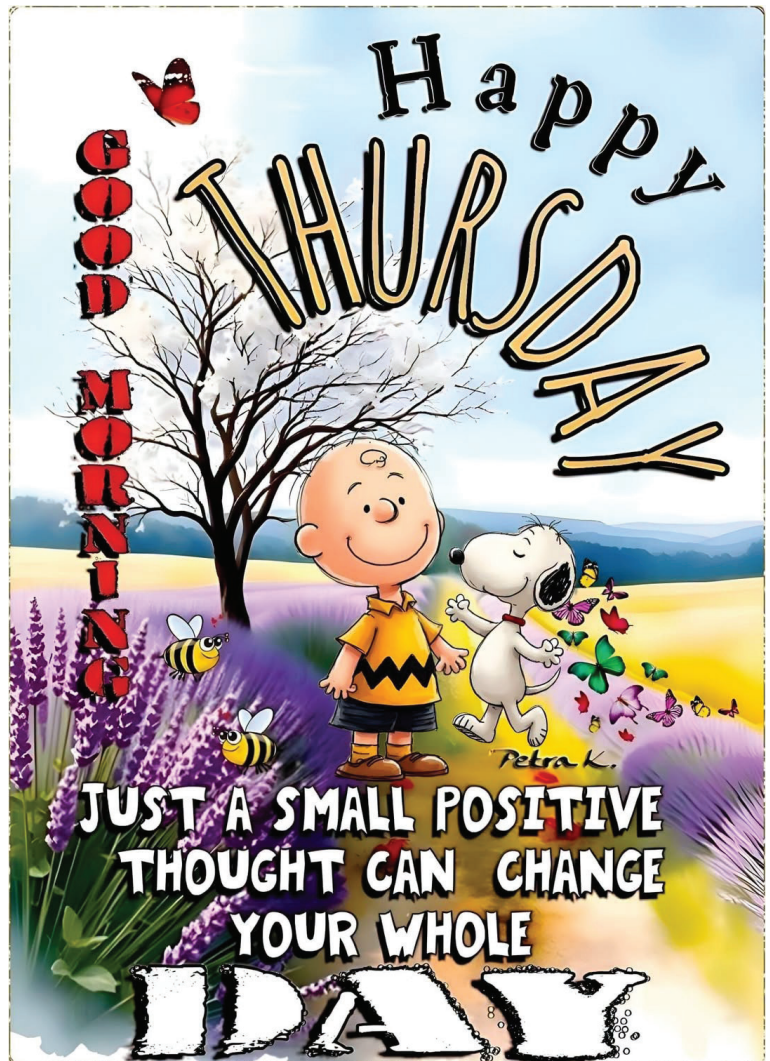


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Community Calendar

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)

Friday, Sept. 11

PATRIOT DAY

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

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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

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1440

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

Kirk Assassination Anniversary

Today marks one year since conservative activist Charlie Kirk was fatally shot while speaking at Utah Valley University. His organization, Turning Point USA, returns to campus today for a memorial.

Kirk founded Turning Point in 2012 at age 18 and grew it into a nonprofit with an operating budget of over \$100M. He is credited with helping to boost President Donald Trump's support among voters under 30 from 36% in 2020 to 47% in 2024. Since Kirk's assassination, college students' support for violence as a means to combat speech has dropped slightly. His death has also fueled infighting among Republicans and sparked conspiracy theories across the political spectrum, with a 2025 poll finding 36% of voters distrust media coverage of the assassination. Kirk's widow, Erika, now leads Turning Point, where new high school and college chapters have grown 168% and 64%, respectively.

Separately, a Utah judge last week ordered alleged gunman Tyler Robinson, 23, to stand trial on seven counts, including aggravated murder, which could make him eligible for the death penalty.

Pricey Oil Milestone

The cost of Brent crude topped \$100 per barrel yesterday for the first time since July. US stock markets dropped on yesterday's news (S&P 500 -0.5%, Dow -0.8%, Nasdaq -0.6%) as President Donald Trump said the war will end and gas prices will fall after the November midterms.

A wave of tit-for-tat strikes over the past week includes US strikes on at least eight Iranian oil tankers, including at least one near Kharg Island, and Iranian attacks on 10 ships in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran this week also captured an unmanned US submarine drone and promises to set up an "exclusion zone," further restricting passage through the strait. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's oil exports are down to a 13-year low; the news comes after Iranian-backed Houthi rebels struck Saudi Arabia's energy and utility infrastructure this week, wounding more than 70 people.

