for the Tigers. (Photo by Paul

Kosel)

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Groton Area boys fall to James Valley Christian

Groton Area's boys soccer team fell to James Valley Christian, 6-1, in action played Tuesday in Groton. Trey Tietz accounted for the Tigers' lone goal in the contest, with Easton Weber recording the assist. Goalkeeper TC Schuster finished the match with six saves for Groton Area.



Pictured left to right are Bentley Ehresmann, Easton Larson, Liam Johnson, Jace Johnson, Haden Harder and Graham Rose. (Courtesy photo Becca Johnson)

Groton places sixth at Milbank Invitational

The Groton boys golf team placed sixth at the Milbank Invitational held Tuesday at Whetstone Creek Golf Course in Milbank.

The Tigers finished with a team score of 387, just two strokes behind fifth-place Sisseton, which carded a 385. Milbank was seventh at 389.

Tri-Valley captured the team championship with a 317, followed by Sioux Valley at 329 and Watertown at 330. Aberdeen Roncalli was fourth with a 345. Redfield finished eighth at 396, while Tiospa Zina was ninth at 479.

Jace Johnson led Groton with an 18-hole score of 89, 17 over par on the par-72 course. Johnson shot a 44 on the front nine and a 45 on the back nine to finish 22nd individually.

Liam Johnson was two strokes back with a 91, placing 24th. He recorded a 43 on the front nine before finishing with a 48 on the back.

Haden Harder finished 33rd with a round of 100. Harder shot a 51 on the opening nine and improved to a 49 on the back nine.

Bentley Ehersmann turned in a 107 to place 43rd. He recorded a 51 on the front nine and a 56 on the back.

Easton Larson rounded out Groton's golfers with a 116, placing 48th. Larson shot matching rounds of 58 on each nine.

The Tigers' team score was calculated using the four lowest rounds of 89, 91, 100 and 107.

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☆	22		Jace Johnson <i>Groton</i>													+17				89			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total		
Strokes																							
White - Men Tee / SLOPE®: 122 / Course Rating™: 69.6 / Whetstone Creek Golf Course																							
Yardage	250	162	476	392	457	155	339	319	346	2896	313	472	350	163	458	326	298	382	168	2930	5826		
Par	4	3	5	4	5	3	4	4	4	36	4	5	4	3	5	4	4	4	3	36	72		
Jace Johnson	5	3	5	5	7	4	5	5	5	44	4	5	5	5	6	4	6	5	5	45	89		

☆	24		Liam Johnson <i>Groton</i>													+19				91			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total		
Strokes																							
White - Men Tee / SLOPE®: 122 / Course Rating™: 69.6 / Whetstone Creek Golf Course																							
Yardage	250	162	476	392	457	155	339	319	346	2896	313	472	350	163	458	326	298	382	168	2930	5826		
Par	4	3	5	4	5	3	4	4	4	36	4	5	4	3	5	4	4	4	3	36	72		
Liam Johnson	4	4	6	7	5	4	4	5	4	43	6	9	4	3	5	5	5	5	6	48	91		

☆	33		Haden Harder <i>Groton</i>													+28				100			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total		
Strokes																							
White - Men Tee / SLOPE®: 122 / Course Rating™: 69.6 / Whetstone Creek Golf Course																							
Yardage	250	162	476	392	457	155	339	319	346	2896	313	472	350	163	458	326	298	382	168	2930	5826		
Par	4	3	5	4	5	3	4	4	4	36	4	5	4	3	5	4	4	4	3	36	72		
Haden Harder	4	5	7	6	8	3	7	6	5	51	5	6	6	4	6	6	5	6	5	49	100		

☆	43		Bentley Ehersmann <i>Groton</i>												+35				107			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total
Strokes																						
White - Men Tee / SLOPE®: 122 / Course Rating™: 69.6 / Whetstone Creek Golf Course																						
Yardage	250	162	476	392	457	155	339	319	346	2896	313	472	350	163	458	326	298	382	168	2930	5826	
Par	4	3	5	4	5	3	4	4	4	36	4	5	4	3	5	4	4	4	3	36	72	
Bentley Ehersmann	5	5	6	8	5	4	7	7	4	51	6	9	5	4	7	6	9	6	4	56	107	

☆	48			Easton Larson <i>Groton</i>												+44				116			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total		
Strokes																							
White - Men Tee / SLOPE®: 122 / Course Rating™: 69.6 / Whetstone Creek Golf Course																							
Yardage	250	162	476	392	457	155	339	319	346	2896	313	472	350	163	458	326	298	382	168	2930	5826		
Par	4	3	5	4	5	3	4	4	4	36	4	5	4	3	5	4	4	4	3	36	72		
Easton Larson	5	6	9	8	7	5	7	6	5	58	8	11	6	6	5	6	6	6	4	58	116		

Starting Hole Eagle or Better Birdie Par Bogey Double Bogey or Worse

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The Life of William Feist



A Memorial service for William Feist, 40, of Sioux Falls will be 1:00 p.m., Saturday, September 12th at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. Bobbi Larson will officiate. Inurnment will follow at a later date in Union Cemetery, Groton.

Visitation will be held at the chapel from 11-1 p.m. on Saturday.

Billy passed away September 5, 2026 in rural Tabor.

William Carl Feist was born on July 25, 1986 in Breckenridge, Minnesota to James "Jim" and Peggy Ann (Thorson) Feist. He attended school in Groton and graduated in 2005. Billy worked at Smithfield Foods in Sioux Falls as a maintenance manager. In his spare time, he enjoyed laser engraving/etching along with leatherwork and beadwork as hobbies. Billy also liked to fix-up and tinker on motorcycles just as much as he enjoyed the ride.

Celebrating his life is his mother, Peggy (Buster) Sichmeller of Webster, his siblings, Brian Feist (Bridgette) Gaukler of Lidgerwood, ND and Renee Feist Gaukler of Sioux Falls, Cory Feist (Stacey) of Pierpont, Tracy Feist, Michael (Ashley) Feist, and Daniel Feist all of Groton. Billy is also survived by his step-siblings, Jodi Sichmeller of MI, Amber (Waverly) Olson of Bozeman, MT, Rachel (Bob) Schuster of Britton, April (Marshal) Robbins of Enderlin, ND, Curtis (Catherine) Sichmeller of Webster and many nieces and nephews.

Preceding him in death were his grandparents and his father, Jim.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

State debt collection strategy includes hundreds of potential driver's license suspensions per month

Clearinghouse brings in \$34.7 million since its 2016 inception

BY JOHN HULT

A South Dakota state agency requests an average of 249 driver's license suspensions per month as part of its efforts to collect debts owed to state government, a legislative oversight panel heard Tuesday.

The figure hasn't changed much in recent years, and many of the debtors enter a payment plan before their license is suspended. It's an effective way to push debtors who've ducked multiple attempts to collect unpaid fees, said Jason Kettwig, deputy director of the Bureau of Human Resources and Administration.

Kettwig's agency oversees the state's Obligation Recovery Center. Lawmakers created the debt collection clearinghouse 10 years ago for things like fines and court costs, unpaid fees or tuition at state institutions, or other fees owed to agencies such as the departments of Transportation, Revenue, or Game, Fish and Parks.

The center's operators, a private company called Reliant Capital Solutions, can ask the state to suspend the driver's licenses of debtors who owe more than \$1,000. Reliant, which has held the contract to operate the center since 2020, is paid through a 20% surcharge added to debt.

License suspensions are "everybody's least favorite thing to talk about," Kettwig told the state's Government Operations and Audit Committee on Tuesday at the Capitol in Pierre.

"We don't collect money because we get their license taken away," Kettwig said. "We collect money because we are able to talk to them and explain to them what they can do to make it right. But sometimes the only way we can talk to them is to have something that they feel."

A report on the center's performance is presented annually to lawmakers. This year's report noted that the center has tallied \$34.7 million in payments since it began operations 10 years ago.

The state's court system represents the largest share of that 10-year total, at \$15.7 million. That's more than four times higher than the figure for the Department of Revenue, at \$3.6 million.

About 45% of the center's collections are tied to the court system, whose debtors owe more than \$102 million, the report said. Of the \$4 million recovered through the center last year, \$1.8 million was court debt.

The center's strategy has also leaned more heavily on payment plans for the last three years, Kettwig said. About 60% of the 15,062 accounts resolved last year belonged to people who paid off their debt in installments.

There were about 176,000 outstanding accounts at the center on June 30, the end of the state's 2026 fiscal year.

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

COMMENTARY

Meta settlement money should be used to build something better for kids

by Billy Mawhiney

South Dakota is set to receive at least \$52.6 million from Meta, with the total potentially reaching \$73.5 million. The money will be paid over the next decade because of the harm social media platforms have caused young people. Now comes the question that will determine whether this settlement changes their lives: What will South Dakota do with the money?

For years, the conversation about young people and social media has focused on what we should take away: phones during class, push notifications, harmful content, endless scrolling and screen time that turns 15 minutes into two hours before anyone notices. But if we are serious about helping young people, we cannot stop at telling them to put their phones down. We also have to give them something meaningful to step into when they do.

That means afterschool and summer programs, sports, arts, recreation, outdoor experiences, libraries, community centers, mentors, trusted adults, youth jobs, leadership opportunities and mental health support that young people can reach. These are sometimes treated as extras. They are instead part of the infrastructure of a healthy childhood and, in South Dakota, part of what allows families to work and communities to thrive.

The problem is not a lack of interest. Young people want these opportunities, and families are looking for them. Too often, however, the opportunity is too expensive, too far away, already full or simply does not exist. A recent South Dakota report estimated that roughly 60,000 school-age children need afterschool or summer care, while only about 20,000 are currently being served. That leaves 40,000 young people without access to a program their families want or need.

Cost, location and transportation are among the biggest barriers, especially in rural and tribal communities, where the nearest option may be 30, 40 or even 60 miles away. A good program does not help a family if there is no open seat or no practical way for a child to get there.

The Meta settlement gives South Dakota an opportunity to close some of those gaps. It also gives us an opportunity to repeat old mistakes. Large tobacco and opioid settlements have shown how money intended to address a specific harm can be diluted, diverted or absorbed into unrelated spending when clear priorities and public accountability are missing. South Dakota should decide that this money will be different.

Before settlement dollars are spent, state leaders should establish a clear, public and youth-informed plan. The money should directly prevent, reduce and repair harms associated with social media while supporting healthy development. It should add to current investments, not replace funding for education, mental health, recreation, libraries or youth development elsewhere in the budget. The public should be able to see where the money goes, who benefits and what results are measured.

Young people and families should have a voice in those decisions alongside educators, mental health professionals, and organizations that serve youth. Leaders should pay close attention to communities with the fewest options, neighborhoods without safe gathering spaces and areas facing shortages of transportation, programming or mental health professionals.

South Dakota should resist spreading the money across a collection of short-term projects and calling the job finished. One-time grants can help, but lasting change requires capacity: trained and stable staff, more program slots, dependable transportation, safe facilities and stronger networks connecting families with care and opportunity. Fund IRL is a coalition working to ensure any payouts from current social media lawsuits help fund programs and services that promote youth wellbeing and healthy development. Its guidance offers a practical framework, calling for investment across a continuum that includes positive youth development, real-life alternatives, safer digital engagement and mental health services delivered through community organizations, schools and clinical settings.

No single program will meet every young person's needs. A teenager might find belonging on a basketball

court, confidence on a stage, purpose through a summer job or support from a counselor. What matters is that the opportunity exists and that they can reach it.

The goal cannot simply be fewer hours on a phone. It should be more hours spent building friendships, discovering talents, moving, creating, learning, working and being surrounded by adults who know a young person's name and notice when they do not show up.

South Dakota has the chance to turn corporate accountability into real-life opportunity. Before the first dollars are spent, our leaders should commit to a transparent, youth-informed plan that invests in the programs, places, relationships and support young South Dakotans need to thrive. Money intended to repair harm to young people should reach young people. That is what real repair can look like.

Billy Mawhiney, of Sioux Falls, is the executive director of the South Dakota Afterschool Network.

Q&A: South Dakota's next attorney general aims to undo criminal justice reforms, just not right away

Unopposed Republican nominee says he'll spend 2027 listening, learning and continuing current officeholder's efforts

BY JOHN HULT

Lance Russell will be South Dakota's next attorney general whether you vote for him or not.

At the Republican state convention in June, Russell earned the party's nomination to seek the job of the state's top law enforcement official, and its defense attorney when the state is sued.

Attorney general is among the statewide offices in South Dakota whose nominees are chosen by delegates at party conventions, not by voters in primary elections. The current attorney general, Republican Marty Jackley, is running for the U.S. House.

Russell is running unopposed to succeed Jackley in Nov. 3 general election. The South Dakota Democratic Party hasn't nominated anyone to run for attorney general since 2018.

Russell, a Hot Springs native and 1999 graduate of the University of South Dakota School of Law, has spent more than half his career as the Fall River County state's attorney, beginning soon after he passed the bar exam. He's also the state's attorney for neighboring Oglala Lakota County, which is part of the Oglala Sioux Tribe's Pine Ridge Reservation. Russell prosecutes the cases in that county that fall under state jurisdiction.

From 2009-2020, he stepped away from the prosecutor job to serve four terms in the state House of Representatives and two in the state Senate. He was elected state's attorney for Fall River County again in 2020 and 2024, and will leave two years early to assume the role of attorney general.

Russell bested Austin Hoffman and John Fitzgerald at the state convention with a campaign focused on undoing some of the reforms to criminal justice he opposed during his time in Pierre.

Those reforms, to the adult system in 2013 and the juvenile one in 2015, ushered in drug courts, a presumption of probation for low-level felonies and a host of other policies meant to hold down the state's prison population without hurting public safety.

Russell argues the reforms haven't worked for the adult system — South Dakota is building two new prisons in spite of them — and says institutions like the now-defunct boot camp for teens in Custer did a better job helping juveniles change their ways than the alternatives now used for kids who break the law.

The following conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

You'll be the first attorney general since Gordon Mydland, who led the office from 1969 to 1973, to have served in the Legislature. How do you think your years in Pierre will color your approach to the job?

The nice thing is that I have the perspective of the legislator. I understand how they're perceiving their job, so I can articulate to them in a manner that they hopefully will understand.

The other thing is that I got a front row seat to watch the attorney general's work in the Legislature. Legislators have a number of ideas. Marty did a really nice job of getting together with the legislators, having a relationship with them. He could talk to them and help them with their legislation and make sure

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that it wasn't unconstitutional or illegal in some fashion.

That's one of the big issues for the attorney general's staff, to make sure that they have good communication with lawmakers so that we're not passing legislation that gets us into federal court and gets us enjoined for doing something stupid.

As attorney general, you will have a Missing and Murdered Indigenous People liaison position. What do you see your office doing on the MMIP issue?

They have someone that has quite a bit of experience (in Marlys Big Eagle), so I'm excited about that. It's my understanding that we do, in fact, have a robust office that is working with the tribes to a large degree and trying to implement something very close to the Amber Alert (for missing Native Americans). I'm thankful for that, and yes, I will be an advocate for it.

How would you approach tribal relations, and what have you learned by serving as a prosecutor adjacent to the Pine Ridge Reservation?

I feel like I have worked cooperatively over the last 25 years with the Oglala Lakota County commissioners and the tribe, and that we've had a pretty good working relationship. So I'm hoping to put that into effect statewide so we don't get ourselves into trouble and get banned from the tribe.

I think that, unfortunately, a lot of what happened with (former Gov.) Kristi Noem getting banned from the Indian reservations just had to do with a lot of not understanding the different jurisdictions and what the state's jurisdiction actually is. Because if you realize that you have limited jurisdiction on the Indian reservation and understand the contours of it, I think it helps you talk to people in a manner that is constructive, respectful and non-threatening. If you just understand your role as the state, I think that helps dramatically.

You opposed criminal justice reform as a lawmaker back in 2013 and 2015, arguing that leaning on community supervision would backfire. You campaigned on the premise that it has. What problems do you see?

The effectiveness of our juvenile justice system between when I started and now is like night and day. It's just not working. If you talk to people at the schools, you will get a real good education in how destructive it's been for the school systems to have these delinquents, who are adjudicated as such, essentially being sent right back to school. The schools have had a very difficult time dealing with it.

The system no longer works. We just don't have the resources we used to have. I remember when I would have kids come into the system that were absolutely defiant to the judges. Then they would spend 60 or 90 days at the boot camp up there in Custer. They would come back, they would stand in front of the judge, and they would stand up straight. They'd look the judge in the eye. They would respond appropriately. Then they'd go back to the high school here in Hot Springs or in Edgemont, and they would graduate. It would be a success story.

But these days, it just seems like we eventually have these kids just dropping out of school. They're not being given the resources they need. We no longer have the boot camp now. We have to send a lot of the children that need help out of state because we don't have adequate resources here.

What would you want to see changed during your term as attorney general? Would you want to bring back a boot camp?

Over the next four years, it's my intention to try and reform the system, but it is going to be an enormous job. It's not going to happen overnight. I know that the attorney general's office has been working on legislation, and my intention this first year is to try and implement a lot of the things that Marty's been working on, not have an ambitious reform package for myself. Give me a year to work to explain the problems to the legislators and to the governor's office, and to try and build some consensus to bring some legislation in subsequent sessions to try and fix some of the problems.

Quite frankly, that's the reason I ran for attorney general. My job has become so much more difficult to do since I came back from the Legislature than it was before, and I knew that I couldn't fix it from Hot Springs.

I'm going to do my best over the next four years to get some reforms that I think make some sense for the people, for the taxpayers and the victims, and quite frankly, for the people that are coming through

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the system, so they have the tools they need when they're released to go back into the community and be successful.

Drug courts and other specialty courts are often cited as successful outgrowths of criminal justice reform. Do you see the value in those?

Here in Fall River and Oglala Lakota County, we don't have any of those courts. My understanding of how they work is all third-hand. I tend to think I just need to be more educated on what they do, because I haven't had a lot of experience with them.

Do I think that they're as effective as they were envisioned to be? Probably not. But I need to not be too critical because I haven't interfaced with it myself personally.

In a smaller jurisdiction that hasn't gotten a lot of those resources, almost all of my experience has been that (the reforms) have made the work much more difficult for everybody involved in the process.

Is there anything else in particular you'd like people to know as we approach your first term?

Marty Jackley has done a great job as attorney general, as far as I can see. I want to continue a lot of his programs. I do want to tweak the system and make it work better for the locals, but what I will tell you is that at the state level, I think that the Division of Criminal Investigation, the State Crime Lab, the entities that are under the attorney general, have been working very well. Frankly, I don't feel like I could have a better situation going in.

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

Trump doesn't have the power to limit mail-in voting, lawmakers tell US Supreme Court

BY JACOB FISCHLER

The hotly contested U.S. Postal Service rule restricting mail-in voting usurps Congress' authority, as well as states' power to administer elections, more than 250 current and former members of Congress said in a filing to the U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday.

All 47 members of the U.S. Senate Democratic Caucus, 199 current House Democrats and 15 former House Republicans signed the friend-of-the-court brief opposing President Donald Trump's policy to add several requirements to mail ballots.

The U.S. Constitution "is unambiguous" in empowering states to run elections, while Congress can enact laws to oversee elections generally, they argued.

"Congress has passed several laws regulating federal elections—though it has always done so surgically, deliberately leaving the States with considerable room to maneuver," they wrote.

The executive branch has no role, they said.

The Trump administration has argued the rule, published last month, requires only "modest" technical specifications for mail ballots and that states transmit lists of eligible voters to receive the ballots. The rule is a targeted measure affecting mail delivery, not elections, the administration says.

But the lawmakers say that argument fails.

The agency cannot take action related to elections without a congressional directive, they wrote. Congress never wrote a law asking for the requirements included in the USPS rule, they said.

Executive order

In this case, Trump spurred the Postal Service to write the rule in a March executive order, based on the unsubstantiated premise that vote-by-mail is vulnerable to fraud.

That shows the rule is meant to address Trump's concerns about election administration, not mail specifications, the lawmakers said.

"The integrity of our constitutional system depends on each branch keeping to its assigned role," they wrote. "The Framers set up a two-part system that gave States default authority to regulate federal elec-

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tions subject to Congress's authority to override the States. The Framers did not provide the President with any authority to interfere in that system, nor has Congress imbued the Executive Branch with any such authority by statute."

Spokespeople for the White House, USPS and the Department of Justice, which is representing the Trump administration in the case, did not immediately return messages seeking comment Tuesday.

In a separate brief, the legal advocacy group the Society for the Rule of Law made a similar argument, saying the federal postal law the administration has cited provides only broad language that does not empower the agency to regulate election mail.

"The non-election, boilerplate ... provisions on which Applicants rely are not a secret, alternative way for the USPS to bar ballot mail, conditionally or otherwise, on the eve of election day," the group wrote. "Under the federalism presumption and the major question doctrine, the USPS needed a clear statement of statutory authority."

Rushed delivery

The rule would require technical elements such as unique barcodes on ballot envelopes. Elections experts say those requirements are unworkable in time for the fall's midterm elections because states have already designed, printed and — in some cases — begun sending ballots.

The rule would also require states to send to the federal government lists of eligible voters, which would be checked against a Department of Homeland Security database to verify citizenship.

The rule bans the Postal Service from delivering ballots to registered voters who are not verified through that method.

The online portal that the rule says states should use for this process has still, less than two months until Election Day, not been introduced to states. A whistleblower last week reported the rushed development has led to myriad problems with the tool, which could result in legitimate ballots being rejected.

Opponents, including more than 20 Democratic state officials and voting rights groups that sued to challenge the rule, say it would risk disenfranchisement for the millions of voters, including Trump, who vote by mail.

High court ruling pending

The rule has been the subject of rapidfire legal fighting over the past several weeks, and the Supreme Court is now weighing whether to overturn a Massachusetts federal judge's order pausing the rule while litigation continues, after the Trump administration filed an appeal over the weekend.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson on Sunday asked the states and voting rights groups challenging the rule to file their response to the application by Wednesday at 4 p.m. Eastern.