Lasker Award Winners

The Lasker Awards recognized breakthroughs yesterday spanning the biology of sleep, a blood disorder treatment, and Parkinson's disease advocacy. The prestigious honors, known as "America's Nobel," include a \$250K reward per category.

Emmanuel Mignot (Stanford) and Masashi Yanagisawa (University of Tsukuba) won the basic medical research award for separately finding that the absence of a brain chemical called orexin causes many cases of narcolepsy. Their discovery translated into an FDA-approved drug for the neurological disorder, which affects an estimated one in 2,000 people in the US. Kunihiro Hattori, Takehisa Kitazawa, and Tomoyuki Igawa shared the clinical medical research award for developing a drug to treat hemophilia A. Actor Michael J. Fox received the public service award for raising awareness and funds toward Parkinson's research.

Established in 1945, the Lasker Foundation has honored over 400 recipients, more than 80 of whom have gone on to earn a Nobel Prize.

 Humankind: World War II veteran asks for 100 cards for his 100th birthday and receives more than 4,000.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Tennis star Coco Gauff advances to US Open semifinals to face Elena Rybakina.
Ben Shelton outlasts Carlos Alcaraz in quarterfinal match that set record for latest finish in tournament's history, concluding at 3:33 am local time.
New York Knicks star Jalen Brunson will host the season 52 premiere of "Saturday Night Live" on Sept. 26.
Sinkhole swallows driveway of Nicolas Cage's unoccupied Malibu home, prompting local emergency declaration.
Dolly Parton's first posthumous song appears on a new Stanley Brothers tribute album, releasing Oct. 16.

Science & Technology

Apple unveils iPhone Duo, its first-ever foldable phone with a 7.6-inch continuous inner display, which starts at \$1,999 and goes on sale Oct. 23.
Archaeologists uncover earliest known evidence of habitual drug use among hunter-gatherers who lived 16,000 to 25,000 years ago; tooth fossils suggest they sucked betel nuts to release psychoactive properties and ease toothaches.
Bursts of gentle static known as "pink noise" may spur more restorative sleep, potentially improving cognitive function and memory while slowing the progression of neurodegenerative diseases.

Business & Markets

US Treasury Department announces it will buy back \$6B in government debt in an effort to keep bond markets functioning; operation comes in response to a surge in 30-year Treasury yields.
Meta shares climb 6.6% yesterday after the tech giant debuts Muse, its new personal AI agent.
Google plans to spend over \$15B to develop AI infrastructure in Finland, marking the tech company's largest single investment in Europe.

Politics & World Affairs

President Donald Trump delivers keynote address at Republican Party's first-ever midterm convention in Dallas, Texas, says he will give every citizen \$5K if Republicans control Congress.
Sen. John Fetterman (D-PA) shares minute-long, pre-recorded video introducing Sen. Dave McCormick (R-PA).
Transportation Security Administration will allow TSA PreCheck members in 13 airports to visit airport gates without tickets, among changes.
Federal appeals court in Louisiana begins hearing oral arguments to determine whether abortion drug mifepristone can be accessed by mail or will require in-person visit; case is expected to be appealed to the Supreme Court.

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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★ 52nd Annual ★ James Valley Threshing and Tractor Club Show

Heritage Quilt & Craft Show

September 11, 12 & 13, 2026

— Andover, South Dakota —

*Celebrating
the history
they protected.*



**HONORING OUR
MILITARY VETERANS
& FEATURING
MILITARY EQUIPMENT**



FEATURED QUILT TRUNK SHOW

Joy Braun – My Journey
Saturday at 10:00 a.m.



- ★ This year, the James Valley Threshing Association is featuring military equipment and honoring veterans.
- ★ Patriotic and military quilt designs are featured.
- ★ All quilts and designs are welcome.
- ★ Heritage Craft Boutique: feel free to donate fabric and notions.
- ★ Quilt vendor for the weekend: Farmhouse Quilt Shop from Hartford, SD.

QUILT & CRAFT SCHEDULE

- **Set-up and hanging of quilts:**
Thursday, September 10 at 1:00 p.m.
- **Program and trunk show:** Saturday at 10:00 a.m.
- **Take-down:** Sunday at 2:00 p.m.
- **We are grateful for our volunteers!**



★ SHOW HIGHLIGHTS ★

DAILY EVENTS (All Three Days)

- Historic Main Street Parade at 1:30 p.m.
- Steam engine demonstrations
- Daily threshing and plowing (after the parade)
- Heritage Craft & Quilt Display
- Kids Sandbox & Park
- Antique Toy Shed
- 1924 Cook Car Display
- Food trucks, ice cream & floats
- Sawmill demonstrations and more!