That district court injunction from Judge Indira Talwani, who was appointed by President Barack Obama, held that the rule was likely unconstitutional and unlawful for reasons the members of Congress articulated Tuesday: The Constitution grants states and Congress the power to oversee elections and states would be harmed if they are forced to comply with the regulation before courts can determine its legality.

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.

Trump's trade war with Canada escalates as new tariffs launch

BY ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — Canada's retaliatory tariffs on American goods kicked in Tuesday, escalating a trade war with one of the largest U.S. trading partners that President Donald Trump continued to antagonize over the holiday weekend.

Trump posted an AI-generated cartoon image of himself Sunday evening in which he is depicted as a hockey player striking Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, who is shown down on the ice, with a hockey stick.

"Get up, governor," a speech bubble from Trump's mouth reads, apparently referring to Canada as a

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U.S. state rather than a sovereign country.

Nearly \$28 billion in U.S. exports crossing the border to Canada now carry up to 50% tariffs, a dollar-for-dollar match on Trump's taxes on Canadian goods imposed last month, according to Canadian officials.

Among the 629 categories of products Canada has targeted are key outputs from U.S. states with hotly contested races in the fast-approaching November midterm elections, including Maine's paper and lumber industry, Michigan's vehicle manufacturing and Wisconsin dairy production.

U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, a Maine Republican who's in the midst of a tough reelection campaign, warned in late August roughly \$170 million of her state's goods will be impacted by the Canadian tariffs, with more than half of that coming from the forest product sector. Canada revised its tariff proposal Aug. 27 to exclude seafood, including Maine's significant lobster industry.

5% of goods in question

The United States and Canada's dueling tariffs represent roughly 5% of the two countries' massive and intertwined trading partnership, which totaled \$879.9 billion in goods in 2025, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

But the escalation has been accompanied by Trump's near constant trolling of the U.S. northern neighbor, including threats since his days on the 2024 campaign trail to annex Canada as the 51st state.

Over the Labor Day weekend, the president declared on his Truth Social platform "NO MORE SELLING BOMBARDIER IN THE UNITED STATES!"

"If they want our Market, they must build here, and stop treating America like a 'piggybank.' BUY AMERICAN. FLY ON AMERICAN AIRLINERS. ENJOY AMERICAN LIQUOR AND BEVERAGES. SAIL ON LAKE AMERICA. AMERICA FIRST!" Trump wrote, referencing his executive order Aug. 27 renaming Lake Ontario to Lake America.

The Canadian aircraft maker Bombardier has multiple manufacturing partners and facilities in the United States, including in Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Kansas and New Jersey, according to the company.

"Bombardier aircraft create tens of thousands of U.S. jobs through the company's growing American footprint as well as within its supply chain made up of approximately 2,800 American companies across 47 states," according to a Bombardier statement issued Monday.

"The company spends over \$2.5 Billion with suppliers each year. This deeply integrated network and incredible growth stem from the company's heritage in the business jet industry, dating back to the innovations of Learjet in Wichita, Kansas, and the first business jets to enter service," the statement continued.

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran said in a post on X Monday evening that he contacted Trump "to make certain the President is aware of the significant contributions of Bombardier to Kansas and the importance of its presence in Wichita to many Kansas workers at Bombardier and in the Bombardier supply chain."

The company supports roughly 1,000 jobs in the state, according to the Kansas Republican.

Executive orders

Trade talks between the U.S. and Canada collapsed Aug. 21. In days prior Trump had said he would delay new tariffs on Canadian goods while negotiations continued.

Trump signed three executive orders for new tariffs on Canada in late July using a Depression-era law that has never been enforced.

Section 338 of the Tariff Act of 1930 authorizes the president to impose duties up to 50% of a product's value in response to discrimination against U.S. commerce.

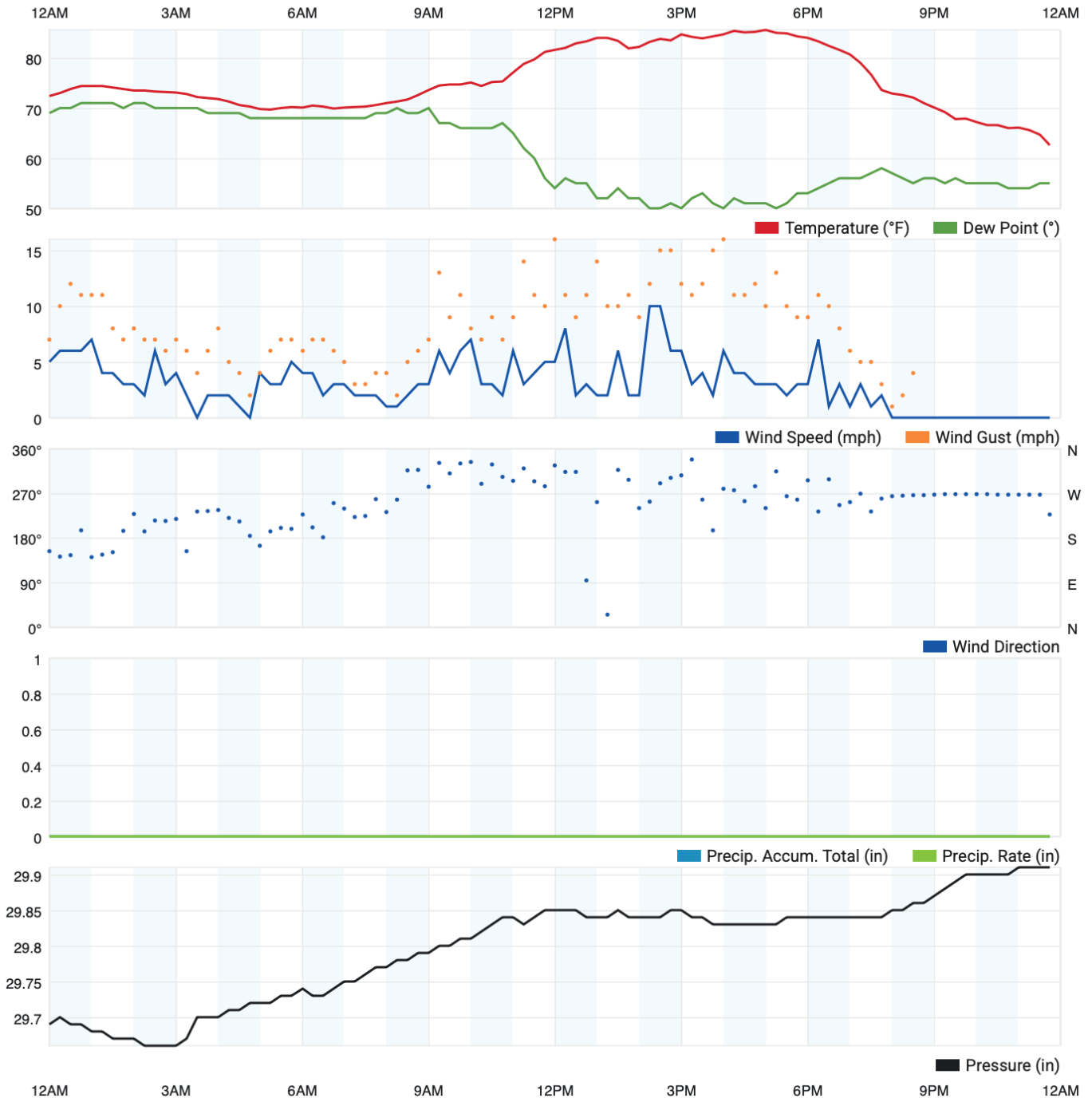
Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

September 8, 2026



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Wednesday



High: 77 °F

Becoming
Sunny

**Wednesday
Night**



Low: 50 °F

Mostly Clear

Thursday



High: 85 °F

Sunny

**Thursday
Night**



Low: 63 °F

Mostly Clear

Friday



High: 86 °F

Sunny

Today



72-80°

End of Work Week

Thursday



82-92°

South Winds
Gusts 20-30 mph

Friday



81-90°

Northerly Winds
Gust +25 mph

weather.gov/abr

September 9, 2026 3:10 AM

 **NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE**
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION



Northwesterly winds today will become southerly on Thursday with wind gusts of 25 to 30 mph during afternoon hours. The winds will bring above average temperatures on Thursday and elevated grassland fire danger. The warmth will not last too long as a strong cold front will sweep across the area Friday afternoon. There is a 20-40 percent chance of thunderstorms along and east of I-29 late Friday afternoon.

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THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:

Scattered Severe Storms
Possible

Timing (CDT):
5 PM - 11 PM
Eastern South Dakota,
WC Minnesota

PRIMARY THREATS



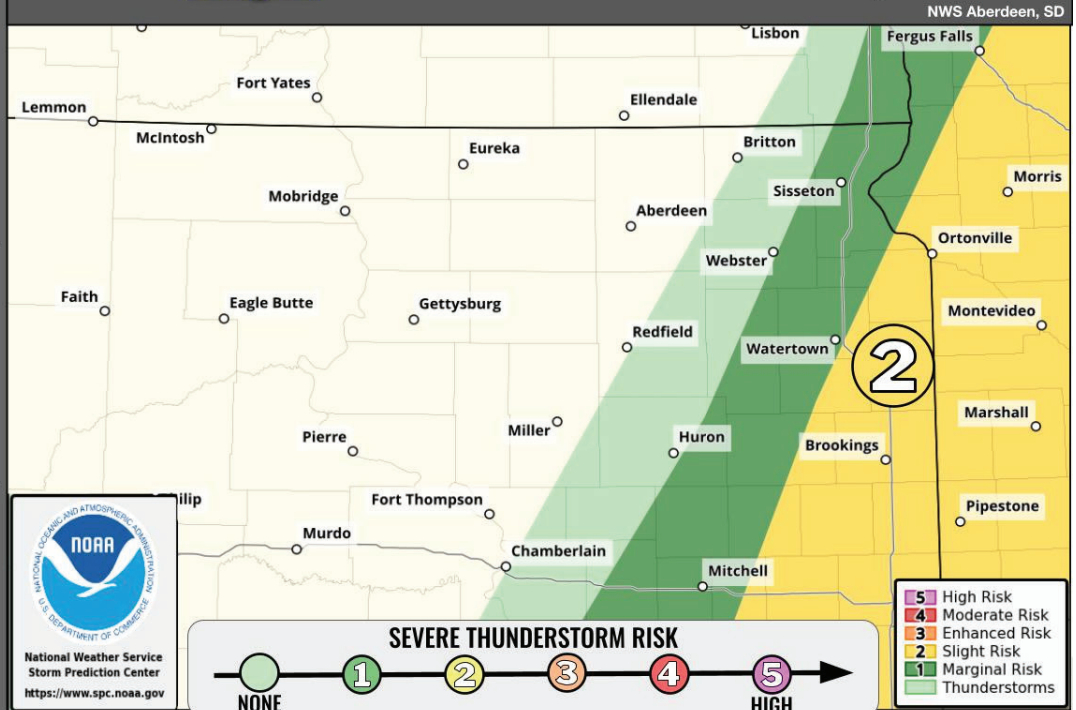
Wind Gusts
of 60 mph



Hail up to Golf Ball



Slight Risk For Severe Storms on Friday



A cold front will bring a 20 to 40 percent chance of thunderstorms late Friday afternoon and evening across far eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota. Some storms may become strong to severe with high winds and large hail the main threats.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 86 °F at 4:57 PM

Low Temp: 65 °F at 11:28 PM

Wind: 17 mph at 11:53 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 101 in 1931

Record Low: 26 in 1898

Average High: 78

Average Low: 50

Average Precip in Sept.: 0.61

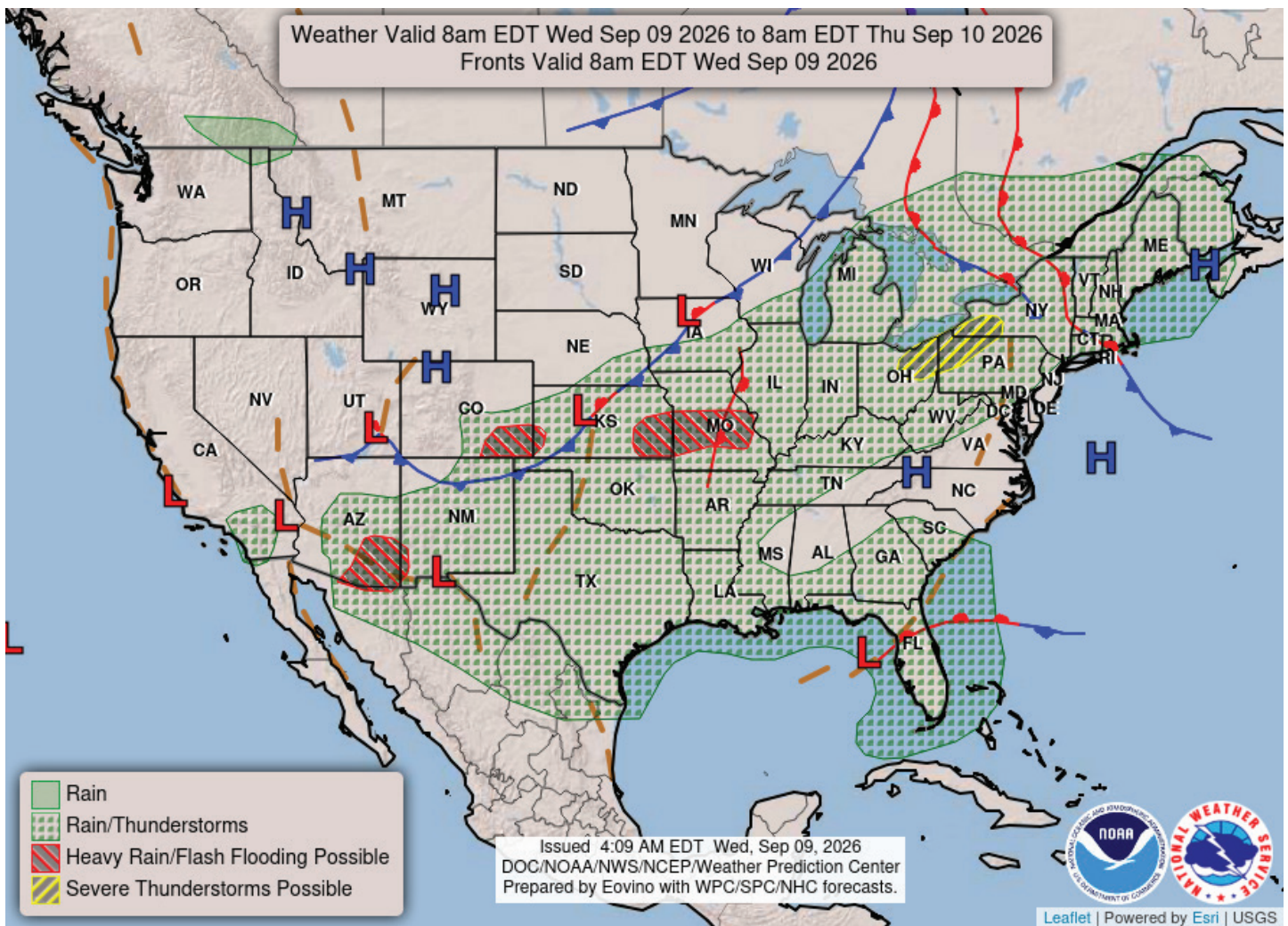
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 16.95

Precip Year to Date: 20.06

Sunset Tonight: 7:56 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:04 am



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Today in Weather History

September 9, 1961: A young girl in Bullhead, Corson County, was killed by lightning on the afternoon while walking on the highway. Her little brother was slightly injured.

September 9, 1983: High winds from the late evening into the early morning hours of the 10th blew through east central South Dakota damaging crops, downing hundreds of trees, breaking windows, damaging roofs and buildings, downing power poles and damaging vehicles. Gusts to 75 mph in Huron moved a semi-trailer a half block. Scattered power outages of up to 24 hours were reported in numerous areas as branches fell across power and telephone lines. Thirty power poles were downed in Kingsbury County alone. Corn, beans, and sunflowers suffered extensive damage in many areas with up to 50 percent losses reported. Gusts up to 90 mph were reported at Lake Poinsett, Lake Norden, and Estelline, where roofs and shingles were ripped from buildings and numerous windows, were broken. At Lake Poinsett, extensive damage was done to boats, docks, and automobiles.

1775: The Independence Hurricane slammed into Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Many ships were sunk and buildings demolished. 4,000 people died in what is considered to be Canada's deadliest hurricane disaster.

1821: A tornadic outbreak affected the New England states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont on this day. Five tornadoes reportedly touched down from this event. One storm in New Hampshire had a path width of a half mile and tracked an estimated 23 miles. This tornado killed at least six individuals, which could be the deadliest tornado in New Hampshire history.

1921 — A dying tropical depression unloaded 38.2 inches of rain upon the town of Thrall in southeastern Texas killing 224 persons. 36.4 inches fell in 18 hours. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1944 — The "Great Atlantic Hurricane" ravaged the east coast. The storm killed 22 persons and caused 63 million dollars damage in the Chesapeake Bay area, then besieged New England killing 390 persons and causing another 100 million dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)

1965: Hurricane Betsy slammed into New Orleans on the evening of September 9, 1965. 110 mph winds and power failures were reported in New Orleans. The eye of the storm passed to the southwest of New Orleans on a northwesterly track. The northern and western eyewalls covered Southeast Louisiana and the New Orleans area from about 8 PM until 4 AM the next morning. In Thibodaux, winds of 130 mph to 140 mph were reported. The Baton Rouge weather bureau operated under auxiliary power, without telephone communication.

1971 — Hurricane Ginger formed, and remained a hurricane until the 5th of October. The 27 day life span was the longest of record for any hurricane in the North Atlantic Ocean. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the central U.S. Thunderstorms in West Texas spawned four tornadoes in the vicinity of Lubbock, and produced baseball size hail and wind gusts to 81 mph at Ropesville. Thunderstorms produced hail two inches in diameter at Downs KS and Harvard NE, breaking car windows at Harvard. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Florence became a hurricane and headed for the Central Gulf Coast Region. Florence made landfall early the next morning, passing over New Orleans LA. Winds gusts to 80 mph were recorded at an oil rig south of the Chandeleur Islands. Wind gusts around New Orleans reached 61 mph. Total property damage from Florence was estimated at 2.5 million dollars. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — The first snow of the season began to whiten the mountains of Wyoming early in the morning, as for two days a moist and unusually cold storm system affected the state. By the morning of the 11th, a foot of snow covered the ground at Burgess Junction. Thunderstorms developing along a cold front crossing the Ohio Valley produced severe weather in Indiana during the late afternoon and early evening hours. Strong thunderstorm winds blew down a tent at Palestine injuring seven persons, and frequent lightning interrupted the Purdue and Miami of Ohio football game, clearing the stands. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2013: Historical rainfall occurred in northern Colorado from September 9 to September 16 and resulted in severe flash flooding along the northern Front Range of Colorado and subsequent river flooding downstream along the South Platte River and its tributaries. The heaviest rain fell along the Front Range northwest of Denver on September 11-12.



What's Required for Salvation?

The entire Trinity works in our salvation, giving us the comfort of complete assurance.

Ephesians 2:1-9: 1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Is it possible to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you are saved? Yes! God wants us to have unquestionable assurance of our salvation (1 John 5:13). And three words anchor our assurance that our faith is genuine.

Knowledge. It is essential to know that we are sinners and our sins have alienated us from God. Since we are helpless to remedy this situation, He is our only hope for salvation. We must also know that Jesus is God and He came to die in our place, thereby rescuing us.

Conviction. One of the Holy Spirit's jobs is to convict us of sin so we can see our need for a Savior (John 16:8). But that alone is not enough. God's Spirit also convinces us the message of salvation in Christ is true, and He invites us to respond.

Trust. When we come to see our need and the sufficiency of Christ's provision for our forgiveness, the next step is trust—believing in and relying on Jesus as our Savior and Lord.

The entire Trinity is involved in our salvation. The Son provided the perfect sacrifice for sin, the Father draws us to Christ, and the Holy Spirit convicts and convinces us to believe in Jesus. We are saved because of God's amazing grace and limitless love.

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

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The Groton Independent

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MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.08.26

14 19 36 41 42 2

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

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 33 Mins 47
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.08.26

17 30 43 58 66 20

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$209,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 18
Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.07.26

1 15 24 35 42 9

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$3,960,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 33 Mins 48
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.05.26

6 9 26 27 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$49,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 48 Mins 47
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.07.26

20 26 49 56 65 5

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 17 Mins 48
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.07.26

15 19 28 39 56 3

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$207,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 17 Mins 48
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Sturgis Brown High School def. Custer, 25-23, 25-21, 23-25, 25-10
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Vermillion def. Bon Homme, 25-23, 25-21, 25-21
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Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

A Ukrainian soldier and his bride dodge Russian bombs to wed in Kyiv

By HANNA ARHIROVA and VASILISA STEPANENKO Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — On the eve of her wedding, Liudmyla Ryzhak pressed her delicately embroidered dress, laid out a full white tulle skirt and her soon-to-be husband's traditionally patterned shirt, then hung them on the bedroom door.

After repeated delays caused by the war with Russia, she was only hours away from marrying her partner, a 43-year-old Ukrainian soldier, in a ceremony in the capital.

But as the couple slept, a Russian strike hit a warehouse across the street from their building, sending a blast wave through the apartment and threatening to stop the wedding scheduled for Tuesday morning.

The pair were soon digging their wedding clothes out of the rubble. Ryzhak, 33, had to pull her skirt from beneath the debris, shaking off pieces of broken glass.

Strike followed visit by US envoys

The strike came soon after U.S. envoys visited Ukraine on Sunday, a trip that brought a lull in Russian attacks. The assaults then resumed with drones and missiles. Explosions were heard in Kyiv for almost five hours overnight. Strikes continued during the day Tuesday.

Like many others in Kyiv, the couple decided the attacks would not derail their lives and forged ahead with the ceremony. It had taken a long time for her fiancé, Leonid Ryzhak, to make it back from the front lines in eastern Ukraine.