*History
Community
Tradition
Together*

FRIDAY SPECIAL EVENTS

- 10:30 a.m. – Steam Talk with Kory Anderson
- 8:00 p.m. (ish) – Moonlight Steam Roller Ride around town

SATURDAY SPECIAL EVENTS

- 10:00 a.m. – Heritage Craft Quilt Trunk Show
- 10:30 a.m. – Antique Tractor Pull
- 10:30 a.m. – Steam Talk with Kory Anderson
- 11:00 a.m. – Ladies of Steam Instruction

SUNDAY SPECIAL EVENTS

- 9:30 a.m. – Church Service on Historic Main Street
- 11:00 a.m. – Kids Tractor Pull

★ ★ SPECIAL RECOGNITION ★ ★

Honoring Our Military Veterans
(All branches—past & present)

FREE BUTTON to Military Veterans



For golf cart reservations call
Charlene Voss: 605-881-2920

Daily Entrance Fee: \$15
Weekend Pass: \$40
4-Day Camping Permit: \$25



For more information, visit
www.jamesvalleythreshers.com

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Left to Right: Haley Erickson, Railey Mulder, Presley Olson, Anna Oswald, and Hazel Hill. (Photo Samantha Oswald)

Groton runners turn in strong performances at Britton-Hecla meet

Groton Area runners turned in several strong performances, including a pair of middle school individual championships, at the Britton-Hecla Cross Country Meet held Tuesday, Sept. 8.

Riley Shellenberger led the Groton varsity boys, placing ninth in the 5,000-meter race with a season-best time of 20:57.65.

Eighth-grader Grayden "Grady" Zeck was 16th with a time of 23:10.15, while Tate Johnson finished 25th in 25:16.04. Johnson's time was a personal best.

Ashlynn Warrington represented Groton Area in the girls varsity 5,000-meter race and placed seventh. The senior crossed the finish line in 24:31.54.

Groton also had three runners compete in the boys junior varsity 3,000-meter race. Calvin Locken led the Tigers with an eighth-place finish, recording a personal-best time of 12:41.86.

Titan Johnson finished 26th in 18:02.75, also recording a personal best, while Logan Clocksene was 28th with a season-best time of 19:18.86.

The Tigers collected a pair of individual victories in the middle school races.

Henry Pharis won the boys middle school 3,000-meter race. The sixth-grader crossed the finish line in a personal-best 12:08.67.

Groton Area was especially strong in the girls middle school race, led by Hazel Hill, who captured first place with a personal-best time of 13:30.18. The middle school girls won the team title over Webster. Groton had 14 points while Webster had 23.

Anna Oswald gave Groton the top two finishing positions as she placed second in 14:51.24, also a personal best.

Haley Erickson finished sixth with a personal-best 15:54.05. Presley Olson placed 12th with a personal-best time of 16:53.46, and Railey Mulder was right behind her in 13th with a personal-best 16:57.37.

All five of Groton Area's middle school girls recorded personal-best times at the meet.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Thousands of South Dakota habitat license plates do nothing for habitat, due to two-part process

Drivers are asked to separately donate with decal purchase unlike other states, where process is streamlined

BY JOSHUA HAIAR

Thousands of South Dakota drivers who have habitat conservation license plates have not actually made a financial contribution to protect habitat for wildlife.

That's because unlike some other states, where drivers' habitat contributions are collected during license-plate transactions, South Dakota dispenses the plates and then asks drivers to separately donate to habitat conservation later by ordering habitat-themed decals and affixing them to the plates.

Some drivers don't follow through with the optional purchase of the decals. As a result, the state has sold 8,484 more sets of habitat plates than decals, according to data from the state Department of Game, Fish and Parks running from March 2025, when the plates first became available, through last month. That equates to about \$415,000 in potential funding for habitat that's not being collected.

Meanwhile, the state has sold 4,626 sets of decals, generating about \$230,000 for habitat conservation.

Jeff Olson is a Black Hills Sportsmen Club board member, co-president of Black Hills Flyfishers, a board member of the South Dakota Wildlife Federation, and a former state Game, Fish and Parks commissioner. He is happy the state started a plate program that puts money toward habitat conservation.

"Yet, I have a hard time understanding why we would require people to purchase these things separately," Olson said. "It doesn't make sense."

Olson said he has a friend who has plates with no decals who told Olson "it is too complicated and people just give up."

How the process works

South Dakota habitat plates feature a special design with a field of grass and a blue sky, and the phrase "Habitat Conservation" across the bottom. The plate number is offset to the right, allowing space for the optional decal to be affixed on the left.

The plates cost \$10 beyond the price of a standard vehicle registration, which covers the cost to make the special plates. Habitat plates are valid for three years.

Drivers can obtain plates in person at their county treasurer's office or through the mail. Either way, the state Department of Revenue says, drivers are given written notice of the opportunity to separately purchase the habitat decals from the state Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

A set of decals costs \$50 — or \$30 for motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles — and can be purchased on the Game, Fish and Parks website. The department uses the decal proceeds for habitat conservation work on public and private lands, for projects such as planting native grasses and trees, and doing prescribed burning to control invasive species. Drivers can choose from four decal designs, which the state describes as emblems: a deer, a meadowlark, a pasque flower (the state flower), or a pheasant.

Why is it this way?

Lawmakers authorized the program two years ago, and the state implemented it in March 2025.

Kendra Baucom, a spokesperson for the state Department of Revenue, which works with counties to manage vehicle licensing and registration, told South Dakota Searchlight in a statement that the two-step process is legally necessary due to language in the state constitution.

The decades-old language in Article 11, Section 8 says vehicle license and registration fees "shall be

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used exclusively for the maintenance, construction and supervision of highways and bridges of this state.”

Baucom said “it would be unconstitutional to tie the sale of the emblems to the sale of the plates, then use the proceeds for habitat conservation purposes.”

“While it might not be convenient to purchase the emblems separately, that is how we can both follow the constitution and provide support for habitat conservation,” Baucom added.

How other states handle habitat plates

Other states have figured out how to streamline the process.

In Minnesota, the purchase of a habitat plate includes a minimum \$30 contribution to the state’s Critical Habitat Program at the time of the plate purchase. No additional decal is required. The state’s Department of Public Safety receives the \$30 contribution and passes it along to the habitat program fund. The \$30 contribution is made annually when drivers renew their registration.

Iowa has a natural resources plate program, which includes a \$45 contribution to the program at the time of the plate purchase and annual \$25 renewals, with no extra decal purchase required. After the money is deposited into a road tax fund, the state treasurer credits an equivalent amount to the Iowa Resources Enhancement and Protection Fund, used for habitat and wildlife programs.

Searchlight asked South Dakota’s Department of Revenue why it can’t follow the example of those other states.

“Every state constitution is different,” Baucom replied.

Policymakers react

The disconnect between plate sales and decal sales in South Dakota disappoints the two lawmakers who served as primary sponsors of the authorizing legislation in the state House and Senate.

Erin Tobin of Winner, who was serving as a Republican state senator at the time but is no longer in the Legislature, said state officials should revisit the program to determine whether there is a better way to structure the purchases.

“I’m still really proud of this program,” Tobin said. “It gives people who don’t hunt and fish, but care about habitat, an opportunity to participate in the state’s conservation work as well.”

Hunters and anglers contribute to habitat conservation through fees included in the price of their hunting and fishing licenses, and with taxes on equipment.

The House sponsor, Rep. Jessica Bahmuller, R-Alexandria, said South Dakotans would be more likely to complete the decal transaction if they could purchase the plates and decals together. She hopes to address that if she wins reelection in November, she said.

Game, Fish and Parks Commission Chairwoman Stephanie Rissler said the plates themselves, even without decals, provide a benefit.

“Whether someone chooses to display the emblem or not, the plate itself still helps promote the importance of habitat conservation across South Dakota,” Rissler wrote in a statement to Searchlight.

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

At midterm convention, Trump pledges cash to voters and crowd boos Thune

President and majority leader from South Dakota have been at odds over Senate taking up voter ID bill

BY ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump headlined the first night of the first Republican midterm convention Wednesday, seeking to rally his base ahead of the November elections and dangling a “Trump dividend” to voters if his party retains control of both congressional chambers.

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While the Republican National Committee's two-day event — dubbed a "Trump-a-palooza" by party Chair Joe Gruters — aimed to bolster support for major candidates, some vulnerable Republicans were notably absent.

Still, speaker after speaker, including Republican lawmakers, Cabinet members and people billed by the RNC as "everyday Americans," filled five hours before Trump took the stage and promised, "Vote Republican and we will leave the world in our dust for generations to come."

"There'll be nothing like it," Trump said during a nearly two-hour keynote address in which he touted the "greatest two years in the history of the presidency."

The event at the American Airlines Center in Dallas, which did not include voting delegates, is the first major-party midterm convention since Democrats' convention in 1982. Democrats also held convention-like conferences following the 1974 and 1978 elections.

The GOP convention comes amid sagging poll numbers for Trump as his war with Iran drags on and voters worry about inflation driven by increasing energy costs and tariffs.