"If God gave me a continuation of life, then why should I put it off?" the bride said. "For someone, it ended. And who can guarantee this won't happen again tomorrow? That tomorrow won't come for us? At least for now, I have the right to be happy. Both him and me."

Liudmyla and Leonid awoke from the blast, which blew out the apartment's windows and scattered its furniture. A burned curtain hung in shreds.

Their ears deafened by the explosion, the couple's only immediate thought was the risk of a second strike. They fled to a shelter with Liudmyla's 6-year-old daughter and two guinea pigs but without the cat, which had hidden in fright and could not be found.

They were lucky: By the time the second strike hit, they were already safe. The apartment was rendered uninhabitable until repairs are made.

A friendship deepened into love

The two met three years ago through mutual friends, coming together as adults who weren't looking for anything serious. Both had children from previous marriages.

But the friendship deepened. She supported him through his deployments to the front, and slowly the relationship grew into love. Leonid Ryzhak, who serves as part of a team that deploys bomber drones in the Pokrovsk area, arrived in Kyiv for a long-awaited vacation a week and a half earlier, just as near-constant

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air-raid alerts and daytime attacks began disrupting life in the capital.

For six days straight, the couple went to the registry office but could not submit their documents because of constant air-raid sirens.

When they finally succeeded, they were assigned Sept. 8. Nobody could have predicted that their apartment would be badly damaged on the same day.

It wasn't the first time for Liudmyla, who owns a Kyiv pet store. She had already lived through one attack, on Aug. 20, when a strike cut the gas lines and shattered windows in her home. She was badly frightened and for a time was afraid to go back.

Eventually, ordinary life pulled her back in: The wedding was coming, and the children had to go to school.

More attacks hit as they wait at registry office

Eventually, the two put on their wedding clothes and headed to the registry office.

Leonid tried to keep their spirits up. What mattered most to him, he said, was for his bride to be smiling.

"It's fine. We'll get through it," he said.

When they stepped outside their apartment, the courtyard looked almost apocalyptic, with a column of black smoke rising behind a brightly colored children's playground. Neighbors clearing debris stopped to congratulate the couple.

"We should all be celebrated, that we survived," Liudmyla replied.

The couple arrived at the registry office on time, at 10:40 a.m.

Leonid wore an embroidered vyshyvanka, a traditional Ukrainian shirt, with a pattern that matched the one on Liudmyla's dress.

In place of black dress pants, he wore army trousers — he couldn't dig his own out of the rubble — and black sneakers with fluorescent yellow soles and laces, for the same reason. Liudmyla's white tulle overlay had tiny, barely visible holes that were torn as she pulled it out from the rubble and broken glass.

Shortly after they arrived, a siren sounded: Another attack had begun, and the registry office closed for safety. The couple waited in the courtyard, unsure how long it would last.

Explosions echoed nearby as strikes hit surrounding districts and fires broke out. Almost three hours passed before the alert finally ended, and the couple hurried back inside.

Against all odds, they became husband and wife

Just before entering the hall for the ceremony, they paused, trading nervous jokes.

"I didn't even get to finish the repairs at home," Leonid joked about their now-wrecked apartment.

"I've never had such a spectacular day," his bride replied.

The ceremony went ahead as the officiant told them, "Love is when two people become a team."

Moments later, the two were officially married.

"We're gaining a new life, because we survived," Liudmyla said. "You could probably call (it) a new life because it could have ended today, and none of this would happen."

In a different scenario, "I wouldn't be wearing this dress. Someone would be picking out something else for me instead, something darker."

Renoir paintings are worth a fortune, but not when they're stolen

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer

Two Renoir paintings stolen from a small French museum have yet to be recovered but if the thieves are hoping to cash in on the artwork, they would be hard-pressed to find a buyer.

Selling well-known, stolen art is impossible to do at an auction house or through other public channels without raising eyebrows. Even under the table, the value plummets. And unlike other eye-catching artifacts such as jewels, paintings can't be chopped up and sold for parts without losing their entire worth.

Art crime experts stress that most buyers simply don't want the liability. In short, the reality looks nothing like the movies.

"People always think that there is this kind of 'Dr. No' type from the James Bond movie," said Arthur Brand, a private art detective based in the Netherlands. "But that's Hollywood. In the real world, there

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are no collectors like that.”

Brand, who has investigated art crime for about 20 years, explains that often “nobody will touch” stolen art, particularly high-profile work. Sometimes that means paintings valued at millions of dollars are effectively “worth zero” once they’re outside of the museum, he added, if not a small fraction of the price.

Tuesday’s theft at the Renoir Museum — the last home of painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir in the French Riviera — marks the latest high-profile art crime targeting collections around the world, and experts warn there could be more.

Here’s what we know.

Where the Renoirs could wind up

Cagnes-sur-Mer’s mayor, Bryan Masson, said a group of “well-equipped” burglars stole a total of four Renoir paintings from the museum in his town on Tuesday. But they dropped two of them — Renoir’s “Portrait of Madame Pichon” and “Coco Reading” — in the museum garden before they fled, the prosecutor’s office said in a statement. Police are still searching for the perpetrators.

In the meantime, Renoir’s “Portrait of Madame Colonna Romano” and “Young Woman at the Well” remain missing.

Masson estimated the value of the combined Renoir works stolen Tuesday at 9 million euros (\$10.5 million).

But the probability of profiting off such a heist is “extremely low,” said Erin Thompson, an art crime professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York. And in cases that end in arrests, the common takeaway is that “thieves are people who are good at stealing things and bad at thinking through the consequences,” she added.

Some may try to make money from heists in other ways, such as through demanding a ransom or looking for an insurance payout. But Thompson explains many museums don’t have insurance because it’s too costly. That’s why the practice is so rare in the U.S., for example, and it would be difficult to negotiate with insurance companies elsewhere without the thieves incriminating themselves.

As a result, if not surrendered or otherwise recovered, stolen paintings may remain hidden — or in some cases eventually destroyed to get rid of evidence, Thompson says.

Brand, who collaborates regularly with law enforcement in his art crime investigations, says that he’s still seen limited cases of stolen paintings “floating around in the underworld” — perhaps as partial payments for products like drugs. And depending on country-by-country laws, he noted that the promise of returning the art has led to reduced sentences on other charges.

“Some more savvy criminal will acquire it as a get out of jail free card, sort of a bargaining chip,” added Christopher Marinello, a lawyer and founder of Art Recovery International. “So if some drug dealer ever is arrested, he can bargain with the prosecutor and say, ‘Listen, give me a lesser sentence and I’ll show you where these Renoirs are.’ And that has always worked and it will work again.”

Paintings are harder to hide and sell than jewels

Stolen paintings are much more difficult to profit from than museums’ other crown jewels — literally.

Jeweled and metal goods have increasingly become a target of theft because they can be melted down or broken down into parts. Last year, a handful of experts warned that could be the fate of the stunning heist of crown jewels at the Louvre Museum in Paris, for example — noting that, if done successfully, smaller pieces could later go up for sale as part of a new necklace, earrings or other jewelry without turning too many heads.

But of course, such pieces would lose their historical worth and, if actually sold, likely only go for a fraction of their original value. Experts also warn that it’s far from a simple process overall — and gems may still be identifiable by characteristics like clarity, for example.

Apart from an emerald-set imperial crown found outside the museum the day of the October 2025 heist, the stolen jewels remain unrecovered.

Paintings, in contrast, don’t have the same commodity value that can potentially be parceled off. “It’s a canvas with some old oil paint on it,” said art theft expert James Ratcliffe, of the Art Loss Register. “You can’t touch it up. You can’t resell it other than for what it is.”

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Uptick in art crime overall

Ratcliffe and others note that hasn't stopped thefts of famous paintings and other artwork from museums. Just earlier this year, three pieces by Renoir, Cézanne and Matisse worth millions of euros were stolen in Italy, for example, before being recovered last month.

Ratcliffe notes that smaller museums, in particular, are harder to secure because they might not have the funding necessary to invest in the latest technology — or are located in historic buildings that may take more time and effort to install new guardrails.

Still, pressures are piling up, with some warning that future cases of art theft could be likely as vulnerabilities persist.

"We need to change the way we treat small and country house museums before we lose ... our cultural heritage permanently," said Marinello, who stresses that stronger security and enforcement is overdue. "We're supposed to be preserving our cultural heritage, not allowing criminals to take what they want and using them as shopping malls."

Oil rises past \$100 a barrel after the latest wave of Middle East attacks

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The price of oil surpassed \$100 a barrel for the first time in almost six weeks after attacks on oil facilities and ships in the Middle East threatened to debilitate an already weakened supply chain.

The most heavily traded contract for a barrel of Brent crude, the international standard, settled at \$97.89 before jumping 2.4% to \$100.29 early Wednesday.

U.S. benchmark crude gained 1.9% to \$94.77 a barrel.

When oil prices spike, prices of gasoline, diesel and jet fuel also rise. That can increase the cost of traveling and of goods that must be transported quickly like fresh food or shipped long distances like furniture and appliances.

Markets reacted after the U.S. military reported striking five Iranian tankers in response to attempted missile attacks on a Navy warship and after attacks by an Iranian-backed Houthi rebel group ignited fires at oil facilities in Saudi Arabia.

Crude oil prices shot up after Israel and the United States initiated a war with Iran, and they have fluctuated a great deal during the more than six months since then. The fighting has halted most shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway through which a fifth of the world's oil supply passed before the war began.

Brent increased from about \$70 to \$100 a barrel for much of March, April and May. In July, prices swung between \$72 and \$102 again, reflecting rising and falling hopes that the U.S. and Iran would agree on a plan that would allow stranded tankers to move oil out of the Persian Gulf safely.

"In our view, reaching a durable deal before the U.S. midterm elections is increasingly unlikely, and it could remain elusive even beyond that," Bank of America analysts said in a Tuesday research note.

The analysts increased their oil price forecast for the second half of the year to \$83 a barrel "in light of more persistent disruptions to Hormuz," but said they still expected shipping through the strait to gradually pick up. If attacks keep a chokehold on traffic, prices could reach \$95-\$120 a barrel, while damage to major energy infrastructure could produce spikes of up to \$150 a barrel, the analysts wrote.

Negotiations over a preliminary deal between the U.S. and Iran to end the conflict broke down over control of the Strait of Hormuz. Iran insists it has the right to set the terms and charge fees for ships traveling through the waterway off its coast. The U.S. wants passage to remain free, and has used a Navy blockade to block Iran's ports and oil tankers.

Recent stepped-up attacks by Yemen's Houthis could constrain global oil supplies even more because they targeted an alternative shipping route that Saudi Arabia has relied on to transport oil during the war.

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Higher energy costs have weighed on consumers, businesses and economies around the world this year, more so outside of the U.S. Refinery outages in Russia, reduced refining activity elsewhere, and sharply declining inventories have pushed diesel and gasoline prices toward record highs, according to a research note Monday from Bank of America.

The effects on American consumers still are a concern for President Donald Trump and the Republican Party as November midterm elections approach.

A gallon of regular gasoline averaged \$4.15 in the U.S. on Tuesday, up 26% from a year ago, according to motor club AAA. Diesel, at \$5.90 a gallon, cost 59% more than the same day a year earlier.

Elevated oil prices also pushed up the cost of jet fuel, one of the global airline industry's largest expenses. U.S. and international carriers have responded by cutting flights and raising fares and fees.

Shelton ends Alcaraz's title reign in late-night marathon, will face Tiafoe in US Open semis

By BRIAN MAHONEY AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Ben Shelton had gone toe-to-toe with Carlos Alcaraz for five exhausting sets and finally at 3:33 a.m. Wednesday came the chance to end the U.S. Open champion's title reign.

Shelton fired an ace at 146 mph, a ball that Alcaraz couldn't have gotten back even with fresh legs.

That gave Shelton a 6-7 (5), 6-1, 6-3, 1-6, 7-6 (10-7) victory in a marathon tussle that was the latest-finishing match in U.S. Open history.

"I'm tired. It was a war," Shelton said. "Carlos is one of the greatest champions of our sport. It was the most enjoyable match I've had in my career, for sure."

Alcaraz had his 18-match winning streak in Grand Slam tournaments ended in a match that lasted 4 hours, 28 minutes, after he fought deep into the night and early into the next morning in a bid to get his hands on the trophy again.

"I mean it was close, it was really close, so I was disappointed I didn't get the win at the end," the No. 2-seeded Alcaraz said. "But I'm happy, I am proud of myself about how I fought. As I said, physically I was really tired but I found a way to push myself."

Shelton next plays No. 11 seed Frances Tiafoe, who kept coming back until he had reached his third U.S. Open semifinal, beating Alex Michelsen 5-7, 3-6, 7-5, 6-3, 7-6 (10-6) on Tuesday.

The U.S. is guaranteed to have a representative in Sunday's final as it seeks its first men's major title since Andy Roddick lifted the title here in 2003.

Alcaraz had played in the previous latest finish at the U.S. Open when he outlasted Jannik Sinner in a match that finished at 2:50 a.m. in the 2022 quarterfinals en route to his first Grand Slam title at 19.

Fans love the energy of a night match

The U.S. Open craves its night matches and players love the energy the fans provide — even when a number of matches have already gone past 2 a.m. this year.

Thousands stayed to the end, with Arthur Ashe Stadium perhaps still one-third full for the finish. Shelton benefited from a home-crowd boost even against the popular Alcaraz, with fans chanting his name along with "USA! USA!"

"It's incredible," Shelton said. "I always say that this is the greatest sports city in the world, I say that this is the greatest stadium in the world. I'm just hoping that my best friend and my sister over there don't have to be at work at 6 a.m. in three hours."

Three of the four singles quarterfinals went to match tiebreakers on a marathon day, which started with Aryna Sabalenka edging Wimbledon champion Linda Noskova to keep her hopes alive of a third straight U.S. Open title.

Alcaraz will have to wait for his next one.

Instead it was Shelton reaching his third major semifinal, having gotten to the final four in the 2023 U.S. Open and 2025 Australian Open.

He seized control by winning nine straight games from early in the second set until he had a 3-0 lead in

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the third. But Alcaraz, in his first tournament since April after returning from a right wrist injury, battled back even as he vomited before the start of the final set.

Alcaraz ran off four straight points in the tiebreaker to go ahead 5-3, but Shelton came back behind some of his powerful serves that can exceed 140 mph, along with some mistakes from Alcaraz. Shelton eventually finished it off with a 146 mph serve his opponent couldn't get back.

Alcaraz is now 15-2 in five-set matches. He won his seventh Grand Slam title at the Australian Open to start this year not long before his injury, and came to Flushing Meadows saying he didn't know what to expect.

'I leave with my head held high'

"I'm leaving happy and my head held high," Alcaraz said. "The truth is, I wanted to win ... but also our goal was to leave the tournament having played matches and staying healthy."

Tiafoe reached the semifinals in 2022 and lost to Alcaraz, when the Spaniard won his first of seven Grand Slam titles. Tiafoe lost to fellow American Taylor Fritz two years later, when the U.S. came closest to ending its men's drought.

It certainly didn't appear Tiafoe would be going back this time, after Michelsen continued his dominant run through his breakout tournament. He was the only man who hadn't dropped a set, and he served to win the match with a 5-4 lead in the third.

He couldn't finish it off and Tiafoe charged back after falling behind 3-0 in the fifth set.

Tiafoe said his performance to start the match was slow and flat.

"It wasn't good, let's put it that way. It wasn't good," he said. "Three out of five is a blessing, because you have time to get it together. I definitely waited for the last minute."

Tiafoe joined Andre Agassi as the only American men to reach three U.S. Open semifinals this century and will return to the top 10 for the first time in three years in the next rankings.

Michelsen, ranked No. 46, fell to 0-6 in matches that go to a fifth set.

Families grieve in the ruins of an Iranian school where a US strike killed dozens of children

By AMIR VAHDAT Associated Press

MINAB, Iran (AP) — The sun set over this southern Iranian city, and Heydar Sadeghi was where he can be found almost every evening: on a bench next to the shattered remains of his grandson's school. His face was soaked with tears.

A banner strung around the rubble showed the faces of children and teachers killed here by an American airstrike on Feb. 28, the first day of the war on Iran. Among them are Sadeghi's 11-year-old grandson Hami and the boy's mother, Neda Salehizadeh.

"I searched the bodies for my kids, thinking maybe one would be among them," Sadeghi said Monday evening as he recounted how he rushed to the school in the moments after the explosions. He called out their names, saying, "Come with me! I've come to get you." They weren't there," he said, weeping.

The Shajareh Tayyebbeh school has become a place to wrestle with grief and preserve the memories of the dead. Here, relatives try to comprehend the incomprehensible — how around 120 of their children could be snuffed out, just after they'd been dropped off for a day of classes.

At least one U.S. missile hit the school that morning in Minab, according to an Associated Press investigation, but there has been no final accounting of what happened. Iranian state media have said 168 people were killed in the strike, most of them children.

The Trump administration has yet to directly accept the blame or release findings of a Pentagon investigation into the bombing.

A grandfather grieves every day

For Sadeghi, the day of the strike began as every school day did.

He drove Hami and the boy's 9-year-old sister Nila to school along with their mother, his daughter-in-law Salehizadeh, who was a teacher. As usual, he planned to pick them up at 1 p.m.

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"But the bell was rung early — by Trump," he said.

Hami was a fifth grader who loved soccer and riding his bicycle, Sadeghi said. His body was so mangled in the blast, they could only identify him from the clothes he was wearing, he said.

Nila was pulled alive from the rubble.

"Thank God, she is physically fine," Sadeghi said. "But mentally, no."

The girl and her father have moved in with Sadeghi and his wife. The slightest, unexpected noise frightens her. She often goes to bed in her grandmother's arms but lies awake for much of the night.

Sadeghi said he often invites Nila's friends to come spend the night, hoping their presence will distract her.

He wants to see Nila smile. So he grieves here at the school away from her.

"I come here and cry," he said. "Then I go home and dance in front of the girl."

The site is becoming a memorial to the dead

The school had a girls' school upstairs and a boys' school and preschool on the ground floor. Some of the students were children of officers at a Revolutionary Guard base located next to the school; many were local children from Minab, which is populated predominantly by members of Iran's Baluch ethnic minority.

The banner at the site listed 120 students killed — 47 girls and 73 boys — and 26 teachers and staff. Three more children are presumed dead but their bodies were never found.

The governor of Hormozgan province, where Minab is located, has said the damaged building would be preserved to be turned into a memorial and war museum.

Several dozen visitors there Monday evening included relatives of the dead but also out-of-towners who had come to see.

In a government-sponsored mourning ceremony held every evening, men and women — including one in the Guards uniform -- took turns at a microphone, telling wrenching stories about those who died and describing in graphic detail the day of the attack. Some visitors broke down weeping from their accounts.

A separate section of Minab's cemetery has also been set aside for those killed at the school. Every grave has a photo of the dead, with a shade overhead and artificial grass around so families can sit with their loved ones. Some lay flowers and prayer beads on the graves. Others bring dishes of "shuleh-zard," a saffron rice pudding eaten at funerals.

One teacher tried to protect her students

At the cemetery, Fatemeh Barani sat by the grave of her daughter, Nasim Neyestani, a second grade teacher at the school. Barani comes several times a week to be with her daughter.

She thinks about her daughter's last hours, which school staffers later described to her, and how everything could have turned out differently.

At around 9 a.m. news came of the airstrikes in the capital Tehran that had hit the compound of Iran's supreme leader. They didn't know it at the time, but those initial Israeli strikes killed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and much of the top military leadership.

Neyestani was alarmed, fearing wider strikes, and urged the principal to cancel classes and call parents to come collect their children, Barani said, according to what she was told by other staffers. The principal didn't think that was necessary. But Neyestani began calling the parents of her 22 students herself, urging them to come get their children, Barani said.

Fourteen of Neyestani's children were picked up before the strike, Barani said. The parents of eight others did not get there in time.

Neyestani took the eight children into the schoolyard, her mother said. But the principal told her to take them into the school's prayer room, thinking it would be safe.

The prayer room was hit. Barani said her daughter and all eight children with her were killed.

"My daughter's classroom was mostly left intact," she said. "Probably if she had been in that classroom, she would not have been killed."

Details of Barani's account could not be independently verified, but it meshes with other accounts. The AP's investigation of the strike found that several teachers called parents to pick up their children before Iran's government ordered schools closed nationwide at 10:15 a.m. The first missile hit the school about an hour later. Accounts of the strikes posted on banners at the school say three missiles struck. The prin-

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cipals of both the boys and girls schools were among those killed.

A teacher's mother is overwhelmed with grief

After the strikes, Barani's husband and sons went to the school; later, they told her her daughter had been killed.

They found Neyestani's bag. But Barani said her sons have hidden it from her because they fear seeing it would only hurt her more.

Parents of students who escaped the school because Neyestani had called them visited the family to pay their condolences, but Barani said she was so overwhelmed with grief that she doesn't remember any of their visits.

She said she still hasn't been able to enter her daughter's bedroom.

She talked about how her daughter, who had not married, was rarely idle. She taught in the mornings and worked as a salesperson at a cosmetics store in the evenings. At home, she stayed busy with her hobby making handicrafts, particularly "minakari," a traditional art of decorating objects with enamel. The enamel work relaxed her, Barani said.

The enamels are still there around the house, a reminder of her daughter.

"Every day, this grief feels fresh again," Barani said.

New Apple CEO to unveil latest iPhone lineup

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

Apple is unveiling its latest generation of iPhones, widely expected to include a foldable version, on Wednesday at an event headlined by new CEO John Ternus, who took over from Tim Cook on Sept. 1.

Many of Apple's biggest rivals, such as Samsung, Motorola and Google, have already come out with foldable smartphones. But Apple is not one to rush on new technologies.

"The foldable launch is straight out of Apple's playbook: Wait for the product to work out its kinks and for the market to offer glimpses of viability, then enter and shape the category," said Forrester analyst Dipanjan Chatterjee. "The difference is that foldables still represent a minuscule share of the smartphone market. The test of Apple's ambition will be whether it can expand that niche into a meaningful new segment."

Compared with earlier generations, the iPhone 18 likely will cost more due partly to a global memory chip shortage. The iPhone 17's price ranges from \$799 to \$1,999 depending on the model.

Earlier this year, Apple unveiled artificial intelligence advances, including upgrades to its Siri assistant, emphasizing a focus on privacy and day-to-day use as the company tries to catch up with rivals on AI.

The keynote address for Ternus at the tech giant's headquarters in Cupertino, California, will set the tone for his vision of Apple's future, Chatterjee said.

"John Ternus inherits perhaps the most successful consumer technology juggernaut in modern times. That is both a boon and a burden for him. Tim Cook's perfected execution, scale, and monetization set a high bar, and Ternus must extend that run," Chatterjee said. "But he must sustain that momentum while positioning Apple to disrupt itself in the near future, when the iPhone, or any smartphone for that matter, will cease to be the consumer's primary conduit to the world."

Last year's iPhone 17 lineup, which included a new ultra-thin model, has been selling well. That generation saw a new slimmed-down model that adopted the "Air" name that Apple already used for its sleekest iPads and Mac computers.

Iran is forging a new ring of proxies to threaten US allies in the Gulf, officials say

By SAMY MAGDY, SARAH EL DEEB and QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — In July, Saudi Arabia and the United States bombed Iran-backed militias in Iraq after blaming them for drone attacks on Saudi oil facilities that had been claimed by Yemen's Houthi rebels, another Iranian ally.

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Now, regional officials tell The Associated Press that the Houthis helped the Iraqi militias plan and execute the two-day swarm attack, showing a new level of coordination.

Iran spent decades building up armed groups on Israel's frontiers that suffered major losses in the wars following Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack out of Gaza. Israel battered the Palestinian militants as well as Lebanon's Hezbollah, which had been Iran's most powerful ally.

Regional officials and experts say Iran is now using the Iraqi militias and the Houthis to threaten Saudi Arabia and other American allies in the Gulf in order to drive up the costs of the war launched by the U.S. and Israel in February.

It is a risky strategy. A wave of Houthi attacks on Saudi oil facilities on Tuesday threatened to reignite full-scale war with the kingdom. Iraq has ordered militias to disarm by the end of this month, though powerful Iran-backed groups have refused to do so. A new American effort to economically isolate Iran could spark further escalation.

Iran-backed groups in Yemen and Iraq form a pincer movement

The Houthi involvement in the Iraqi drone attack was confirmed by two Saudi officials, citing intelligence, and a senior Iraqi security official. They said Houthi emissaries worked in an operations room run by Iraqi militias.

Saudi Arabia and the U.S. responded with joint airstrikes that killed at least 20 Iraqi fighters, six Iranian advisers and at least one Houthi official. The death of the Houthi, not previously reported, was confirmed by a Houthi official and an Iraqi militia member.

A U.S. military official said Houthis had been killed in previous strikes in Iraq. The U.S. is concerned about the Houthi presence there and their ability to launch attacks on other countries, including Saudi Arabia, the official said.

Two officials with the Popular Mobilization Forces, an umbrella group of militias that is officially part of Iraq's security forces, denied involvement in the attack on Saudi Arabia and denied that the Houthis were operating under its auspices. The PMF includes powerful militias backed by Iran that sometimes act independently.

All the officials and the militia member spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to media. The Houthis did not respond to a request for comment.

Cooperation grew during the war in Gaza

Cooperation between the Iraqi militias and the better organized Houthis had grown throughout the war in Gaza, when they coordinated attacks on Israel, according to the Houthi and regional officials. At the height of the war, Houthi leader Abdel-Malek al-Houthi spoke of a joint operations room.

After the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran on Feb. 28, Iran and its allies began firing on Gulf nations to broaden the conflict and inflict pain on major oil producers hosting American forces.

"Iran has a hybrid strategy in the current war. We are not fighting on one front and we are not using one tool," Mahdi Mohammadi, an adviser to Iran's parliament speaker, wrote on social media in June.

"The Houthis' growing prominence during the Gaza war opened up a new horizon in Iraq. Many groups there became eager to support the Houthis, and in return, the Houthis started sharing their military expertise with Iraqi militias," said Ahmed Nagi, senior Yemen analyst at the Crisis Group, an international think tank.

Now they are "squeezing Saudi like with pliers," Nagi said.

Houthi blockade of Saudi Arabia ramps up pressure

A week before the drone swarm attack, the Houthis declared a blockade against Saudi shipping in the Red Sea, threatening another critical trade route as the wartime disruption of the Strait of Hormuz has jolted the world economy.

Since late July, the Houthis have carried out over a dozen attacks against Saudi oil facilities and tankers in the Red Sea, according to the war monitor group ACLED.

On Tuesday, they launched a wave of attacks on oil and other facilities in southern Saudi Arabia, wounding more than 70 people, including women and children, Saudi authorities said.

The Houthi blockade has forced Saudi Arabia to adopt a "dark" transit policy that includes turning off tracking signals on oil tankers in the Red Sea, according to ACLED.

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Saudi oil exports are in the crosshairs

Saudi Arabia had diverted much of its oil to the Red Sea after Iran effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz. When the Houthis began attacking, the kingdom started shipping more oil north to the Suez Canal and Egypt's SUMED pipeline, whose flows have risen from 650,000 barrels a day in June to over 1.9 million in August, according to global shipping monitor Kpler.

Last month, the Houthis showed they can target that route as well, striking a Saudi tanker in the northern Red Sea with a missile. The tanker had reportedly traveled from the Saudi port of Yanbu to the Suez Canal, some 1,000 kilometers (700 miles) from Houthi territory.

The Houthis "are willing to weather some shorter term pain for what they feel will be longer term gains," such as extending their reach along the Red Sea coast, said Adam Baron, a Yemen expert at the New America think tank in Washington.

"The train to a return to full scale war has left the station, and it's unclear if anyone is going to jump in to stop it," he said, citing the U.S. focus on Iran and the Saudis' reluctance to intervene in Yemen again.

The Houthis have their own reasons for fighting Saudi Arabia

The rebels seized Yemen's capital, Sanaa, in 2014. The following year, the Saudis joined with Yemen's internationally recognized government in a counteroffensive, likely fearing that the kingdom could end up with a Hezbollah-like group on its doorstep.

The civil war has killed at least 150,000 people, according to U.N. estimates, and at times pushed Yemen to the brink of famine. A ceasefire that had mostly held since 2022 is now in tatters.

For years, a Saudi-led blockade has raised pressure on the Houthis while exacting a heavy toll on ordinary people in rebel-held parts of Yemen.

The Houthis have often responded by escalating hostilities, and renewed fighting could allow them to gain control of energy-rich areas of eastern Yemen, said Elisabeth Kendall, a Yemen expert at Cambridge University's Girton College.

The Houthis have no shortage of advanced weaponry

The Houthis, who control northern and central Yemen, have been smuggling in advanced weapons for years, circumventing the blockade and a U.N. arms embargo. Iran denies arming the rebels, but Iranian-made weaponry has been found on the battlefield and in intercepted shipments.

The rebels have an array of cruise and ballistic missiles, drones and unmanned submarines.

Saudi-backed forces in Yemen are fighting back on a number of fronts, including the crucial port city of Hodeida and the province of Taiz along Yemen's west coast. The Houthis have attacked Mokha, the main Red Sea port still held by the government.

Saudi Arabia appears reluctant to directly target the Houthis again, but if the rebels continue to escalate, "it will have to act decisively once and for all," Kendall said.

Former US Sen. John E. Sununu to face US Rep. Chris Pappas in New Hampshire Senate race

By HOLLY RAMER and KATHY McCORMACK Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Republican John E. Sununu and Democrat Chris Pappas will compete for an open U.S. Senate seat in New Hampshire in a race that has emerged as one of a handful around the country that could determine control of the chamber in November.

Sununu, a former U.S. senator, and Pappas, a member of the U.S. House, are vying to replace U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, whose decision not to seek reelection created a cascade of competitive races. Both entered their respective party primaries as strong front-runners and now have just eight weeks to make their case to general election voters.

Republicans view the seat as an opportunity to regain a foothold in a region long dominated by Democrats in Congress. Democrats, meanwhile, need a net gain of four seats to retake the chamber, and keeping New Hampshire in their column is a critical part of that effort.

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In other top races, Stefany Shaheen, Shaheen's daughter, won a close primary and will face Republican Anthony DiLorenzo in the race to fill Pappas' open seat in the 1st Congressional District. The 2nd Congressional District will feature a matchup between U.S. Rep. Maggie Goodlander, a Democrat seeking her second term, and Republican Lily Tang Williams.

Familiar names will compete in November for open Senate seat

Pappas, who is giving up his seat in the 1st Congressional District after four terms, defeated four other candidates, including democratic socialist Karishma Manzur, who had been gaining on him in recent weeks.

Speaking to supporters at his family's restaurant in Manchester, he quickly sought to link Sununu to President Donald Trump, who endorsed Sununu even though Sununu called him "a loser" during the 2024 presidential campaign.

"While New Hampshire families are struggling to make ends meet, John Sununu has thrown his lot in with Donald Trump and supports the policies that cater to big corporations and billionaires while they make life harder for Granite Staters," said Pappas, whose campaign also quickly posted a negative ad on social media calling Sununu "a sequel we can't afford."

"We've got to turn the page on Donald Trump's reckless leadership, on corruption, on the rigged economy and on costs, and this is not the time to turn it back to a failed politician from the past," he said at his victory party.

Sununu, who spent six years in the U.S. House and one term in the Senate before being ousted by Shaheen in 2008, called Pappas a career politician who has held office for virtually his entire adult life.

"He's not an independent voice for New Hampshire," Sununu said at his victory party at a Manchester ski area. "Chris Pappas has three main qualities: ineffective, partisan and out of touch with New Hampshire."

Sununu defeated seven other Republicans to win the primary, including former U.S. Sen. Scott Brown, who accused him of coasting on his name. Sununu's father and younger brother are both former governors.

Jim Loomis, 83, of Bow, said he backed Brown in 2014 but not on Tuesday because "he never got traction back again." He acknowledged Sununu had been out of politics for even longer but still voted for him.

"I think what he's done for work over the years has kept him close enough to what's going on, and then with his family ties, I just think he's got a more stable base," Loomis said.

Senator's daughter survives tight contest for 1st District nomination

Stefany Shaheen and Maura Sullivan were the leading candidates among seven seeking the Democratic nomination in the 1st District.

Shaheen is a former city councilor in Portsmouth. She founded a business to help people with chronic medical conditions after one of her daughters was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. She also is part of a bio-tech initiative in New Hampshire to advance regenerative medicine.

Speaking to her supporters Tuesday night before the race was called, Shaheen said she was campaigning to "take on Donald Trump and his disastrous corruption, his endless war, his attacks on small business with these disastrous tariffs, the skyrocketing costs families are facing in New Hampshire and across the country." But she also said running against the president wouldn't be enough, that she would give voters a reason to turn out for the general election.

"We can bring the real change that's needed, starting with healthcare, starting with Medicare for all," she said.

Sullivan is a retired Marine and Iraq War veteran who served as an assistant secretary at the Department of Veterans Affairs under President Barack Obama. A vice chair of the New Hampshire Democratic Party, Sullivan ran for the 1st District seat in 2018, losing in an 11-candidate primary to Pappas in his first congressional bid.

Her campaign did not immediately return a call and email seeking a response after Shaheen won. Earlier in the night, Sullivan addressed her supporters and thanked them for their hard work during the campaign.

"What we are doing right now is send such an incredible message for change, and that politics as usual is not, is not going to get us where we need to go," she said.

On the Republican side, political newcomer DiLorenzo, who owns a chain of car dealerships and has been endorsed by Trump, won the Republican primary. He defeated three other candidates, including

Hollie Noveletsky, a veteran and nurse practitioner who runs a steel fabrication company and ran for the same seat two years ago.

"Our campaign is about prosperity," DiLorenzo told supporters. "I believe that Washington, D.C., needs more pragmatic businesspeople."

In the 2nd District, first-term incumbent Goodlander overcame a primary challenge from Paige Beauchemin, a progressive state lawmaker and nurse. Tang Williams, who was the nominee two years ago and was making her third attempt at the seat, won the Republican primary.

Incumbent Ayotte defeats 2 challengers in GOP primary for governor

In contrast to the all-Democratic congressional delegation, Republicans dominate state government.

Republican Gov. Kelly Ayotte defeated two little-known opponents in her primary as she seeks a second two-year term. Cinde Warmington, a healthcare attorney, was unopposed for the Democratic nomination.

Voters also were nominating candidates for the entire state Legislature, where Republicans hold a roughly 40-vote majority in the 400-member House and outnumber Democrats in the Senate 16-8.

Accustomed to going first when it comes to presidential primaries, New Hampshire is among the last states to hold state-level primary elections. But legislation passed this year moves future state primaries to the second Tuesday in June.

What to know about the Amazon cargo plane crash in Miami that killed 5 workers in a van

By JOSH FUNK and JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

Investigators are still trying to determine what caused an Amazon cargo jet to overshoot a runway in Miami and plow into two vehicles, killing five people on the ground.

The Boeing 767 hit a van on Miami International Airport property on Sunday before ramming through a fence and hitting an SUV on a public street. Five people who were a part of a cleaning crew in the van died while two survived. The pilot and co-pilot also lived.

National Transportation Safety Board Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy called the scene at the airport "utter devastation."

Hundreds of flights at the Miami airport have been delayed or canceled as authorities investigate the crash site, where the jet and a mangled white van have remained. By late Tuesday, only one of the airport's four runways was still closed, raising the likelihood that the cancellations would begin to ease.

Here's what to know about the crash.

Jet spent a long time over the runway before touching down

The NTSB said the plane barreled roughly 1,300 feet (396 meters) past the end of the runway.

It was landing after a two-hour flight from Puerto Rico as storms brewed around the Miami airport.

Homendy called the scene "utter devastation," with pieces of the vehicles, air bags, destroyed navigational equipment and fencing along the plane's route. Investigators didn't have full access to the site until all the jet fuel was recovered from the plane Monday evening.

Former FAA official Mike O'Donnell said that the fact that the plane landed on its nose and right landing gear first demonstrates this was an unstable landing. He said the pilot might have been attempting a "go-around" to retry the landing approach.

Video of the landing showed the plane hovering above the runway for a long time without flaring the nose to force the wheels onto the ground. Experts said it appeared a strong tail wind propelled the plane far past the point where it was supposed to land. Air traffic controllers also had not changed the approach to the runway to allow the plane to land into a headwind. Investigators will want to know how quickly the winds shifted.

All the people killed were in a cleaning service van

Amazon said in a statement that it is cooperating with the investigation and the company's deepest sympathies go to the victims and their families.

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The five people killed were all in a van owned by Professional Ocean Service Corp., a company that cleans planes. The company said it wouldn't comment on the crash out of respect for the families who lost loved ones.

"Our employees are far more than the people who work beside us each day, they are family, and they are deeply loved. Our hearts and prayers are with every employee and every family whose lives have been forever changed," the company said in a statement Tuesday.

The Miami-Dade sheriff identified the deceased as Rolando Aleman Leon, 55; Yoel Rodriguez Naranjo, 53; Julio C. Pineda, 75; Carlos Acosta Fajardo, 53; and Javierkys Reyes Quevedo, 47.

The jet started as a passenger plane before converting to cargo

The 32-year-old Boeing 767 was originally built to carry passengers and flew for several airlines in foreign countries for more than two decades before being converted to a cargo plane in 2015, according to flight-tracking site Flightradar24.

The final flight was operated by 21 Air, a cargo carrier based in North Carolina.

Homendy said the jet's ownership history, maintenance records and operations by 21 Air would all be reviewed by NTSB investigators.

It's the second crash of a cargo jet in the U.S. in less than a year. A UPS plane crashed after losing its engine while accelerating down the runway at Louisville's Muhammad Ali International Airport in October. The crash killed all three pilots and 12 people on the ground. Twenty-three more were injured.

Miami airport lacked system to stop speeding jets

Homendy has said the NTSB will look at Miami's lack of a special system to slow and stop speeding jets at the end of runways. But investigators will examine everything that may have contributed.

About 120 airports in the U.S. have the lightweight, crushable material that the Federal Aviation Administration says has saved around 500 lives.

Even without a runway excursion system, Miami's airport appears to be compliant with federal rules because it has a 1,000-foot (305-meter) safety buffer at the end of its runways, experts said.

Homendy said her agency's goal is to prevent tragedies, but runway excursions continue to happen even after the board has suggested installing the systems in the past.

"Our recommendations must be implemented or we're going to be here again," she said.

With AI memes, Trump promotes mythical version of himself as challenges stack up ahead of midterms

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the real world, President Donald Trump is struggling to stop inflation, rout the Iranian government and restore American manufacturing with tariffs.

However, it's a different story in the fantastical vision that he shares with supporters on social media. Over Labor Day weekend, Trump and the White House unleashed an extraordinarily heavy torrent of memes that portrayed the president as singularly powerful.

One video depicted Trump as a superhero wielding Green Lantern's ring to effortlessly build a wall to keep out migrants and erect a slew of busy factories. Another post showed him in a U.S. hockey uniform looming over Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney as Carney cowered on the ice. And another had Trump on a military ship as it bombarded an enemy fleet.

Trump's allure has always relied on a mythical version of himself, from "The Apprentice" to the White House, but the gap between meme and reality has become glaringly stark ahead of the midterm elections. Most U.S. adults are unhappy with Trump's handling of the economy and say the Iran war hasn't been worth it, but Trump has responded with outlandish images of himself as unstoppable and omnipotent.

Memes risk sidestepping reality

Some of the pictures are generated with artificial intelligence, and the administration has previously defended the memes as funny and their critics as humorless. Yet the stakes right now are serious for

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congressional Republicans who have tied their own fate to a president with low approval numbers. Trump's party will put him center stage at an unusual midterm convention on Wednesday and Thursday in Dallas in hopes of stoking voters' enthusiasm.

Kevin Madden, a Republican strategist, said that Trump's social media posts can energize his base of "Make America Great Again" followers, although the tradeoff is that he's not talking about how to fix inflation.

The voters who are likely to determine control of Congress in the midterms "are not going to be won over with memes," Madden said. "The affordability voter is driving this election cycle and the issues they care about are anchored in the economy."

The White House press office did not respond to a request for comment. Trump sometimes plucks memes from a sprawling ecosystem of online conservative supporters, and sometimes his government staff produces them as part of their official messaging. Recently they created a series of old-school video games, such as a "Tetris" knockoff called "Build the Wall."

"The memes will continue," Kaelan Dorr, a member of the White House communications team, recently posted on social media. "The winning will continue."

Aging presidents promote vitality online

The problem for Trump is that voters have other images they're using to define him. Drivers can spot through their windshields that gasoline is averaging \$4.15 a gallon, up nearly 30% from a year ago because of the Iran war. And social media is inundated with questions about the 80-year-old president's health and vitality, spurred by pictures of his bruised hands or video clips of him appearing to fall asleep in meetings.

White House officials have said the bruising is caused by "frequent handshaking" and Trump's aspirin regimen, and they've denied that he's dozed off.

Trump's predecessor, Joe Biden, is three years older and faced relentless scrutiny about his age while in office. His White House came to embrace a meme version of Biden with lasers for eyes, suggesting that he was powerful and focused rather than infirm.

Andrew Bates, who was a deputy press secretary for Biden, said that Trump's memes seem to be about avoiding the actual responsibilities of governing. He said they risk angering voters who see Trump as more focused on redecorating the White House than bringing the Iran war to a successful end.

"When a president who ran on bringing gas prices under \$2 a gallon is now saying, 'You're at four dollars, it's OK,' it unfortunately makes sense that he's also posting fever dreams," Bates said.

Some memes have caused trouble

The memes have occasionally gotten Trump into trouble. He posted an image of himself as Jesus in April, which caused a degree of consternation among some supporters. The president later claimed he thought the image showed him as a medical doctor — albeit a doctor in Biblical robes with light emanating from his hands.

In February, his account posted a racist video of former President Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle, as primates, which he deleted after a backlash.

Last October, Trump shared a video of him in a fighter jet dumping feces on Americans who were protesting his policies.

What the memes have not done so far is boost his wider approval ratings. Only 33% of U.S. adults approve of how he is handling the job of being president, according to a July AP-NORC poll.

But the polling also hits at a reason why he might be sending the memes to rally his core supporters. Just 15% of U.S. adults strongly approve of his presidency, the poll found, a slight decline from 22% shortly after he took office.

Sen. John Fetterman's isolation from Democrats grows stark in Pennsylvania

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Around this time two years ago, Sen. John Fetterman was in high demand on the campaign trail, going county-to-county in Pennsylvania to help Democrats up and down the ballot.

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Now, after two years of crossing swords with Democrats and backing some of President Donald Trump's priorities, he's nowhere on the stump.

No Democrat in the state wants to be seen with him. His approval ratings are better with Republicans — far better — than they are with Democrats. And a shadow primary of sorts is taking shape for Fetterman's Senate seat in 2028, even if he runs again.

Fetterman has acknowledged his isolation in the party as he maintains staunch support of Israel's war in Gaza and criticizes left-wing candidates who are members of the Democratic Socialists of America. He's often gone his own way in the Senate, voting repeatedly with Republicans to end the shutdown last year while supporting multiple Trump nominations and opposing efforts to end the war in Iran.

Still, Fetterman has repeatedly said that he wouldn't switch parties because of his support for labor unions, LGBT rights and other issues held dear by the left.

"I'm not going to be a Republican, but I'm going to be a Democrat that's going to have a conversation with whoever is playing it straight," Fetterman told Fox News host Sean Hannity.

Fetterman's office and political adviser did not return messages seeking comment.

Fetterman has fallen out of favor with Pennsylvania Democrats

Fetterman has been silent about any plans to campaign in Pennsylvania this year, and Democrats say they aren't asking him for help.

"I absolutely think that Fetterman would bring us more harm than good," said Lori McFarland, the Democratic Party chair in Lehigh County, which is home to a congressional seat and a state Senate seat that Democrats are trying to flip. "Nobody's asked to see him, nobody's requested his presence, and people, quite honestly, they're mad at him and they don't want anything to do with him. The local feel here is they feel betrayed by him."