Financial incentive

Trump acknowledged political challenges without attributing them to the unpopular parts of his agenda. "For some reason, when a president wins, even if he's really a good president or a great president — there aren't too many of them — they don't win the midterms, and nobody quite knows why," he said. "We've got to change that because we have something going that's so good we can't let that string be broken. So I'm asking you to pretend that I'm on the ballot."

Trump said if Republicans retain control of both the House and Senate, he would pay out \$5,000 "to every adult."

"The only caveat I have is that the dividend that we're making must be spent in the United States of America. We don't want you going to Canada to spend the money," he said.

This is not the first time Trump has promised to send checks. The president said in November 2025 he would send \$2,000 to Americans from tariff revenue that he falsely said would reach "trillions" of dollars.

Those payments never materialized and Trump's emergency tariffs were struck down by the Supreme Court. The government is now on the hook for refunding American businesses that paid the import taxes.

Trump announced he'll be campaigning for nearly three dozen Republican candidates in competitive races over the next 55 days.

"We can win every one of those races, but I'm going to go to every one of those states for congressmen and for senators," he said.

Collins, Sullivan absent

In perhaps the night's most surprising turn, Democratic Sen. John Fetterman made an appearance in a video praising fellow Pennsylvania Sen. Dave McCormick, a Republican, and vowing to work with Trump to shore up the steel industry.

But two of those most vulnerable Republican senators were missing from the more than three dozen speakers Wednesday night.

Sens. Susan Collins of Maine and Dan Sullivan of Alaska, both locked in tough reelection bids, reportedly declined to attend. Neither Collins' nor Sullivan's campaigns or Senate offices replied to States Newsroom's requests for comment.

Sullivan's campaign posted several images and videos of the senator in Alaska Wednesday.

Collins posted a message of support for the New England Patriots on her X feed as the RNC event was in full swing. The made-for-TV political gathering aired the same night as the NFL's season kick-off between the Patriots and Seattle Seahawks.

An analysis by CNBC on Wednesday found fewer than half of Republican candidates in the most competitive congressional districts were slated for speaking roles during the two-day event.

Crowd boos Thune

But many Trump allies running for reelection spoke, and U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Louisiana Republican, sat in a row with Vice President JD Vance and several Cabinet members.

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Attendees cheered when Trump said Johnson "will go down as the greatest speaker of the House in the history of our country."

But a chorus of "boos" erupted when the president asked where Senate Majority Leader John Thune of South Dakota was in the crowd.

"No, no," Trump responded to the booing. "John is working hard. He's got great opposition."

Thune and Trump have been at odds about the Senate taking up a strict election bill that would require voters to provide a birth certificate or passport to register to vote, among other provisions.

Unlike other Republican leaders from both chambers, Thune was not scheduled to speak at the convention.

An individual close to Thune told States Newsroom the majority leader is in Dallas and wanted to give other Republicans an opportunity to speak.

'We're so glad you're here'

Several Trump allies, even those facing tight or toss-up races, spoke in praise of the president while stumping for their own candidacies.

Former RNC Chair Michael Whatley, running for an open Senate seat in North Carolina, and Sen. John Husted, fighting to keep his seat in a special Ohio election, praised Trump for passing tax cuts.

The North Carolina seat is rated "lean Democrat," by the Cook Political Report with Amy Walter, and the Ohio seat rated a "toss up."

While both Whatley and Husted mentioned their opponents and former President Joe Biden more times than they did Trump, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, who is running for U.S. Senate, did not shy away from lauding the president.

"We're so glad you're here," said Paxton, who unseated longtime Sen. John Cornyn in a Republican primary after receiving Trump's endorsement.

"The press, the courts, and the establishment all tried to take President Trump down, but he's won every single time. He's delivered more for this country than anyone before, secured victories for America that no other president could, and always stood up for Texas," Paxton said.

Attendees waved "Keep the Majority" signs and chanted "USA" while House Majority Whip Tom Emmer, R-Minn., railed against Democrats, and said "We will not let the Marxists, communists and anarchists destroy it."

"This historic midterm convention is rallying Republicans at the perfect time because so much is on the line this November," said House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, a Louisiana Republican.

'A party for Donald Trump'

Democrats panned the event as an expensive celebration for the president.

"While Republicans spend millions of dollars throwing a party for Donald Trump, Democrats are spending our time and resources doing the work that wins elections: Talking to voters, registering new ones, organizing communities, and fighting for every vote," Democratic National Committee Chair Ken Martin said in a statement Wednesday.

"The difference is stark," he continued. "As Republican candidates worship an unpopular president, Democrats are going on offense and staying focused on lowering costs, making life more affordable, and delivering for working families."