Polling captures the shift. Only about 2 in 10 registered Democrats in Pennsylvania have a favorable view of Fetterman, according to a New York Times poll from August. That's a sharp reversal from 2024, when 74% had a positive view. He's now seen more favorably by Republican voters in the state, with 73% giving him a positive rating. That's up from 25% a couple years ago.

A Quinnipiac poll from July similarly found most Republicans approve of how Fetterman is handling his job, while most Democrats do not.

Cindy Durian, a Democrat voting in May's primary in suburban Harrisburg, said she would never vote for Fetterman again.

"I think he might as well change parties, he might as well change from a D to an R," she said.

Frustration with Fetterman has been building

Fetterman had a stroke on the campaign trail before winning his Senate seat in 2022 and then was hospitalized for clinical depression in the first months of his term.

Progressive frustration with Fetterman began to emerge in late 2023 with his support for Israel's war against Hamas. But it's moved beyond that since Trump took office. Democrats have watched him belittle their attempts to push back on Trump while emerging as a conservative media darling.

"He is antagonizing Democrats, seemingly for pleasure," said J.J. Abbott, a Democratic strategist.

Fetterman's dedication to the job has also been called into question. Last year, he began racking up missed votes and missed hearings in the Senate. A meeting in Washington with representatives from a teachers union broke up after he began repeating himself, shouting and slamming his hands on a desk. And he has avoided other meetings and public events, including the funeral for three police officers killed in the line of duty.

Public officials around Pennsylvania say they haven't seen him in several years. Some can't remember when they last saw him.

"I couldn't tell you," said state Rep. Peter Schweyer of Allentown. "We assumed that when we got him there that we were going to get somebody who's going to fight for us. And what we got instead was somebody who just disappeared."

Pennsylvania Democrats have a lot on the line in November

The state has several marquee races this year. Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro, seen as a likely presidential

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candidate in 2028, is running for reelection and leading the party's efforts to hold a narrow state House majority, capture a state Senate majority for the first time in decades and flip four U.S. House seats.

In one of those competitive U.S. House races, Democrat Bob Harvie is trying to unseat Republican Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick. A campaign spokesperson said Harvie hasn't asked Fetterman for help.

It's unclear whether Fetterman will ever return to the campaign trail, or whether he even wants another term in 2028, given that he spends much of his time criticizing his party and the dysfunction of Congress. He often sits alone in the hallway during Senate votes, eschewing conversations with colleagues inside the chamber.

Talk of 2028 among Democrats often turns to several others — Reps. Chris Deluzio and Brendan Boyle and former U.S. Rep. Conor Lamb — who have become outspoken critics of Fetterman.

"I don't think that Democrats want John Fetterman campaigning for them, and I say that as a guy who's campaigning with Democrats in the most competitive and toughest districts across Pennsylvania," Deluzio told The Associated Press.

Deluzio said he'll decide after the November election whether to run for Senate in 2028. But, he said, "Pennsylvanians elected John Fetterman as a Democrat to the United States Senate. They expect him to be a Democrat in these two years he has left in this term."

Fetterman says he has a 'red line' with his party

While Fetterman has insisted he won't change parties, he hasn't ruled it out, saying the Democratic Party becoming anti-Israel would be a "red line" that would force him out.

He's also become close with Pennsylvania's other senator, Republican David McCormick, appearing at events alongside him and launching a joint political fundraising committee, an unusual arrangement for senators from opposing parties.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., in July said he and other Republicans had spoken with Fetterman about the "challenges" he has in the Democratic caucus. "If he ever comes to the conclusion that he's ready to move, we'd certainly welcome him."

Democrats hold 47 seats in the Senate. If they were to pick up four seats in the election, a Fetterman party-switch could reset the Senate back to a 50-50 split, giving Republicans the majority and putting Vice President JD Vance in a position to break ties.

A more perfect union? Congress has been the place where America tries to resolve its problems

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's one thing to issue a Declaration of Independence. It's quite another to launch a grand experiment in representative democracy.

Congress isn't quite yet celebrating its 250th anniversary — the House and Senate as they are recognized today first convened in 1789 — but from the start it has provided an enduring, if imperfect, forum in the country's pursuit of a more perfect union.

From drafting the Bill of Rights that enshrines for many what it means to be an American — freedom of speech, the right to bear arms — to passing modern-day legislation on taxes, Civil Rights, war and peace, the work of Congress has shaped the nation.

"Congress needs to be the place where we figure out how to live with each other," said Philip Wallach, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, and author of the book "Why Congress."

It's a messy, often broken process. Most of the bills introduced never become laws. Those that do are often challenged anew.

In recent years, Congress has allowed its foundational powers to erode, shrinking when confronted with a powerful executive in President Donald Trump.

Yet as the branch of government closest to the people, Congress holds a unique spot in the system of checks and balances — one that is revived every two years as voters choose their representatives in the midterm elections, including this fall.

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Here are five measures that shaped — and are still shaping — America's pursuit of a more perfect union.

Money: From tariffs to income taxes — and back again?

The new Congress, established on the revolutionaries' battle cry of no taxation without representation, also needed to pay the bills.

Lawmakers debated how to raise revenues over the years — at times relying heavily on tariffs, then moving briefly toward taxation to handle Civil War debt. But it wasn't until the 20th century that Congress sought ratification of a constitutional amendment to stand up the modern income tax.

First set at 1%, income taxes now account for about half of all U.S. revenues — "the workhorse of the U.S. tax system," said Daniel Bunn, president of the nonpartisan Tax Foundation think tank.

But the tax debate is far from finished. Congress approved a sweeping tax cuts package last year that the president signed into law, while Trump himself has sought a new tariffs regime, some blocked by the courts.

People: Reconstruction, Civil Rights and the promise of equality

It was a Saturday in 1867 when Congress passed one of the early Reconstruction Acts in the aftermath of the Civil War, overcoming a lengthy veto message from then-President Andrew Johnson. The era became a stress test of the system of checks and balances as Congress and the White House sparred — and ultimately led to the president's impeachment.

"Johnson regularly vetoed congressional Reconstruction legislation," according to the House website. "In response Congress overrode his vetoes more than any other president."

Nearly a century later, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, seeking to end the persistent discrimination and racial violence against Black Americans.

More recently, those once-settled issues are being revisited again. The Supreme Court recently struck down part of the Voting Rights Act, unleashing a wave of redistricting battles that threaten to eliminate Black-majority congressional districts particularly in the Southern states.

And as the Trump administration seeks to decrease the number of immigrants in the U.S., it appealed to the Supreme Court to strike down the Reconstruction Era's 14th Amendment, which guarantees birthright citizenship. While the Supreme Court rejected Trump's proposed limits, his court battles continue.

Health and social services: Building a safety net

In signing the Social Security bill into law, President Franklin D. Roosevelt said that even if the House and Senate had done nothing else, that session of Congress "would be regarded as historic for all time." Roosevelt said the Social Security legislation was a "patriotic" bill that would provide seniors some measure of income protection "against poverty-ridden old age."

Thirty years later, Congress added the Social Security amendments, which stood up the Medicare and Medicaid healthcare programs for seniors and lower-income people. And by 2010, Congress approved the Affordable Care Act, expanding Medicaid and other health care options.

Some 75 million people now receive Social Security. Two in five Americans use the Medicare and Medicaid health care programs. And more than 20 million are enrolled in the ACA, otherwise known as Obamacare.

Republicans in Congress tried to repeal and replace Obamacare during Trump's first term, but those efforts collapsed. More recently, Trump's tax cuts bill required certain adults who use Medicaid to also work, volunteer or go to school, a shift that is expected to save billions of dollars as millions of people are thrown off the program.

Meanwhile, congressional Democrats shut down the government last fall as they tried, and failed, to preserve expiring Obamacare subsidies that help some people purchase health insurance.

Conflict: The powers of war

While Congress has the authority to declare war, the president as the commander-in-chief executes it. That divide inherent in the Constitution has been called a "twilight zone" of concurrent authority," according to a Congressional Research Service report, referring to an earlier Supreme Court opinion.

During the Vietnam War, Congress had had enough. In 1973, Congress passed the War Powers Act, which requires, among other provisions, that the president seek congressional approval of military action within 60 days of the start of a conflict.

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President Richard Nixon promptly vetoed it.

"Saving our Nation from autocracy demands, at the minimum, that Congress begin the process of becoming again a truly coequal branch of Government," said Republican Sen. Mark Hatfield of Oregon during the debate to override Nixon's veto.

This year, Congress has voted multiple times on war powers resolutions that would stop Trump's military actions in Iran and Venezuela, and prevent attacks on Cuba. None has made it to the president's desk.

Behavior: Censures and expulsions set a tone

Congress sets many of its own rules and, in the process, sets a tone for the nation.

The House first expelled members in 1861, ousting three representatives who "took up arms for the Confederacy during the Civil War," according to House history. The Senate notably censured anti-communist crusader, Republican Sen. Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin.

Once rare, censures and expulsions have become more common, particularly in the House.

In 2023, the House voted to expel Republican Rep. George Santos of New York after Ethics Committee investigators said they found "overwhelming evidence" that he had exploited his public position for his own profit.

More recently, Democratic Rep. Eric Swalwell of California and Republican Rep. Tony Gonzales of Texas resigned their seats rather than face possible reprisals over allegations about their personal conduct.

Cargo jet tried to abort unsteady landing before Miami crash that killed 5, flight data indicates

By GISELA SALOMON, JOSH FUNK and JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Flight data suggest an Amazon cargo plane tried to abort an unsteady landing at Miami International Airport before smashing into a van and killing five people inside, according to information investigators released Tuesday.

National Transportation Safety Board investigators will interview the pilot and co-pilot on Wednesday as they try to determine why the jet overran the runway while landing Sunday.

NTSB Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy said at an evening news conference that they are reviewing flight data and cockpit recordings to figure out what happened in the seconds before the aircraft slammed into the van on airport property, careened through a fence and then smashed an SUV on a city street.

Homendy said investigators want to talk to the pilots before releasing anything from the cockpit voice recorder about why they appeared to briefly attempt to perform a go-around to retry the landing approach before abandoning that and trying to stop the plane. She said the data showed the thrust reversers were never used to help stop the plane.

The five people killed were all inside a van used to shuttle crews that clean planes, authorities said.

Five other people were injured. The pilot and co-pilot have been released from the hospital, Miami-Dade County Sheriff Rosie Cordero-Stutz said Tuesday. Two people remain in critical condition, while a third is in stable condition, she said.

Both the mangled white van, its entire front end crushed, and the SUV — so badly damaged it was nearly unrecognizable — remained at the crash site Tuesday, along with the jet, which sat nose-down with a large soot mark near the P in "Prime Air."

Expert says the pilots may have hesitated

The Amazon jet was landing after a two-hour flight from Puerto Rico as storms brewed around the Miami airport. The NTSB said the plane barreled roughly 1,300 feet (396 meters) past the end of the runway.

Former FAA official Mike O'Donnell said Tuesday the fact that the plane landed on its nose and right landing gear first demonstrates this was an unstable landing. He said the pilot might have been attempting a go-around.

"A go-around probably should have been executed sooner than that. And it seems like they hesitated," O'Donnell said.

O'Donnell said that by the time the crew tried to abort the landing, it may have been too late if there

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wasn't enough runway left. But the interviews investigators scheduled with the pilots for Wednesday will reveal more about what they were thinking at that moment.

Aviation attorney Mary Schiavo, who once was the Transportation Department's Inspector General, said "it almost seems like there was a disagreement between the pilots on what to do."

The weather could have also been a factor because experts said it appeared a strong tail wind propelled the plane far past the point where it was supposed to land. Investigators will want to know what the pilots were told about the weather and why air traffic controllers had not flipped the approach to the runway to allow the plane to land into a headwind.

All the people killed were in a cleaning service van

Amazon said in a statement that it is cooperating with the investigation and the company's deepest sympathies go to the victims and their families.

The five people killed were all in a van owned by Professional Ocean Service Corp., a company that cleans planes. The company said it wouldn't comment on the crash out of respect for the families who lost loved ones.

"Our employees are far more than the people who work beside us each day, they are family, and they are deeply loved. Our hearts and prayers are with every employee and every family whose lives have been forever changed," the company said in a statement Tuesday.

The Miami-Dade sheriff identified the deceased as Rolando Aleman Leon, 55; Yoel Rodriguez Naranjo, 53; Julio C. Pineda, 75; Carlos Acosta Fajardo, 53; and Javierkys Reyes Quevedo, 47.

Homendy said the crash raises safety concerns for workers at airports. "This is certainly very tragic. You would not think riding in a van to clean an airplane, that this would happen," she said.

Miami doesn't have a special system to stop runaway planes

Homendy has said that investigators will look at whether the lack of a special system to slow and stop speeding jets at the end of Miami's runways could have been a factor in the crash. But other experts say the airport complied with FAA requirements to provide a cleared buffer space of at least 1,000 feet (305 meters) past the end of the runways.

Miami is not one of the more than 120 airports in the U.S. with lightweight, crushable material that the Federal Aviation Administration says has saved around 500 lives.

Homendy said her agency's goal is to prevent tragedies, but thousands of runway excursions have continued to happen. The NTSB's final report will identify the cause and make recommendations to prevent it from happening again, but that likely won't be complete until a year or more from now.

The jet started as a passenger plane before converting to cargo

The flight had been operated by 21 Air, a cargo carrier based in North Carolina. The 32-year-old Boeing 767 was originally built to carry passengers and flew for several airlines in foreign countries for more than two decades before being converted to a cargo plane in 2015, according to flight-tracking site Flightradar24.

The Miami airport regained the use of a third runway Tuesday evening after the NTSB released it, but investigators are still documenting the evidence around the wreckage at the end of the runway the jet landed on.

More than 225 flights were canceled Sunday and Monday, and hundreds more were delayed, officials said. But that should improve now that the airport can use three of its four runways.

Homendy said the NTSB will try to release the runway back to the airport as quickly as possible after investigators document the scene.

Competing court orders add confusion to Missouri congressional elections

By DAVID A. LIEB and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Dueling court orders eight weeks before Election Day left Missouri's congressional map uncertain Tuesday as legal wrangling over a redistricting plan backed by President Donald

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Trump sparked fresh confusion.

A federal judge in Missouri on Tuesday temporarily blocked the state from using its old congressional districts in the November election. But that came just moments after the U.S. Supreme Court let stand a decision from the Missouri Supreme Court ordering the old districts to be used instead of new ones favored by Trump.

The decisions highlight the bewildering nature of Missouri's redistricting battle, which has spanned more than a year and leaves Missouri voters in some parts of the state uncertain which district they will be in on Election Day.

Missouri's top court ruled last week that the new Trump-backed map cannot be used because citizens turned in thousands of petition signatures demanding a statewide vote on it.

The U.S. Supreme Court declined to take up an appeal from Missouri's Republican attorney general, leaving in place the injunction from Missouri's top court. But moments later, U.S. District Judge Stephen Clark, a Trump appointee, issued a temporary restraining order prohibiting Missouri from using anything other than the new districts backed by Republicans.

Redistricting opponents quickly filed a notice to appeal that order to the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The new districts were used in the August primary, and the winners already were certified by election officials. But the question of which districts will be used in the November election continues to linger. Clark's order remains in place for 14 days, allowing time for additional court proceedings.

Missouri Attorney General Catherine Hanaway said the state "is prepared to follow and comply with" Clark's order, which she said "binds the state to using" the new congressional districts.

Republican Secretary of State Denny Hoskins, who oversees elections, described the federal court order as a victory that "halts a full-on constitutional crisis." He immediately notified local election officials that they are required to use the new districts.

But an attorney for People Not Politicians, the group that sponsored the referendum petition, stressed that the order from Missouri's top court against using the new map also remains in effect. The group's leader filed a request Tuesday night with the state Supreme Court to hold Hoskins in contempt for attempting to use the new map, and the court scheduled arguments for Thursday on the request.

"An individual federal judge cannot overrule the Missouri Supreme Court," said attorney Chuck Hatfield, who represents People Not Politicians.

Judge says switching maps could 'wreak havoc'

Hanaway has argued it would violate federal rights and cause confusion to switch districts for voters between the primary and general elections. Clark agreed in his written order.

"Using a different map for the general election would wreak havoc on the fairness and orderliness of Missouri's congressional elections, calling into question the candidacy of those nominated in the primaries and the votes of those who voted in the primaries," Clark wrote. "Widespread voter confusion would inevitably follow."

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who handles cases from Missouri, did not explain the rationale for declining to take up the case.

Missouri law set a Tuesday deadline to change the candidates or issues on the November ballot. But the determination of which ballots voters receive could take longer. Federal law sets a Sept. 19 deadline to begin mailing absentee ballots to overseas citizens and military members.

New Missouri district targets Democrat from Kansas City

Missouri currently is represented in the U.S. House by six Republicans and two Democrats who were elected under districts that Republican state officials approved in 2022.

But at Trump's urging, Missouri Gov. Mike Kehoe called the Legislature into a special session last year to redraw congressional boundaries to Republicans' advantage ahead of the midterms.

The revised map targeted the 5th Congressional District, held by longtime Democratic Rep. Emanuel Cleaver of Kansas City. It reassigned portions of Kansas City to two neighboring districts represented by Republicans and stretched the remainder of Cleaver's district far eastward into rural Republican areas.

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About 59% of the district's voters were new under the revised map, according to an Associated Press estimate.

Cleaver, who was unopposed in the Democratic primary, praised Tuesday's U.S. Supreme Court action and expressed confidence the old districts will ultimately be used.

State Sen. Rick Brattin won the Republican primary in the reshaped district. He joined with Republican U.S. Rep. Bob Onder and other voters to file the federal lawsuit resulting in Clark's temporary order. Brattin praised that decision while pledging a continued campaign.

Missouri's top court said new districts never became law

On the same day as the primary, Hoskins rejected a petition with thousands of signatures seeking to force a November referendum on the map. Hoskins asserted that Missouri's Constitution doesn't allow a referendum on congressional redistricting. A lower court agreed, but the state Supreme Court reversed Hoskins' decision.

The state's top court said the new districts were retroactively frozen in December, when the petition signatures were submitted, and thus never became law. Hoskins on Tuesday assigned the redistricting referendum as Proposition A on the November ballot, in compliance with the state court order.

The Missouri Constitution does not specifically say that a referendum can be used for congressional redistricting. But the state Supreme Court said a constitutional provision allowing a referendum on "any act" of the Legislature encompasses congressional redistricting legislation.

Missouri was the second Republican-led state, after Texas, to respond to Trump's call last year to redraw congressional districts. Several other states followed. All told, Republicans hoped to win as many as 16 additional seats from new House maps enacted in eight states — Texas, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Florida, Tennessee, Louisiana and Alabama. Democrats, whose counterattack faced several setbacks, think they could win up to six additional seats from new districts in California and Utah.

It remains to be seen whether the redistricting works as intended for Republicans. The president's party historically has lost congressional seats in the midterms, and Trump's poor approval ratings could provide an extra hurdle for Republican candidates.

NCAA says it can't overturn Michigan's win over Western Michigan after MAC appeals outcome

KALAMAZOO, Mich. (AP) — After review, the Mid-American Conference wants Western Michigan recognized as having defeated Michigan after all.

The NCAA said the call stands.

Citing what it believes to be an "extraordinary" circumstance in appealing the outcome of the Michigan-Western Michigan game, the MAC asked NCAA and College Football Playoff administrators on Tuesday to recognize the Broncos as the winner instead of the Wolverines. The CFP's bracket selection choices in December carry significant financial benefits to teams that make the playoff.

A few hours later, the NCAA said the result will stand, noting its playing rules do not have a protocol for overturning the outcome of a game and the Division I Football Bowl Subdivision Oversight Committee does not have the authority to do so. According to the NCAA Football Rules Book, the team with the most points at the end of the game is the winner and the score is final when the referee declares the game has ended.

"No rule decision may be changed after the ball is next legally snapped, legally free-kicked or the second or fourth periods have ended," the rule book says.

Michigan won 13-12 on a Hail Mary pass Saturday night after the replay official had put one second back on the clock when Bryce Underwood's first try was incomplete.

The controversy was the talk of college football on the long holiday weekend with many questions surrounding how the officiating crew decided to give Michigan time for another try at the win. The MAC initially accepted the Big Ten explanation but that had changed by Tuesday.

An NBC replay showed a clock expiring before the ball hit the ground or any player, leading to two days of questions about what clock everyone was looking at. NBC said the next day that its cameras "are not

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the official arbiter" of game time, that in this case it was the responsibility of the Big Ten.

The Big Ten said after the game — and reaffirmed Tuesday — that the call was correct and published a recording of the replay as it was reviewed by officials. The conference said it too used a shot of the game clock in the stadium, which showed 1 second remaining when the ball on the first Michigan pass was touched by WMU's Micah Davis. Since Davis had just been out of bounds, the clock would stop on such contact.

CFP executive director Rich Clark told CBS Sports it was too early to say how Western Michigan or Michigan will be treated in potential rankings discussions. The first CFP rankings won't be issued until Nov. 3.

"We would have to bring that to the management committee to give guidance on how that should be considered," Clark told CBS Sports.

In his letter to the FBS Oversight Committee, MAC Commissioner Jon Steinbrecher said "established protocol" in this situation is that the television truck is contacted with a request to insert the in-stadium game clock onto "the program feed" — NBC's feed in this case — and that is supposed be the sole source of the replay decision.

"Had the prescribed protocol been followed and the program-feed clock been used, no additional time would have been restored, no additional play would have been awarded and Western Michigan would have won the game 12-7," Steinbrecher wrote.

According to multiple reports, NCAA national coordinator of officials Ron Snodgrass sent guidance to conferences and officials on Tuesday to clear the air.

"Recognizing the replay technology and available broadcast resources may vary among institutions, conferences and game sites, it is necessary to establish a standard timing protocol that ensures consistency in the administration of all college football games," the memo said.

The guidance will make clear that "to be considered by the instant replay official, the game clock must be embedded in the instant replay's program feed or the game clock graphic when accurately displayed as part of the broadcast feed."

Game results are rarely, if ever, changed after the fact unless the NCAA vacates results because of rules infractions, though there are countless examples of decisions by officiating crews affecting the outcome (Colorado beating Missouri on a fifth down in 1990 is familiar to many).

Western Michigan was voted the preseason favorite in the MAC, raising hopes for a potential CFB berth. The highest-ranked team from the Group of Six leagues gets an automatic bid to the playoff.

"I recognize that the oversight committee does not ordinarily alter results recorded on the field," Steinbrecher said. "Nevertheless, the circumstances of this game are extraordinary. ... Western Michigan should not be disadvantaged because the prescribed replay protocol was not followed and an unsynchronized clock was used to award a play that, under the applicable procedure, should not have occurred."

Western Michigan President Russ Kavalhuna backed the MAC's request.

"Being bitter doesn't make you better and this should not be mistaken for weakness or agreement," Kavalhuna said in a statement posted on social media. "We can show respect for the game while also asking serious questions; I've done both, and I'll keep doing both."

US military says it destroyed 5 more Iranian oil tankers after missile attacks on Navy warship

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military said it destroyed five Iranian oil tankers on Tuesday in response to the latest attacks on its warships and Tehran hit back at American targets in Jordan, the latest burst of back-and-forth strikes that have lurching the sides back toward open hostilities in a more than 6-month-old war.

Following the American strikes, Iran launched missiles toward U.S. targets in Jordan, Iranian state-run media said. Jordan's military said its air defense systems intercepted 18 ballistic missiles launched toward its territory and two others fell in places where no one lives. It said it has no reports of casualties. Jordan

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is a staunch U.S. ally that hosts American forces, making the kingdom's military bases a target of repeat Iranian strikes. U.S. Central Command said it had no information to offer.

The latest strikes are part of a dual economic and military approach by President Donald Trump as he struggles to bring an end to the war. The Trump administration on Tuesday also imposed sanctions on additional elements of Iran's aviation industry, targeting more than two dozen commercial and private airlines as well as foreign cargo service providers, in its new push to isolate Tehran from its remaining trading partners.

Both the U.S. and Iran are seeking to exert control over the Strait of Hormuz, where about one-fifth of the world's oil passed before the war began. Rising energy prices are posing political problems for Trump and his Republican Party ahead of the November midterm elections. A barrel of international standard Brent crude briefly climbed as high as \$99.46 on Tuesday.

The U.S. forces also destroyed three Iranian oil tankers on Saturday after Iran's Revolutionary Guards tried to attack a U.S. aircraft carrier and destroyer with ballistic missiles, warning that it would, "if necessary, destroy Iran's limited and exposed oil fleet." Iran later said it planned to announce a new "exclusion zone" near the Strait of Hormuz aimed at vessels intending to transit.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the U.S. will not allow Iran's attacks to go unanswered.

"Iran continues to try to hit U.S. naval ships. And for every time they do that or try to do that, they're going to lose tankers. And I think you'll see that again today," Rubio told reporters Tuesday when asked about the latest attacks in Iran while on a trip to Colombia.

Danny Citrinowicz, an Iran expert at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies, warned that such back-and-forth strikes can only risk more retaliation and further impact to the global economy.

"There is no kinetic solution to the Strait of Hormuz problem," he said on social media. "Every attempt to impose one only brings Washington and Tehran closer to an escalation that may become increasingly difficult to control."

U.S. Central Command said the military struck the tankers on Tuesday after the Revolutionary Guards targeted a Navy warship with ballistic missiles twice over the past two days. "The U.S. warship successfully evaded the attempted Iranian attacks and continued to patrol regional waters. No American personnel were harmed," it said in a statement.

It said the Iranian tankers destroyed on Tuesday were the Kivik, Charminar, Horizon 1 and the Riesco in the Gulf of Oman. The U.S. military also destroyed the vessel Derya, which was located near Kharg Island in the Strait of Hormuz. The statement said the crews of the five vessels were told to abandon ship before the attacks.

Iranian state television also reported the U.S. strikes, saying U.S. forces attacked Iranian oil tankers near the southern port of Jask and near Kharg Island in the Persian Gulf. It said the crews were evacuated.

An Iranian state TV reporter in Jask said an Iranian tanker was struck near the coast of Yekbeni. State TV later reported that the U.S. military attacked a second tanker near waters off Jask. Separately, state television reported that another Iranian tanker was attacked in the Kharg Island anchorage area.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard Navy on Tuesday had warned crews of oil tankers near ports in Kuwait and Bahrain to immediately leave their vessels, saying the ships could be targeted in retaliation for U.S. attacks on Iranian tankers. It accused Kuwait and Bahrain of hosting U.S. forces and assisting in the attacks.

A U.S. blockade of Iranian ports has squeezed the country's economy by limiting its oil exports, while the American military has been helping a limited number of ships transit on a route through the Strait of Hormuz off Oman. Tehran wants ships to follow a route that it chooses through the strait, which was considered an international waterway before the war.

US banning dairy products, most alcohol and motorcycles from Canada in growing trade war

By ROB GILLIES and PAUL WISEMAN Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — The United States is banning the import of some dairy products and motorcycles from Canada along with most alcoholic beverages, the White House said Tuesday, as part of a trade war that shows little sign of cooling off.

The ban will take effect Sept. 29 and comes after retaliatory tariffs promised by Canada kicked in earlier Tuesday on \$20 billion in U.S. imports. Canada had responded to tariff moves by U.S. President Donald Trump after trade talks between the countries broke down last month.

Trump also moved to shut Canadian products out of large, long-term U.S. government contracts and directed the U.S. General Services Administration to declare Canadian products ineligible for those contracts until Canada allows "full and fair reciprocity" for American products.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said Canada's strategy was about becoming more independent and vowed to speed those efforts. "It's about ensuring that no country can hold us hostage. And that we can live how we want to live," he said.

The rupture has upended one of the world's closest relationships. On Aug. 22, the U.S. imposed 50% tariffs on about 5% of Canadian imports, charging that Canada had unfairly treated the American dairy, alcoholic beverage and auto industries.

The U.S. and Canada have long sparred over trade, particularly Canada's protected dairy market and its subsidies for producers of softwood lumber. But they remained friends and staunch allies.

Under Trump, U.S.-Canada relations have deteriorated rapidly. In addition to imposing tariffs on Canadian products, Trump has repeatedly made inflammatory comments about making Canada the 51st U.S. state. Carney came to power in a come-from-behind political victory last year by promising to stand up to him.

Some Canadian provinces have banned the sale of U.S. alcoholic products — a move that prompted the retaliatory U.S. ban on Tuesday on various Canadian wines and spirits. Also subject to the ban are some motorcycles and mopeds, dairy products, including whey, and various types of molasses.

Canada is exploring ties with the European Union that could stop just short of membership, a Canadian official familiar with the discussions said.

Options could include expanding existing agreements, negotiating a new treaty or creating other forms of cooperation. The official said Canada is already consulting provinces, territories and labor groups about what a deeper relationship with the EU could look like, but no model has been chosen.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the talks publicly.

Carney is due in Strasbourg, France, next week, where he will attend European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's State of the European Union address Sept. 16 and address the European Parliament the following day.

Canada looks beyond the US

Carney acknowledged the trade actions would cause short-term pain but said they would push Canada to move faster on investment, infrastructure and trade diversification.

"It was easy business, but it meant we relied too much on one economic partner," he said. "That time is over."

More than 70% of Canadian exports still go to the United States, underscoring the scale of Carney's push to diversify trade. He said Canada's exports to other countries are rising sharply and are on track to double over the next decade.

Canada retaliates as Trump responds

Carney defended the retaliation, saying Canada could not let American goods enter tariff-free while Canadian companies face U.S. tariffs.

Canada was not seeking to escalate the confrontation, he said, but the tariffs were necessary to protect Canadian workers.

Carney said the larger problem was what Washington had sought in the failed negotiations.

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"The most fundamental issue is that the cumulative U.S. demands revealed that they wanted us to become even more reliant on them, not less," he said. "In too many areas, they wanted dependency, not a true economic partnership."

The prime minister said Washington sought limits on French-language and cultural protections, influence over future trade deals and terms that would weaken the auto, steel and forestry sectors.

How the trade war ends could carry consequences far beyond Canada, testing whether a smaller U.S. ally can resist Trump's economic pressure without being forced to yield.

Earlier on Tuesday, a Canadian official said Ottawa did not intend to change course regardless of whether Trump responded with nothing or what the official called a "nuclear response." The government's strategy will remain focused on building more at home and diversifying trade abroad, the official said.

The tariffs hit hundreds of American products, including steel, aluminum, cheese, appliances, clothing, cosmetics and farm equipment, at rates of 15%, 25% or 50%. They cover about \$20 billion in American goods, roughly 6% of the \$333.6 billion the United States exported to Canada last year.

Since Canada-U.S. trade talks collapsed Aug. 21, Trump and his administration have imposed additional tariffs and issued a series of threats and attacks portraying Canada as weak and dependent.

Trump's trade war and repeated talk of making Canada the 51st state have fueled anger across the country. Canadians have sharply cut travel to the United States and boycotted U.S. goods, moves Carney praised as signs of national resolve.

British Columbia Premier David Eby said the province will install new signs at U.S. border crossings reading: "Welcome to British Columbia, Canada. Strong, proud and will NEVER be the 51st state. Sorry!"

"While our kindness is one of our greatest strengths, you should never, ever mistake that kindness for weakness," Eby said.

Neither side is rushing back to the table

Canada-U.S. Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc said the government was assessing the latest U.S. tariff measures and that he remained in contact with U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, adding that Canada was ready to engage when Washington was.

The senior Trump administration official who briefed reporters during a conference call late Tuesday that was arranged by the White House said U.S. and Canadian trade representatives have had "constructive conversations" and would speak again in coming days to see if there's a "path forward."

Former U.S. trade official Wendy Cutler said Carney's public approval rating, now topping 70%, gives him little reason to restart talks.

"Clearly, at this point each side does not want to look too anxious to reengage in fear of looking weak," she said.

Prosecutor says man accused of charging toward Ohio governor candidate wanted to ask questions

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

CANFIELD, Ohio (AP) — An armed man accused of charging toward Ohio gubernatorial candidate Amy Acton during a campaign stop at a fair was trying to ask the Democrat questions, a prosecutor said during the man's arraignment Tuesday.

No one has publicly said what 38-year-old Patrick Havas wanted to ask Acton, but authorities have said he never brandished or unholstered the weapons he had on him and they haven't found any threats in a search of his cellphone. As he charged toward Acton, authorities said, he knocked down two people before troopers stopped him.

Havas pleaded not guilty to two counts of assault, one count of disorderly conduct and one count of inducing panic. His bond was set at \$5,000.

He was arrested after authorities said he knocked people down while forcing his way through a crowd Sunday as Acton spoke under a tent at the fair in Canfield in northeastern Ohio. Authorities said he had two handguns, a taser and a set of brass knuckles.

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"He appeared in that tent wanting to ask questions," Mahoning County Prosecutor Lynn Maro told the judge during the hearing. "You should know law enforcement gained consent for them to have complete access to his cellphone so they found no threats."

Maro said after the hearing that the video Havas took shows him "walking into the tent recording and moving forward, calling out her name." Acton, a physician, is the state's former public health director.

"All he got out was Dr. Acton, Dr. Acton," Maro said.

Maro said that the investigation is continuing, and noted the Mahoning County Sheriff's Office is asking the public for any video capturing what happened.

Acton's security detail, made up of troopers with the Ohio State Highway Patrol, intercepted Havas as he forced his way through the crowd, the agency has said. A highway patrol spokesman said they did not have any bodycam footage from the incident.

Two people were treated at the scene on Sunday and released, according to an incident report from the Mahoning County Sheriff's Office.

Mike Ray, a city councilman in Youngstown who is also a member of the Ohio Democratic Party's executive committee, said he was in a corner behind Acton as she spoke. Then, he said, he could tell that something was going on among those in the crowd facing Acton, and he saw two people who were standing in front of their mobility scooters "tumble to the ground."

Havas' attorney, J. Gerald Ingram, said at the hearing that his client has lived with his mother in Canfield for the past 30 years and is not a flight risk.

"He really has nowhere to go," said Ingram, who declined to make any comments after the hearing.

The Ohio gubernatorial race is one of the most high-profile races this year as the campaigns enter the final six weeks of campaigning before the election in November. Acton is facing Republican Vivek Ramaswamy, who has parlayed his national name recognition, tech industry connections and alliance with President Donald Trump into a record fundraising haul. Ramaswamy's campaign called the incident unacceptable.

The judge on Tuesday ordered that Havas have no contact with Acton or the two people who were knocked down, and that he forfeit any guns. He was also ordered to refrain from speaking with the media.

Addie Bullock, spokesperson for the Acton campaign, said in a statement following the hearing that Acton and her husband were "grateful to see the rule of law upheld," and extended their "continued appreciation to law enforcement."

Former U.S. Rep. John Boccieri, a Democratic candidate for the Ohio House, said he was near Acton in the tent when Havas "came in very aggressively" with his cellphone in the air screaming Acton's name while rushing toward her. He said officers quickly "sprang into action," grabbed the man and pulled him out of the tent.

Boccieri said he immediately jumped forward to make sure Acton was OK, which she was. And, he said, she'd already started helping a man who was face down in the mud after being knocked down.

Families' interest in their kids' education is falling around the globe as scores drop, test shows

By SHARON LURYE AP Education Writer

Families' interest in their kids' education is falling in many high-income countries as school systems struggle with plunging test scores, according to newly released results from a standardized test taken by 15-year-olds around the world.

Over 760,000 teenagers in dozens of countries took the Programme for International Student Assessment last year. Results released Tuesday show average scores in math, reading and science are all at their lowest point in PISA history among highly developed economies. That includes continued declines in reading and math scores in the U.S.

China, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea scored the highest marks on the test. Estonia, the United Kingdom and New Zealand also did well.

The key to why scores are falling so widely may be found in an accompanying survey taken by students.

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Compared with the 2022 results, almost every country saw a drop in families' support for their kids' education, especially for boys, as measured by questions about how often parents talk to their kids about their schoolwork or take an interest in their learning.

"Parents see themselves more as a client of the school, not as someone who takes personal interest," said Andreas Schleicher, director for education and skills for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which runs the PISA test.

Students who said a family member asks them at least weekly what they did in school that day scored around 35 points higher on the PISA science test — equivalent to over a year and a half of learning — compared with students whose families take less interest. That number includes adjustments for socio-economic differences.

Digital distraction is another factor. Over a quarter of students in high-income countries complained their classmates got distracted by digital devices in most or every science class. In countries with strong policies controlling the use of cellphones in schools, distraction rates were lower.

There's undoubtedly a strong association between students using digital devices for leisure and lower test scores, Schleicher said. When tech is used for learning, however, the results are more nuanced.

Countries where high schoolers reported using digital devices for around two to three hours per day in school saw higher test scores, but scores fell once tech use climbed beyond that.

Asian nations dominate in test scores

Asia seems to have found the key to using technology in a way that benefits students. Fewer than 10% of tested students in Japan, Korea and mainland China complained of digital distraction in the classroom. (Only four provinces in China participated in testing, plus Hong Kong and Macao.)

At the same time, Asia had some of the strongest schools in the world, with Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and the Chinese provinces ranking among the top 10 regions for math, science and reading.

Almost 100% of all children in the Chinese provinces scored at or above baseline for math and reading. In the U.S., it was only 65% in math and 74% in reading.

Experts worry China's educational dominance over the U.S. has serious political implications.

"To win a technological race, you need the people with the science and the technology and the reading capabilities," said Tracey Burns, chief of global strategy and research at the National Center for Education and the Economy, a group that researches high-performing education systems.

The U.S. scores for math were equal to the average among OECD countries that administered the test, and the U.S. was ranked in the top 15 countries in the world for science, reading and computational problem-solving, a new category. However, those rankings benefited from other countries' declines. After all, U.S. teens' reading and math scores slid to the lowest point since the PISA test was first administered in the early 2000s.

Researchers warned the results must be taken with a grain of salt because the U.S. did not meet standards for having a large enough sample of schools and students that participated in the test.

More AI usage, less learning

Generally, higher use of artificial intelligence was associated with lower test scores. Students who said they never use chatbots performed better than students who did. Almost half of students in developed economies say they use AI chatbots to help them learn at least weekly.

Schleicher pointed to China, Japan, Singapore and Estonia as countries that have succeeded in using AI to support learning without overusing it. He noted that in Asia, in particular, teachers are more empowered to take the lead in designing AI systems for the classroom.

"In the United States, teachers largely implement lessons. In Asia, teachers have a very strong role," he said.

He remembers seeing one classroom in China where elementary schoolers practiced calligraphy with ink and brushes. The teachers scanned their work and used AI to analyze how their handwriting could improve.

"The classroom, if you made a photograph, would have looked like the 1950's — students doing calligraphy with ink," Schleicher said. "But everything was powered by AI."

Ballots discounted for late postmarks surged in Washington and Oregon after Postal Service changes

By GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — The number of ballots rejected for late postmarks has soared in the vote-by-mail states of Washington and Oregon, according to newly released data highlighting concerns about recent changes in U.S. Postal Service operations ahead of this fall's pivotal midterm election.

The struggling agency has been consolidating its operations with an emphasis on regional hubs in an effort to save billions of dollars. Some U.S. senators and election officials for months have been warning that the changes could delay the application of postmarks to ballots — even if they're mailed on or before Election Day. That would prevent otherwise valid votes from counting.

That prediction is being borne out, they say, with thousands of voters having their ballots rejected during this year's primaries.

"More Oregonians had their voices go unheard just because their ballots couldn't make it through the mail in time," Oregon Secretary of State Tobias Read told a news conference Tuesday, referring to the state's primary in May. "That is unacceptable."

The operational changes at the Postal Service are compounding worries about the future of voting by mail, especially in some Western states where the method is universal and widely popular. Trump has repeatedly attacked mail-in voting, falsely claiming it's riddled with fraud, despite having voted by mail himself.

Over the weekend, his administration asked the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn a judge's ruling blocking his executive order that seeks to restrict mail-in voting, a method used by nearly one-third of voters in the U.S.

States rush to install more drop boxes

Read said he is asking lawmakers for emergency funding to install 20 new ballot drop boxes in areas where they're not otherwise easily accessible to voters. Washington's secretary of state this year has spent about \$300,000 to reimburse counties for the addition of 21 drop boxes.

In two rural Washington counties — both of which have reliably backed President Donald Trump — ballots rejected for late postmarks represented more than 4% of all ballots cast in last month's primary. Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell of Washington called it ironic that postal changes might disenfranchise some of Trump's most stable supporters.

"The Postal Service is disenfranchising voters across the United States with policies that are leaving them with a ballot that was cast, but never counted," she said.

In December, the Postal Service finalized a rule clarifying that postmarks don't necessarily reflect the date the agency first took possession of a piece of mail, but rather the day it was handled in one of its processing centers. Those processing centers are increasingly likely to be farther from certain communities due to recent consolidations.

And since last year, USPS policy has dictated that mail is transported once a day — rather than twice — from post offices or collection boxes that are more than 50 miles (80.47 kilometers) from a postal distribution center.

USPS urges voters to mail ballots early

In a written statement, the Postal Service acknowledged that changes in how it transports mail could result in postmarking delays. It noted that anyone who wants to ensure their ballots are postmarked on time can go into a post office and ask for it to be stamped manually, free of charge.

"Our consistent message to voters who choose to vote by mail is to mail early" — at least one week before ballots are due, the statement said.

Some 7,314 ballots that arrived in the mail during Oregon's weeklong grace period for this year's May primary were not counted because they were postmarked after Election Day — a rejection rate of 13%, up from 9.5% two years earlier, Read said.

In Washington, the number of late-postmarked ballots first jumped last year, after postal changes had taken effect. Officials responded by urging people to get their ballots in early and by installing more drop

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boxes. Drop box use did increase in this year's primary, but the number of late-postmarked ballots was still a problem: 20,267 — up from 16,131 in 2024.

The data paralleled numbers in California, where during this year's June primary about 93,500 voters had their ballots rejected because they were postmarked or arrived too late to be counted.

Rural counties heavily affected

In some rural Washington counties where voters often return ballots by mail because drop boxes are farther away, the data was most pronounced. In Stevens County in Washington's northeastern corner, the rate at which mailed ballots were rejected for late postmarks quadrupled.

Stevens County Auditor Lori Larsen said that on Aug. 7, three days after the primary and during the state's grace period for ballots to arrive, her office received a haul of 547 ballots with late postmarks. There were so many that she initially thought the mail must have been interrupted by wildfires in the region, but when she looked at the ZIP codes they originated from, she realized that wasn't the case.

"To me that is a number that suggests that many, if not all, of those folks thought they were timely delivering their ballot into USPS custody," Larsen said in a phone interview.

Her office is now rushing to double the number of secure ballot drop boxes in the county from five to 10.

In conservative Yakima County, where nearly 4.4% of all ballots cast in the primary were rejected for late postmarks, local mail is now sent to a processing center in Spokane — about 200 miles (320 km) away — before being returned to Yakima, said county Auditor Charles Ross.

He said that while elections officials try to treat all voters equally, the postal changes could make it more likely that those in rural areas won't have their vote counted.

"If you're in one of these rural areas like where we live and you put your ballot in the post office box three days before the election, and if you live in Seattle or Spokane and you put your ballot in the same blue box three days before the election — there's a high likelihood that those two ballots are going to be treated differently," Ross said.

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 billion in Canadian dollars (US\$90.1 billion) — 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.

UK government bans goods from Israeli settlements and accuses settlers of 'ethnic cleansing'

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The United Kingdom on Tuesday banned trade with Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, where it says "settler terrorists" are carrying out "ethnic cleansing" of Palestinians, in a significant toughening of Britain's stance toward a longtime ally.

France and Canada announced they would take similar action in an attempt to prevent expanding settlements and growing violence from making it impossible to establish a future Palestinian state.

Israel responded angrily and said it would close the British consulate in Jerusalem.

Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband said the U.K. will ban imports of all goods from the settlements and bar companies from providing services for the settlements, including financing, construction, infrastructure, real estate and advertising.