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

State board approves \$1.4 million of aid to businesses

BY SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF

The South Dakota Board of Economic Development approved a total of \$1.4 million in state assistance for projects in Sturgis, Yankton, the Sioux Falls area and Clear Lake, according to a news release Wednesday from the Governor's Office of Economic Development.

The board approved a \$597,275 SD Works loan for IR LLC to support construction of a new location for Rev It Up Espresso in Sturgis. The new facility will allow the locally owned coffee business to expand from

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its kiosk operations into a permanent storefront with a sit-down cafe, drive-through service, on-site coffee roasting, and an expanded food and merchandise offering. Rev It Up Espresso began in an 8-by-12-foot trailer and has since grown to three kiosks throughout Sturgis.

The board also approved a \$320,000 SD Works loan for JBHM LLC to support construction of a new facility for Elwood Family Dental Care in Yankton. The expansion will allow the practice to add a second dentist and operate five days per week. The project is expected to grow the practice from eight to 16 full-time equivalent positions.

A \$10,000 Economic Development Partnership Program grant was awarded to Sioux Metro Growth Alliance, based in Sioux Falls, to support its Leadership Sioux Metro Regional Economic Development Training Initiative. The program will provide training in areas including business retention and attraction, site readiness, housing and development, workforce, development finance, and regional collaboration.

The board approved a \$500,000 Local Infrastructure Improvement Program grant for Clear Lake Area Development to support construction of a water tank and pump station. The infrastructure will strengthen the water system serving the Clear Lake community and provide the water supply and fire protection necessary to support an expansion by the company Tech Ord, which produces detonating and explosive components and materials for the military.

The SD Works, Economic Development Partnership, and Local Infrastructure Improvement programs provide financing and grants that support business growth, economic development capacity, and infrastructure investments. They are available to businesses and organizations that meet program requirements established in state law and by board policy.

Dakotas' only fair housing group furloughs part of staff due to funding gap **BY JACK DURA**

The only fair housing organization in the Dakotas has furloughed some of its staff due to the delay of a crucial federal grant.

The Grand Forks-based High Plains Fair Housing Center has been awaiting the \$425,000 Fair Housing Initiatives Program grant since May. Executive Director Michelle Rydz said she and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development were getting ready to sign the grant last week, when "for some reason they stopped," Rydz told the North Dakota Monitor.

As a result, she has furloughed three of her eight staff. A fourth employee might be furloughed in a couple of weeks, Rydz said. The center could go for about another year with reduced staff and other grants it has, she said. She does not want to shut down.

"We'll keep the organization going because I really believe, strongly, the Fair Housing Act is an important civil right that we all have," Rydz said.

Furloughs had been hanging over the center as early as July 31, but Rydz said the center was able to get by on fundraising, applying for grants and reworking the budget to keep staff on. She also has worked less than full time to keep other staff on, she said.

It's unclear when the grant might arrive. It might be a year from now, Rydz said. HUD's public affairs office acknowledged but did not immediately respond to a Monitor email inquiry. The delay in the grant is not unique to Rydz's organization. Others around the U.S. are experiencing the same thing, she said.

A federal lawsuit brought by the National Fair Housing Alliance and the Massachusetts Fair Housing Center seeks to stop HUD from making changes to the grant program they allege would gut funding for more than 100 fair housing groups and give "huge sums" to a handful of "favored" organizations. A judge last month granted a temporary block the challengers sought.

The \$425,000 was the last installment in a previously approved three-year grant. The second-year grant ended in May, and the High Plains Fair Housing Center expected the third portion to start the next day.

The center assists people within the scope of the federal Fair Housing Act, which prohibits people from

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being treated differently because of a protected characteristic, including race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status or disability. The center investigates, mediates and resolves housing discrimination complaints, and assists with accommodations.

"We won't have as many as staff to be able to provide that crucial advocacy service that we do," Rydz said.

The center will have to shift to educating callers to help them advocate for themselves, she said.

In 2025, the center fielded 958 total calls, more than one-third of which related to allegations of housing discrimination. The others dealt with landlord-tenant matters or general inquiries.

The center reached 204 resolutions for clients, about half of which were done without having to file a complaint.

In the last year and a half, the center has handled about 100 calls in South Dakota, which has no related organization. The center won't be able to help at all in South Dakota anymore, Rydz said.

Reach North Dakota Monitor reporter Jack Dura at jdura@northdakotamonitor.com.

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

Jack Dura is a North Dakota Monitor reporter based in Bismarck. His coverage areas include state government, elections, politics and courts. He can be reached at jdura@northdakotamonitor.com.