"I do not believe the British people want us supporting the occupation by accepting products from settlements in our shops and supermarkets," Miliband said.

In a joint statement, British Prime Minister Andy Burnham, French President Emmanuel Macron and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said settlement expansion and settler violence in the West Bank "pose a direct and urgent threat" to the two-state solution. They said they decided to act "before it is too late."

The economic impact is likely to be limited, since the settlements produce only a small amount of largely

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agricultural exports. But the move is a symbolic expression of displeasure with Israel by some of its closest allies, and it offers a new sign of the Israeli government's growing isolation as a result of the Gaza war.

Miliband said that he feels "a deep sense of shame about what has unfolded in Palestine under the eyes of the international community."

"We will not acquiesce in the destruction of the two-state solution," he said.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar condemned the "despicable" move. He said Israel would expel U.K. representatives from a joint military center monitoring the Gaza ceasefire and end U.K. training of the Palestinian Authority's security forces in the West Bank. In addition, Israel barred entry to a dozen British lawmakers and other U.K. citizens whom Sa'ar said were "involved in antisemitic and anti-Israel activity."

Settlements have expanded under Netanyahu

Under the ultranationalist government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, settlement construction in the West Bank — seized by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war — has surged. Netanyahu's government views the West Bank as the biblical and historical homeland of the Jewish people and is opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state.

The international community overwhelmingly considers such construction to be illegal. Britain and other countries have voiced particular concern about the E1 settlement project approved by Israel, which would effectively cut the territory in two.

There have been marked increases in attacks by settlers on Palestinians, evictions from Palestinian towns, Israeli military operations and checkpoints that choke freedom of movement, as well as several Palestinian attacks on Israelis.

"The British government agrees that there is ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in areas of the West Bank, perpetrated by settler terrorists," Miliband said. He said there had been "houses bulldozed, roads and public infrastructure destroyed, families displaced from their homes."

The ban on trade will be in place in six to nine months, Miliband said. He said Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Poland, Portugal and Sweden have pledged to "support further action."

The Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium, Spain and Norway have either banned goods from settlements or are in the process of doing so, he said.

Miliband also tightened Britain's embargo on weapons sales to Israel for use in Gaza to include arms "that materially contribute to the occupation" of Palestinian territories.

Move follows UK recognition of a Palestinian state

Britain recognized Palestinian statehood last year in an attempt to revive dwindling efforts to achieve a two-state solution.

In a change of Britain's position, Miliband said Tuesday that the U.K. regards Israel's occupation of the West Bank, and not just the settlements, as illegal.

The new position is likely to be welcomed by many Labour voters and lawmakers, who have urged the government to go further in sanctioning Israel and supporting the Palestinians.

But some expressed concern that the sanctions could boost support for Netanyahu, who is facing a tough battle for reelection in October, or lead to attacks on British Jews. The U.K.'s chief rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, said it was "a dark day for British Jews."

Opposition Conservative Party foreign affairs spokesman Tom Tugendhat said that "turning Israel into a pariah will risk sectarian division in our own country and risk a further rise in antisemitic violence on our own streets."

Announcement sparks anger in Israel

Before Miliband's announcement, Itamar Ben-Gvir, Israel's hard-line public security minister and a settler leader, called on Netanyahu to recognize Argentina's claim to the Falkland Islands, a British overseas territory in the South Atlantic known in Argentina as the Malvinas.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog called the ban "a grave miscalculation, a decision that will fall on the wrong side of history."

"In the current context, it would be a gross interference in the democratic elections of a sovereign na-

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tion," he said.

The move was also criticized by the U.S. ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, a longtime supporter of the settlements, who said that it was "discrimination against the Jewish people." He said the U.K. could face "repercussions or retaliations" from the U.S. if it imposed the sanctions.

Several U.S. states have laws banning contracts or investments with businesses that boycott Israeli firms, including those based in the West Bank.

Burnham's office said he spoke with U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday and set out "the U.K.'s commitment to working toward peace and security in the region" and achieving a two-state solution. There was no word on how Trump responded.

Miliband, whose parents came to the U.K. as refugees from the Nazis, told lawmakers he spoke "as a proud British Jew" and supporter of Israel.

"Our argument is not with the people of Israel, with whom the U.K. has unshakable bonds," Miliband said. "Our argument is with the conduct of its government."

LSU cracks top 10, Oregon slips and Wolverines fall out of AP Top 25 after second-chance Hail Mary

By ERIC OLSON AP College Football Writer

LSU jumped back into the top 10 in the first Associated Press Top 25 college football poll of the regular season on Tuesday, Oregon slipped out of the top five and Michigan fell out of the rankings altogether after it needed a second-chance Hail Mary try at home to beat Western Michigan.

Ohio State remained No. 1 by a wide margin entering its showdown with No. 4 Texas on Saturday. The Buckeyes received 46 first-place votes from the voting panel of 69 writers and broadcasters. The other 23 first-place votes were divided among six teams.

Georgia, Notre Dame, Texas and Indiana each moved up one spot with Oregon going from No. 2 to No. 6 following a 34-27 win over Boise State as a 25.5-point favorite. Miami, LSU, Mississippi and Texas A&M rounded out the top 10.

Defending national champion Indiana received the second-most No. 1 votes, with eight. LSU got five, Notre Dame four, Oregon three, Texas two and Miami one.

LSU made one of the biggest statements of Week 1 with its 51-10 rout of Clemson in Lane Kiffin's debut in Baton Rouge. Courtroom drama over the eligibility status of LSU players trying to return to college from NFL training camps took the spotlight in the days leading up to the game, and then Sam Leavitt and his highly paid teammates made fast work of Clemson.

LSU's rise from No. 11 to No. 8 gave the Tigers their first top-10 ranking since they were No. 4 after a 4-0 start last season. The Tigers went 3-6 the rest of the way, Brian Kelly was fired at midseason and Kiffin was hired away from Mississippi with the charge of restoring LSU to its former glory.

LSU's promotion bumped Oklahoma out of the top 10. The Sooners shut out UTEP 51-0 and will take a No. 11 ranking into their visit to Michigan. That matchup lost some luster in light of Michigan's slogging offensive performance against Western Michigan, a game the Wolverines won 13-12 after one second was put back on the clock at the end of the game. That was just enough time for Bryce Underwood to throw a second Hail Mary, this one landing in the hands of JJ Buchanan.

In and out

Virginia rode an impressive Week 0 win over North Carolina State to a No. 25 ranking. It's the first time since 2005 the Cavaliers have been ranked in a first regular-season poll. They finished No. 16 in the final Top 25 last season but received just one vote in the preseason poll.

Michigan went from No. 16 to out of the Top 25, the first time since at least 2008 that a team ranked so high was bounced after a win. Kansas State went from No. 17 to unranked after holding off North Dakota of the Football Championship Subdivision last year.

Poll points

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— Seven teams with first-place votes are the most since the same number got first-place votes in the 2016 preseason poll. It's the most in a regular-season poll since seven got first-place votes Sept. 2, 2014.

— Of the 25 ranked teams, 24 won in the same week for the first time since Week 1 in 2019.

— Louisville held onto its No. 24 ranking after losing 41-38 to Mississippi on a walk-off field goal. The Cardinals became the lowest-ranked team since at least 2008 to stay in the Top 25 after a loss.

Conference call

SEC (9 ranked teams): No. 2 Georgia, No. 4 Texas, No. 8 LSU, No. 9 Mississippi, No. 10 Texas A&M, No. 11 Oklahoma, No. 12 Alabama, No. 18 Tennessee, No. 23 Missouri.

Big Ten (7): No. 1 Ohio State, No. 5 Indiana, No. 6 Oregon, No. 14 USC, No. 16 Penn State, No. 19 Washington, No. 21 Iowa.

ACC (4): No. 7 Miami, No. 17 SMU, No. 24 Louisville, No. 25 Virginia.

Big 12 (4): No. 13 Texas Tech, No. 15 BYU, No. 20 Utah, No. 22 Houston.

Independent (1): No. 3 Notre Dame.

Ranked vs. ranked

No. 1 Ohio State at No. 5 Texas: It's the first regular-season, top-five matchup since these teams met in Columbus to open 2025. Texas was No. 1 that day and lost 14-7. The Buckeyes moved from No. 3 to No. 1 and stayed there until they lost to Indiana in the Big Ten championship game.

Trump honors 9/11 victims at the Ellipse, pledging to 'never forget'

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly a quarter century after a day "etched forever into the memories of Americans," President Donald Trump honored the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on Tuesday by vowing to "never forget."

The event at the Ellipse was spearheaded by the Tunnel to Towers Foundation and showcased a massive, 21-foot, nearly 17,000-pound steel beam recovered from the South Tower of the World Trade Center in New York, which had traveled for months across the country as part of the Steel Across America tour.

The steel beam will make its way through New York in a procession on Friday by retracing the steps of fallen New York City firefighter Stephen Siller. Trump's presence at the event on Tuesday just outside the White House began a week of commemorations that will culminate in several events on Friday, including one at the Pentagon that Trump will attend.

"This battered piece of steel here today on the Ellipse is a reminder that America is blessed with a strength no fire can consume, no evil can conquer and no terror can destroy," Trump said.

Trump noted that the Sept. 11 attacks were one of few moments in history that "divide time into really what came before" and after.

His remarks briefly dipped into the political, as Trump warned of people turning a "communistic way" — a reference to his frequent attacks on Democrats as more democratic socialists gain influence in the party.

During his remarks, Trump paid particular tribute to two men who died in the attacks: Jeffrey Palazzo, a New York City firefighter, and Welles Crowther, a young equities trader who became known as the "man in the red bandanna" after rescuing several people in the attacks.

Trump said the U.S. Coast Guard will commission a new fast-response cutter this weekend in New York in honor of Palazzo, a Coast Guard reservist who was working out of Staten Island's Rescue Squad 5 when he responded to the attacks 25 years ago.

And the president recognized Crowther, also a volunteer firefighter, by awarding him the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Crowther's mother, Alison, and sister, Paige, accepted the award, which is considered the nation's highest civilian honor.

During his remarks, Trump also recalled being near the site after the attacks and hearing the structure then known as the U.S. Steel Building "creaking."

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"I was building a big building in New York and I took the whole crew down there right after this happened," he said. "We thought it was coming down on top of us. And two firemen — big, strong guys, and I'm not the smallest guy in the world -- they grabbed me under the arms."

"They lifted me up and they started running with me," he added. "I said, 'Fellas, I could run myself,' but they were amazing." It wasn't clear from Trump's comments precisely when the event he described occurred.

In attendance were a smattering of top Cabinet officials and members of Congress, including Republican Reps. Mike Lawler of New York and Dan Meuser, whose Pennsylvania district is near Shanksville, where Flight 93 crashed on Sept. 11, 2001.

Trump praised at length Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, who was chairman and CEO of Cantor Fitzgerald, a financial firm that had been housed at the World Trade Center. Lutnick lost his younger brother, Gary, as well as more than 650 employees in the attacks.

"He's done an amazing job," Trump said of Lutnick. "He's rebuilt Cantor Fitzgerald, and he's given much of the profits to some of the families or the families of people who perished."

About 150 first responders from New York, as well as some from Washington and Pennsylvania, were in attendance, Trump said.

"This steel beam represents the best of our country," said Frank Siller, the foundation's chairman and CEO who is the brother of Stephen Siller. "It's important to recognize that the heroism that was exhibited that fateful day was nothing short of incredible."

Most states prompt schools to teach about 9/11, but the details differ, AP finds

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

For three days this summer, teachers converged at the Flight 93 National Memorial in remote western Pennsylvania to talk about 9/11.

How best to educate a new generation about the attacks 25 years ago? Which details are appropriate for young kids? What do victims' families want students to be told about the dead?

"Even worse than getting started wrong or using inappropriate language is the total omission of telling the story," Gordon Felt, whose brother Edward Felt died on United Airlines Flight 93 on Sept. 11, told teachers in one session. "That's our biggest fear."

Teaching about 9/11 in schools is more important than ever now that about one-third of Americans were born after al-Qaida hijackers crashed planes and killed nearly 3,000 people in New York, the Pentagon and rural Shanksville, Pennsylvania. A growing majority of states — at least 40 — expect or suggest that public schools address 9/11 in some way, but the provisions vary widely in scope, specificity and framing, The Associated Press has found.

State education standards range from detailed course content to broad concepts. As a result, some don't specify what to teach about Sept. 11.

A decade after the attacks, about 60% of states didn't explicitly mention 9/11 in their education standards, but there has been more movement toward teaching it as time passed and the attacks were seen as "a settled event," said University of Wisconsin education professor Jeremy Stoddard. He, now-retired dean Diana Hess and colleagues have researched 9/11 education for decades.

"For those states that include it, it seems to be going in much more depth than it was in the past," Stoddard said.

States vary in teaching about 9/11

Twenty-five states have laws or education standards that require or expect public schools to provide instruction specifically on the Sept. 11 attacks, and another 13 have optional mentions of 9/11, according to data AP gathered. Several other states have laws requiring or recommending school observances, bringing the number of states with some policy to at least 40. In states without specific laws or standards, schools and teachers also may choose on their own to discuss the attacks.

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Here's how every U.S. state approaches 9/11 history in schools.

The AP gathered its data through requests to all states, reviews of standards in four states that didn't answer, and interviews with lawmakers and other officials.

While states may share an interest in teaching about 9/11, their approaches differ.

In Alabama, Sept. 11 fits into "the United States' military involvement in international conflicts since 1980" for students as young as fifth-graders. Texas has taught 9/11 and surrounding events as an example of "radical Islamic terrorism" and a key piece of modern history overall.

Colorado suggests high school students might analyze the aftermath of Sept. 11, including "Middle Eastern discrimination." New Mexico envisions discussions that could include not only post-9/11 wars and legislation but also the U.S. detention of suspected enemy combatants at the Guantanamo Bay naval base in Cuba and the Abu Ghraib prisoner-abuse scandal.

States' classroom lessons don't always map neatly with their political leanings. States as politically different as California, Florida, New Jersey and North Dakota all propose or expect that students discuss post-9/11 efforts to balance national security and civil liberties, for instance.

But social studies overhauls that reflect conservative priorities have tended to include Sept. 11. A 2023 Florida law even specifies that certain middle and high school courses spend 45 minutes on 9/11.

The Louisiana "Freedom Framework" — crafted in 2022 after conservative complaints about an earlier draft — starts mentioning 9/11 in second grade.

"We coalesced around our belief that Sept. 11 needed to be included in a very real way," Louisiana Education Superintendent Cade Brumley said by phone this spring. He hopes students learn that "threats to our freedom are real, but as Americans, I think, we are quite powerful when we stand together and we face that adversity."

A 2022 Arizona law required "age-appropriate education" on Sept. 11 in all public schools — until legislators dialed it back last year to seventh through 12th grades. "We have to protect young children from the true horror of 9/11 and ensure older children never forget it," said state Sen. John Kavanagh, a Republican who sponsored the first measure and supported both.

In Congress, Rep. Andrew Garbarino, R-N.Y., has proposed a resolution encouraging all states to teach students about the attacks.

Educating teachers, along with students

About 60% of U.S. young adults say they first learned about the attacks through school, according to a recent Pew Research Center poll that included about 250 adults born after 2000. But if educators' role in 9/11 awareness is clear, it hasn't been easy.

When Megan Jones became the National Sept. 11 Memorial & Museum's education chief in 2014, teachers told her they worried about bringing up traumatic memories for students. Now, pupils often need basic facts, and teachers reconcile their own pained recollections with the reality that students see Sept. 11, 2001, as distant history.

The key is "helping them to understand how 9/11 ultimately shaped the world that they live in," Jones said. The New York memorial has raised over \$25 million this year to enhance student field trips, teacher training and other education programs.

The Flight 93 Memorial brought 40 Pennsylvania teachers to its site in June, hoping to kindle more education about Sept. 11, said organizer Donna Gibson, the executive director of Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial.

Fifth-grade teacher Martha "Marty" Runzer went to explore a subject with personal meaning. The former United Airlines flight attendant wears her old wings pin every Sept. 11, tells her West Chester students about her colleagues who died, and emphasizes how ordinary people — such as the Flight 93 passengers and crew members who tried to wrest control from the 9/11 hijackers — became "everyday superheroes."

John Boston Bradley, by contrast, doesn't remember 9/11. The 28-year-old social studies teacher has taught his Catholic high school students in Johnstown about the attacks, but he said the memorial sym-

posium inspired him to convey more of the "human, emotional aspect."

"It will help our students understand that these difficult stories need to be told," he said.

How kids see 9/11

"Why did they want to crash into us?" Desmond Killian, 9, asked his parents as they looked around the Sept. 11 Memorial plaza in New York one recent afternoon.

"It's some tough things to talk about," dad Eric Killian replied.

Desmond took that in, then asked: "Which country?"

"It wasn't so much a country," Eric Killian said.

The questions kept coming from the fourth-grader, who said he'd heard the term "9/11" from friends but hadn't been taught about it yet in his California school. The state recommends that all public schools hold a moment of silence, and it suggests that high schools discuss the attacks' impact on U.S. policy and world affairs.

Another visitor, 17-year-old New Jersey high school senior Ameya Williams, had learned extensively about Sept. 11, from the missed warning signals before the attacks to rebuilding after.

Her state requires such instruction in public high schools and encourages age-appropriate instruction earlier. Plus Williams has heard stories from relatives, including her grandfather, who was commuting to work at New York's World Trade Center when it was struck.

"I feel like understanding it is understanding what they went through," Williams said.

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis have become an increasingly disruptive force in the Mideast

By FATMA KHALED, AHMED AL-HAJ and JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

ADEN, Yemen (AP) — Yemen's Houthi rebels, who launched a wave of attacks on Saudi oil facilities on Tuesday, have become an increasingly disruptive force in the Middle East in recent years, striking Israel, Saudi Arabia and a global shipping route in solidarity with Iran and allied armed groups.

They have been at war with Yemen's internationally recognized government since 2014, when the rebels swept down from their mountainous heartland and seized much of northern and central Yemen. Saudi Arabia entered the war the following year on behalf of the government.

A ceasefire largely halted the fighting in 2022. The Houthis trained their fire on Israel and Red Sea shipping routes after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack triggered the war in Gaza. Those attacks subsided after the U.S. carried out a wave of airstrikes on the Houthis in early 2025.

The Houthis kept to the sidelines during the initial, heavy phase of the Iran war, but in July they resumed attacks on Saudi Arabia and declared a blockade against the oil giant. The Houthis have their own reasons for fighting the Saudis, but it also serves Iran's interests by ramping up pressure on an American-allied oil producer as Tehran seeks leverage against the United States.

The rebels have been at war with Saudi Arabia for more than a decade

The Houthis are members of Islam's minority Shiite Zaydi sect, which ruled Yemen for 1,000 years until 1962. Their official slogan is "God is greatest; death to America; death to Israel; a curse on the Jews; victory for Islam."

They battled Yemen's central government for years before launching the 2014 offensive, which soon ground into a stalemate. The war has killed an estimated 150,000 people and at times pushed Yemen to the brink of famine. Even before the war, it was the poorest country in the Arab world.

A Saudi-led blockade has largely isolated Houthi-run areas of Yemen — including the capital, Sanaa — deepening the misery there. The Houthis have also faced growing discontent over their campaign of detaining U.N. employees and aid workers.

The 2022 truce largely held until July of this year, when the Houthis resumed their attacks on Saudi Arabia in response to an airstrike on Sanaa's international airport that the rebels said prevented a flight from Iran from landing.

The Houthis also declared a blockade on Saudi shipping, threatening a major oil exporter at a time of

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soaring prices due to Iran's disruption of the Strait of Hormuz. They threaten another key trade route, running through the Bab el-Mandeb and the Red Sea, that carries 12% of the world's trade in peacetime.

Saudi Arabia has vowed to respond to such attacks, but seems keen to avoid a return to full-blown war.

The Houthis are part of Iran's so-called Axis of Resistance

The Houthis are a proud member of Iran's so-called Axis of Resistance, an alliance of armed groups hostile to Israel that includes Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza and Tehran-backed militias in Iraq.

Iran denies arming the Houthis — which would violate a U.N. embargo — but Iranian weapons have been seized from ships bound for Yemen on a number of occasions.

The Houthis' profile rose after the outbreak of the Gaza war, when they began launching missile and drone attacks on Israel and targeting commercial ships in the Red Sea. The Houthis portrayed such attacks as a blockade on Israel, but most of the targeted ships had no known connection to Israel or the Gaza war.

Between November 2023 and December 2024, the Houthis targeted more than 100 merchant vessels with missiles and drones, sinking two and killing four sailors. Their campaign greatly reduced the flow of trade through the Red Sea corridor, which typically sees \$1 trillion of goods move through it annually.

The U.S. and Israel eventually responded with waves of airstrikes in 2025, and the attacks largely ceased.

Attacks have killed dozens and could reignite war with the Saudis

The Houthis have resumed their attacks on Yemeni government forces, killing dozens of troops and civilians. They have also fired on several Saudi oil tankers, disrupting shipping in the Red Sea.

The Bab el-Mandeb has worked as a pressure release valve since the start of the Iran war as Saudi Arabia has piped oil across the Arabian Peninsula to the Red Sea to avoid the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's effective closure of the strait has jolted the world economy, driving up the price of fuel and other goods far beyond the Mideast.

The Houthis say the attacks on Saudi tankers are aimed at lifting the Saudi-led blockade. But they also serve Iran's interests by opening a new front in a regional war with no end in sight.

The GOP was confident about keeping its Senate majority. Now the fight for control is wide open

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI, THOMAS BEAUMONT and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans appeared to have a firm grip on the Senate heading into the final two years of President Donald Trump's term. But with less than two months until Election Day, control of the chamber is now up for grabs.

Democrats have found themselves competing in states that once seemed beyond their reach as Trump's slipping approval ratings and voters' dissatisfaction with the economy create a difficult political environment for Republicans. But races Democrats once counted on winning have also become more complicated.

It's a battle that's expected to exceed \$3.4 billion in spending across all races during the midterm campaign. The implications are huge for Trump's agenda and his ability to fill administration jobs and open court seats for the remainder of his term, as the Senate is empowered to confirm or block presidential nominees.

Republicans say it's unlikely for everything to break in Democrats' favor, but they acknowledge they're facing a difficult landscape. Senate Majority Leader John Thune told South Dakota's KELOLAND News last week that he does "worry" about losing the chamber.

"I'm a realist," Thune said. "I don't ever try and sugarcoat things. I think it's a competitive environment right now."

Democrats face a scrambled path to the majority

Democrats need to net four seats to win the majority. The original path had been to hold Michigan, Georgia and New Hampshire while winning back Republican-held seats in Alaska, Maine, North Carolina and Ohio. But things have changed.

"We now have multiple paths for the majority," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said last month. "We found new states — Iowa, Texas — which people a year ago weren't even paying attention to."

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Some of the states where Democrats were feeling most optimistic at the start of the election cycle, such as Michigan and Maine, have grown murkier.

In Michigan, where there's an open seat this fall, no GOP candidate has won a Senate race since 1994. But Democrats are struggling to unite behind nominee Abdul El-Sayed. The favorite of progressives narrowly defeated moderate U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens in the August primary, and feelings remain raw from a bruising contest that saw nearly \$70 million spent against El-Sayed.

Republicans believe Mike Rogers, who lost the 2024 Senate race by fewer than 20,000 votes, has an improved shot against El-Sayed. The Senate Leadership Fund — Senate Republicans' spending PAC — added \$6 million to its Michigan advertising investment after El-Sayed won, bringing their total spending to \$51 million, the third-highest total.

Democrats also saw a prime opportunity to finally defeat five-term Republican Sen. Susan Collins in Maine, where Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris won more votes than Trump in 2024.

Progressive Graham Platner easily won the nomination in June, but he left the race the next month over a sexual assault allegation that he denies. Democratic delegates in late July chose Troy Jackson, a lesser-known former state legislative leader, to replace him.

Jackson has been forced to play catch-up. Collins and aligned super PACs have spent almost \$80 million so far, according to the ad-tracking firm AdImpact, while Jackson and Democratic-aligned groups have spent and reserved close to \$45 million since he became the nominee.

As one path narrowed for Democrats, others widened

Democrats increasingly see a real possibility in Texas, a state that has been an elusive goal for decades, and other GOP-led states including Iowa, Alaska and Ohio.

In Texas, Democrat James Talarico faces state Attorney General Ken Paxton, who ousted four-term incumbent Republican Sen. John Cornyn to win the GOP nomination. Senate GOP leadership backed Cornyn, seeing him as the stronger general election candidate.

Paxton has been shadowed for decades by legal and ethical questions, including indictments for securities fraud, though he was not convicted.

Talarico and allied groups have spent nearly \$30 million on advertising since the May runoff, compared to less than \$3 million by pro-Paxton groups. The political fund associated with Trump last week spent \$10 million on TV and digital ads to help Paxton — the first major general election investment by MAGA Inc. for the midterms. Senate GOP leaders had petitioned Trump's political team to spend some of the more than \$400 million it had last month to help Paxton.

Democrats have also upped their spending in Alaska, Iowa, Ohio and North Carolina, all states currently held by Republicans. The GOP, meanwhile, is feeling more optimistic about New Hampshire as well as Michigan, while spending more to defend seats in Iowa and Alaska.

The expanded map has upped the anticipated total spending this cycle. AdImpact in June projected \$3.4 billion in advertising spending on Senate races, a significant increase from the \$2.8 billion the ad spending firm projected in the fall of 2025.

Why more states are in play than expected

Democrats' path has widened in part because of Trump's slumping job approval, notably on handling the economy, which was at 32% according to an AP-NORC poll in July — down from 40% in March 2025, shortly after he took office.

Trump's trade policies and the war in Iran, with its corresponding inflated fuel costs, have added to the economic uncertainty for voters less than two months before Election Day.

"Things still cost too much. And so we've got to work on that issue," Republican Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio told The Associated Press. "We understand that and we know that's real."

Ohio Sen. Jon Husted heard the concern firsthand at a roundtable last month. Husted is looking to fend off a comeback from former Sen. Sherrod Brown in another key matchup for both parties.

During the discussion on housing, one attendee told Husted that costs were "skyrocketing" in part because of uncertainty around tariffs.

"Uncertainty is the killer to this economy," said Dean Windham, a real estate developer who previously

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ran for office as a Republican.

Some Republican Senate candidates have defended Trump's policies while confronting concerns about their economic impact.

In Michigan, where Trump's tariffs on Canada have become a central issue, Rogers has backed the president's approach while leaving room for disagreement.

"President Trump is right to put America First — and tariffs are necessary, but are not a one-size-fits-all solution," Rogers said in a recent statement.

Republicans believe the math still favors them

Even if Democrats hold every seat they currently control, they would need to flip at least two seats in states Trump carried by double digits in 2024 to win the majority.

Republicans are betting that those underlying advantages will matter more as Election Day approaches — particularly as Trump and the party turn their attention toward mobilizing voters who helped return him to the White House.

Trump told reporters last week that he will "be making a lot of stops" in the last 30 days before the election.

This week, Republicans will hold a midterm convention in Texas, where Trump is set to speak and top Senate candidates including Rogers and Husted are expected to attend.

But Republicans acknowledge they have work to do.

"Politics is local," Republican Sen. Mike Rounds of South Dakota said. He pointed to Trump's decision to import beef, which he said made farmers and ranchers "feel just like the administration pulled the rug right off from underneath" them.

"They're hurt," Rounds said. "They feel like they've been let down."

Cyclospora outbreak followed years of declining FDA foreign inspections

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A nationwide outbreak of cyclospora tied to contaminated lettuce has heightened safety concerns about imported food, while underscoring a longer-term trend: U.S. regulators are conducting fewer international inspections to catch contaminated produce before it lands on American plates.

Food and Drug Administration inspections of foreign food sites — including the Mexican farm linked to the ongoing outbreak — are down nearly 35% since 2019, the year before the COVID-19 pandemic, according to agency records reviewed by The Associated Press. The pandemic kicked off a wave of retirements and departures among FDA inspectors that continues to this day.

Even before COVID-19, the agency had long failed to hit its congressionally mandated targets for international inspections. And recent staffing cuts, reorganizations and other upheavals under President Donald Trump could mean even fewer inspections in the years ahead, according to former senior FDA officials.

"When you look at the numbers of inspections balanced against the responsibility of the FDA — in terms of all the firms domestically and internationally under its oversight — the agency just can't achieve what is required," said Michael Rogers, who spent nearly 35 years in various inspection roles within the agency. He added that FDA continues to do many things "very well with limited resources."

The Trump administration has proposed new approaches to stretch agency resources — including a pilot program of one-day inspections. Rogers and other officials say the abbreviated inspections are not equivalent to traditional ones, which can take a week or more to document serious problems.

FDA officials have long made the case that inspections are only one tool to oversee safety.

"Inspections will never be the only way to ensure the safety of imported products given the massive volume coming into the country," said Susan Mayne, FDA's former food director who is now at Yale University. "That's why FDA uses border inspections, importer inspections, sampling and other tools."

But the outbreak in iceberg lettuce has also laid bare the potential downsides of those approaches.

In July, regulators were forced to retract a faulty test result that they claimed found cyclospora on a

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sample of Taylor Farms' lettuce obtained at the border. Despite the error, FDA officials say they are confident the company's farm is the source of the diarrhea-causing parasite. Mexican food authorities, however, say they have not found any positive samples or other red flags there.

A spokesperson for the Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees FDA, said the agency's investigation is ongoing. Additionally, FDA officials are studying how many foreign inspections should be conducted annually "to ensure oversight comparable" to the U.S. food supply.

FDA inspectors took a month to arrive at Mexican farm

FDA inspectors arrived at the Taylor Farms site in Guanajuato, Mexico, in mid-August, about one month after the recall was announced July 17.

It was their first visit there since 2019. That year marked an all-time high for foreign food inspections before the FDA pulled most of its staff from the field during the pandemic.

Inspections for food — along with drugs, medical devices and other products — still haven't recovered. And foreign food inspections actually fell further behind last year, down 17% to 1,140 in fiscal year 2025 from the prior year.

While inspectors were not among the 3,500 jobs targeted for termination by the Trump administration, the agency did eliminate more than half the staffers who handle travel bookings. That's left inspectors to handle most of their own flights, lodging and other logistics.

Food experts say it shouldn't have taken four weeks to get inspectors on-site in Mexico, considering the scale and number of people sickened.

"It took us too long to get boots on the ground," said Frank Yiannas, the former top food safety official at FDA. "When these outbreaks happen in fresh produce, you have to respond quickly because these are very complex and changing ecosystems."

The Taylor Farms recall involved thousands of packaged salad products combining iceberg lettuce with other vegetables. The products were shipped to major U.S. restaurant chains, including Yum Brands, which owns Taco Bell, Pizza Hut and KFC.

According to FDA figures, companies have announced more than 480 food recalls in the current fiscal year, already surpassing four out of the five previous years.

Food inspection targets have gone unmet for over a decade

Washington has tried before to overhaul the U.S. food safety system.

A string of deadly outbreaks involving spinach, cantaloupe and other produce led Congress to pass the Food Safety Modernization Act of 2011, which required additional testing, training and monitoring of hygiene conditions at farms. The legislation also set aggressive goals for FDA foreign inspections — targets the agency has never met.

Under the law, the FDA is supposed to inspect more than 19,000 international food sites annually. The agency hit an all-time high of 1,700 in 2019 — less than one-tenth of the target, according to the Government Accountability Office.

Former FDA regulators say the 19,000 target is unachievable and has never been properly funded by Congress — which has left FDA's food budget essentially flat for years. Still, the FDA "has not identified an appropriate annual target," GAO noted.

Perhaps the biggest challenge to boosting inspections is recruiting new inspectors, and retaining those FDA already has.

The FDA's food inspection workforce includes more than 420 staffers, although 10% to 15% of its positions have been chronically unfilled, according to the GAO and former staffers.

Inspectors who work internationally can spend 50% or more of their working time traveling, a grueling schedule that has long caused turnover among FDA staff.

"Until you can better incentivize people to stay in those positions, I think the agency is going to continue to see high attrition, younger and less experienced investigators," said Rogers. "That ultimately may impact FDA's ability to enhance and increase inspections."

Many experts say new approaches, including machine learning and remote monitoring of supplier practices, could help alleviate some of the need for inspections.

"We have to rethink how we oversee the safety of foreign producers," Yiannas said. "We can't use the same approaches and limited tools that we've used for the past 30 years."

The 2011 food safety law called on manufacturers to place bar codes on each batch of produce, so that it can be quickly traced in the event of contamination. The rule was supposed to take effect in January, following years of discussions and revisions with produce companies. But the FDA again delayed its implementation after pushback from industry.

"There's widespread acknowledgment that these are complex issues, but when you have 17 years to prepare for a final exam you should be able to pass it," said Brian Ronholm, a former Department of Agriculture official who is now with Consumer Reports.

Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia ignite fires at oil facilities and wound 73 people

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The Iranian-backed Houthi rebel group in Yemen launched a wave of attacks on Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, wounding more than 70 people and igniting fires at oil facilities and utilities in the kingdom, authorities said.

The attack was a major escalation in renewed fighting between an important U.S. ally and the Iranian proxy group. It also threatened to further destabilize a region rocked by nearly three years of wars and deliver a new blow to the global economy.

Weeks of clashes have added pressure to limited global oil supplies as the Houthis target a shipping route Saudi Arabia has used to transport oil to world markets while the Strait of Hormuz is throttled due to the U.S.-Iran war. Tuesday's attacks hit Saudi oil facilities connected to an alternative route, the Bab el-Mandeb, a strategic waterway off the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula that connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden.

Houthi attacks hit oil facilities in southern Saudi Arabia

The attacks early Tuesday came hours after the rebels blamed Saudi Arabia for an airstrike that hit a prison in Yemen's northern province of Jawf. At least seven people, including a child, were killed and seven others were wounded.

The rebels hit "civilian and economic facilities" in the Saudi cities of Abha, Jazan, Najran and Khamis Mushait, said Maj. Gen. Turki al-Malki, a spokesperson for the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen.

Seventy-three people were wounded, including women and children, he said, calling the attacks a "serious escalation" and vowing retaliation.

The attacks ignited fires at several oil facilities and utilities in Saudi Arabia's southern region, the kingdom's Energy Ministry said, adding that operations at the oil facilities and utilities were temporarily suspended.

The southern region houses major oil facilities, including a 400,000-barrel-per-day oil refinery in Jazan, which is one of Saudi Arabia's largest. The Houthis previously attacked the Abha airport.

The ministry said firefighters were battling the fires Tuesday morning.

In a prerecorded video statement, Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree, the Houthis military spokesman, said they fired dozens of ballistic missiles and drones at oil and economic facilities, as well as an air base in southern Saudi Arabia.

He said they targeted Jazan City for Primary and Downstream Industries, a major industrial and logistics hub on Saudi Arabia's southwestern Red Sea coast. The rebels also aimed at Aramco facilities in Najran and Abha, as well as King Khalid Air Base in Khamis Mushait.

Saree blamed Saudi Arabia for the escalation, warning that "every aggression against our country and people will be met with a firm response."

While visiting Moscow Tuesday, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan accused the Houthis of resorting to violence to serve their interests over those of Yemen, despite the Kingdom offering a chance to negotiate for peace.

He added during a joint press briefing with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, that the latest es-

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calation by the Houthis against the Kingdom is part of a series of provocations and that Saudi Arabia will not hesitate to defend itself

Fears mount of renewed war in Yemen as thousands are displaced

The new fighting has threatened to reignite the country's civil war, which began in 2014 when the Houthis seized the capital, Sanaa, and much of northern Yemen and forced the government into exile. A Saudi-led coalition intervened the following year to try to restore the government to power.

The war has killed at least 150,000 people, according to U.N. estimates, and at times pushed the country to the brink of famine.

A truce four years ago had eased fighting between the Houthis and the Saudi-backed government and its allies. But in recent weeks, the two sides have increasingly been battling on the ground.

The flare-up has killed at least 194 people and wounded over 880 others between Aug. 23 and Sep. 5, said the World Health Organization. It also displaced more than 21,000 people, including 18,500 in Taiz and Hodeida in southwestern Yemen, over the past 27 hours, according to the United Nations.

"Families are arriving with nothing: no shelter, no food, no way to know if it's safe to go back," said Abdusattor Esoev, head of the International Organization for Migration's mission in Yemen. "Many of these are people who have already been displaced once, twice, even four times before."

The latest escalation stemmed from a Houthi attempt in July to fly a plane from Tehran to Yemen's capital, Sanaa, challenging a decade-long air and naval blockade by the Saudi-led coalition. A coalition airstrike struck the runway of the Sanaa airport, preventing the landing of the flight.

The Houthis responded with missile and drone attacks on Saudi Arabia, and attacks on Saudi shipping in the Red Sea, ending a 2022 truce that had largely halted fighting.

The rebels also launched attacks on Saudi-allied forces inside Yemen, prompting government forces to respond with attacks on the Houthis across Yemen's west coast and elsewhere in the country.

Government forces have reclaimed territory from the Houthis in the provinces of Hodeida and Taiz, and attacked the rebels in the northern province of Jawf as well as the central provinces of Marib and Bayda.

The Houthis are part of a network of Iranian-backed proxies across the region that have stepped up attacks on regional shipping, Israel and neighboring countries in recent years in response to Israel's wars in Gaza and Lebanon, and more recently during the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran.

The rebels often act in coordination with Iran but also have carried out operations independently to promote their own interests.

German vote shows rise of far right in Europe, but it hasn't been a steady march

By SAM McNEIL Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The stunning victory of the Alternative for Germany in a state election has renewed fears of an ascendant far right in Europe, as voters repeatedly vent discontent and mainstream leaders grapple with myriad crises, from affordability to Russian aggression and scraps with China and the United States over trade.

But while anti-immigrant, pro-Russian parties have made inroads across the continent in recent years, there have also been notable reversals, and some have softened their views to build coalitions with moderates.

The AfD fell short of an absolute majority in Sunday's vote in Saxony-Anhalt that would have allowed it to form the first far-right state government since the Nazi era — though it may still manage to do so.

Far-right leaders from Portugal to Austria celebrated the win as they ready for elections across Europe in the coming months. These will show whether the vote was a watershed moment in the demise of an anti-fascist consensus dating back to World War II, or the latest in a series of elections worldwide in which frustrated voters simply cast out incumbents.

Far-right parties have gained influence in several governments

The far right's biggest success in recent years was the rise of Giorgia Meloni, who became prime minister

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of Italy, one of Europe's most influential countries, at the helm of a party with neo-fascist roots.

But Meloni, who campaigned as an EU-skeptic, took a moderate turn in office that has won praise from across the continent and led to her presiding over the most stable government in decades. She now faces a challenge from the right, in the form of an upstart party led by a retired general.

Far-right parties have meanwhile joined governments and gained key portfolios in Finland, Croatia and Slovakia.

Populist anti-immigrant parties also made major gains in the 2024 elections for the European Union parliament, reflecting their growing support across the 27-nation bloc.

Since then, the center-right European People's Party has increasingly coordinated with the far right, as it did earlier this year in embarking on a historic migration overhaul that incensed traditional allies on the center left and human rights groups.

"It's a bit of a paradox: you partner up with them to prevent them from getting more powerful," said Sophia Russack, a fellow at the Brussels-based Centre for European Policy Studies.

Populists have also suffered some notable setbacks

For 16 years, Hungary's Viktor Orbán was the standard-bearer of the far right in Europe and an inspiration for populists worldwide. But he lost in a landslide in April to a former ally who had campaigned against corruption.

In the Netherlands, Geert Wilders, another far-right celebrity, broke up a coalition he had helped form when his allies refused to go along with his far-reaching crackdown on immigration.

The far-right, anti-immigration Reform UK party has grown in influence in the United Kingdom in recent years and was the big winner in local elections in May, a result that helped spur a panicky Labour Party to replace then-leader Keir Starmer with new Prime Minister Andy Burnham.

Though it holds just eight of the 650 seats in the House of Commons, Reform has often led opinion polls and dominated political debates on immigration. Led by the veteran nationalist politician Nigel Farage, the party has been particularly successful in areas that supported Brexit in 2016.

But Reform has recently suffered reverses, losing several special elections and facing questions about funding.

Electoral setbacks, however, send "a double-edged message," said Jeremy Cliffe, editorial director of the European Council on Foreign Relations.

"These parties are mortal, they can be defeated, but when they're in power, they're not all chaotic and hopeless."

All eyes will be on next year's elections in France and Spain

Next year's elections in France and Spain present major opportunities for the far right to resume its march across the continent — or stumble, said Lisa Musiol, head of EU Affairs for the International Crisis Group.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, revered by the global left for his stance on migration and the wars in Gaza and Iran, has faced mass protests over the Ceuta border crisis.

The far-right, anti-immigrant Vox party, which holds just 32 seats in the country's 350-member parliament, is poised to gain. It has already entered into governing agreements with the center-right Popular Party, parliament's second biggest faction, in four regional elections.

Sánchez said Monday that the AfD win should be "a warning that the far-right threat is gaining ground in Europe and the world," and that "a progressive coalition government is more necessary than ever."

In France, the far-right leader Marine Le Pen is the front-runner to replace the increasingly unpopular President Emmanuel Macron, who is constitutionally barred from seeking a third term. She has long been hostile toward the EU and immigration.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot, whose center-right party is among a crowded field running against Le Pen's National Rally, decried the Germany vote as a victory for "the neo-Nazi, anti-European and pro-Putin far right."

"We urgently need to open our eyes to the despair that is propelling such ideas and such parties to power," he said in a post online. "It can be done, but this is our last chance."

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Today in History: September 9, Attica prison uprising begins

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 9, the 252nd day of 2026. There are 113 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 9, 1971, prisoners seized control of the maximum-security Attica Correctional Facility near Buffalo, New York, taking 42 staff members hostage and demanding improvements to inmate treatment and living conditions.

Also on this date:

In 1776, the second Continental Congress formally adopted the name "United States of America," replacing the "United Colonies of North America."

In 1850, California was admitted as the 31st U.S. state.

In 1919, about 1,100 members of Boston's 1,500-member police force went on strike. The strike was broken by Massachusetts Gov. Calvin Coolidge with replacement officers.

In 1948, the People's Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea) was declared.

In 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the first civil rights bill to pass Congress since Reconstruction, a measure primarily concerned with protecting voting rights. It also established a Civil Rights Division in the U.S. Department of Justice.

In 1985, President Ronald Reagan ordered economic sanctions against South Africa to target apartheid.

In 1993, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat exchanged letters in which the PLO recognized Israel's right to exist and renounced violence and Israel recognized the PLO as representing the Palestinian people. The exchange occurred days before an agreement under the Oslo peace process.

In 2022, King Charles III gave his first speech to Britain as its new monarch, vowing to carry on the "lifelong service" of his mother Queen Elizabeth II, who died a day earlier.

In 2025, Israeli conducted a daylight airstrike targeting the Hamas political leadership in Doha, Qatar. The attack killed at least five lower-ranking Hamas members and inflamed Middle East tensions as Israel continued to wage war against Hamas in Gaza.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Dee Dee Sharp is 81. Former NFL quarterback Joe Theismann is 77. Actor Angela Cartwright is 74. Musician-producer Dave Stewart (Eurythmics) is 74. Actor Hugh Grant is 66. Actor Constance Marie is 61. Actor Adam Sandler is 60. Actor Julia Sawalha (suh-WAHL'-hah) is 58. Model Rachel Hunter is 57. Actor Eric Stonestreet is 55. Actor Henry Thomas is 55. Actor Goran Visnjic (VEEZ'-nihch) is 54. Pop-jazz singer Michael Bublé (boo-BLAY') is 51. Actor Michelle Williams is 46. Actor Zoe Kazan is 43. Country singer-songwriter Hunter Hayes is 35. Actor Ronni Hawk is 27. NHL hockey player Luke Hughes is 23.