Developers eye Native nations, tribal communities for new data center projects

BY MADYSON FITZGERALD

Officials in Page, Arizona, a small city near the Glen Canyon Dam, passed a land sale agreement last fall that establishes a framework for future construction of a data center.

The sale of the 500-acre parcel about a mile away from the Colorado River's Horseshoe Bend — one of the most visited natural landmarks in the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area — to Huntley LLC for \$7 million specifies that the company intends to build a 1 gigawatt data center.

Residents have been pushing back and launched a petition earlier this year to stop the planned data center from being built.

About 5 miles south of the city, a group of tribal leaders began to take notice. The proposed data center borders the LeChee Chapter of the Navajo Nation, located in the northwest corner of the Navajo Reservation.

Like most of Arizona, the community has run into challenges from severe drought conditions this year. After learning how much water it could take to cool the thousands of servers housed in the massive facilities, members of the tribe grew increasingly concerned about the proposed data center.

The LeChee Chapter also passed a resolution opposing Page's decision to sell the land to the developers.

"Water is precious to us," said Irene Whitekiller, president of the LeChee Chapter. "... Water is used for everything, like with holy water in church and traditional ceremonies. But with a data center coming in, it's going to take a lot."

Data center developments are continuing to spread throughout the country as the demand for digital processing power grows — especially as artificial intelligence systems become more prevalent. But in addition to concerned residents, some federal, state and local officials are worried about how data centers could drive up utility bills, strain water resources and hurt the environment.

And now, tribal communities are grappling with the fact that more developers are eyeing their land for future data center projects.

"Because of the history with treaties, removal actions and those sorts of things, tribal lands are probably more pristine and not as developed as other state, federal or local government lands," said Tana Fitzpatrick, the associate vice president of tribal relations at the University of Oklahoma and a member of the Crow Tribe in Montana and a descendent of the Lakota Sioux, Ponca and Chickasaw nations.

"That might be one of the reasons why tribes are finding that people are coming and wanting to build

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data centers on their lands.”

Some tribal leaders are also concerned about President Donald Trump’s ability to alter regulations related to federal lands. While most of Trump’s executive orders don’t apply to federal land belonging to Native nations or reservations, Whitekiller said that could change.

In July, for instance, Trump issued two executive orders to revise the boundaries of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and the Bears Ears National Monument so the lands could be “put to a higher-priority use,” such as extracting minerals to invest in national security. The orders faced backlash from environmental advocacy groups and Native nations.

“We’re trying to educate our people to say no to this kind of thing (data centers) because we want the land the way it is. This is a federal land that we live on, but Trump doesn’t respect that,” Whitekiller said.

In March, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma became one of the first Native nations to enact a complete moratorium on data centers. Honor the Earth, a national nonprofit organization advocating for the protection of Indigenous sovereignty and the environment, has helped communities like the Seminole Nation organize against data center development on their land.

Some companies see tribal land as a regulatory dream, said Ashley Leitka, an enrolled member of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma and the director of the department of sovereignty and self-determination at Honor the Earth. She is also part of the Oglala and Sicangu Lakota nations.

While municipalities are pushing back against data center developers by tightening codes and enforcing stricter regulations, she said some companies are hoping that tribal nations will be more lenient. As sovereign, self-governing nations, tribes are not required to follow all state and local laws.

“These companies are really preying upon the lack of economic diversity in our tribal nations,” Leitka said. “The reality is our tribal leaders are given a mandate to care for their nations, and whenever there’s opportunities, it’s pretty difficult for them to assert why they would not consider it. I just think it’s several things happening at the same time — that makes tribal nations prime targets.”

A handful of other tribes have taken action against data centers. In July, the Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma’s Business Committee formally declared its opposition to construction and operation of data centers on its lands.

And in August, following a report detailing the impact of data centers on economy and environment, the Cherokee Nation announced it would be banning hyperscale data center development on tribally owned and trust lands, according to the nation’s official news site.

However, some tribes are considering how data centers could help their people. Colusa Indian Energy, for instance, has become one of the only tribally owned microgrid companies helping lead data center partnerships with Native nations.

And in the past few years, the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs has encouraged tribes to consider data center projects by offering financial and technical resources to assist.

Data centers are a significant way to bring economic opportunities to tribal communities, said Eric Mahroum, the office’s director. Mahroum said data centers also offer a number of jobs to community members.

“I think that’s why a lot of private companies are approaching tribal lands and the tribal governments to partner with them,” he said. “And we’re here to help them with that. I’ll be the first to say that there’s a lot of private companies and a lot of bad players that want to take advantage of the tribes. But then there’s a lot of great players that want to help the tribes.”

As more communities push data center developers out and states consider rescinding tax breaks, some of the country’s top tech developers and data center companies see tribal land as an easier option.

Microsoft, for instance, recently proposed a data center project in Fernley, Nevada, about a 10-minute drive from the boundary of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation, according to Honor the Earth’s Data Center Tracker. The company’s community-first AI initiative outlines steps Microsoft will take to be a “good neighbor” in the communities where they build, according to an unsigned written statement from the company.

In the meantime, tribal leaders have expressed the need to continue studying the impacts of data centers through task forces. And now, more Native nations are considering moratoriums to allow time for more

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discussions, said Fitzpatrick, of the University of Oklahoma.

"In general, every tribe is their own sovereign nation," Fitzpatrick said. "Regardless of the issue, every tribe is going to have their own ways of governing, choosing their priorities and looking at their citizens' priorities."

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

Madyson Fitzgerald is a national content producer for States Newsroom. A Virginia native, Madyson has worked with a number of local news organizations including the Richmond Times-Dispatch and The Henrico Citizen.

Trump administration aims to exclude many noncitizens from the census

BY ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration wants to overhaul the U.S. census to exclude noncitizens who don't have a green card from the country's next population count in 2030, according to a Wednesday notice in the Federal Register.

The document, which will officially be published Thursday, could mean major changes for how millions in federal funding is allocated to states, as well as affect the population numbers for determining the number of U.S. House members in each state. The House is made up of 435 lawmakers apportioned among congressional districts in the 50 states.

The move is likely to face legal challenges, as the changes run counter to the U.S. Constitution's 14th Amendment that directs representatives in Congress to be appointed based on the "whole number of persons in each State," excluding Native Americans "not taxed."

The amendment language does not specify immigration status. The states handled immigration enforcement until the federal government took over in 1882 with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

The proposed changes would exclude any noncitizens who do not have lawful permanent residence, or a green card, which could result in millions being excluded from the population count. That would include immigrants in the country without legal authorization, those with some form of temporary legal status, refugees and asylum seekers.

The unauthorized immigrant population — that includes noncitizens who have some form of limited legal status — has grown to more than 15.8 million since mid-2024.

The Trump administration argues that noncitizens who are not green card holders should be kept out of the census count because "they are not true inhabitants, members of the body politic, or persons with a 'usual residence' in the United States due to their lack of a sufficient tie and allegiance to the United States," according to the document.

The proposal also calls for removing several questions pertaining to sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, and suggests adding a question relating to citizenship, which President Donald Trump has pushed to include since his first term. But the Supreme Court in 2019 kept the question off the 2020 census.

The Trump administration wants those demographic questions removed from the census because the survey "should be colorblind and should not be distorted in any way by questions about immaterial personal characteristics, such as race," the proposal says.

The census has collected information about race and ethnicity since 1790, the first survey count in the U.S. Public comment will last for 30 days after the document is officially published Thursday.

Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include immigration, congressional policy and legal challenges with a focus on how those policies impact the lives of immigrants and migrants coming to the U.S.

States sue feds over endangered species rollbacks

21 attorneys general filed a pair of lawsuits seeking to reinstate rules that protect habitat

BY ALEX BROWN

A coalition of state attorneys general filed a pair of lawsuits Wednesday challenging the Trump administration's rollbacks of protections for endangered species.

The lawsuits, filed by 20 states and the District of Columbia, seek to reinstate rules that protect the habitat that endangered species depend on to survive.

Under President Donald Trump, federal agencies have changed their interpretation of "harm" under the endangered species law to include only actions that directly injure or kill animals. For decades, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal agencies had taken a broader position that the law also banned the destruction of forests, streams and wetlands that those animals depend on for nesting, mating and raising young.

"The federal government's attempt to gut the Endangered Species Act threatens the habitats of orcas, sockeye salmon, and other endangered species that are part of our economy, culture, and way of life," Washington Attorney General Nick Brown, a Democrat, said in a news release.

A second lawsuit challenges a pair of new rules that change the process for federal wildlife officials to designate "critical habitat." The rules reduce protections for newly listed threatened species and make it easier for officials to decline to list certain lands as critical.

"For over half a century, the (Endangered Species Act) has stood as a bipartisan example of what it means to protect an irreplaceable part of our planet, but these new rules attempt to destroy longstanding and integral regulatory protections and open the door to further species decline and possible extinctions," California Attorney General Rob Bonta, a Democrat, said in a statement.

The lawsuits argue that the rollbacks enacted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service violate two key federal laws, the Administrative Procedure Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. According to Bonta's press release, the rules ignore not just the purpose and history of the Endangered Species Act but also numerous court rulings and the law's "overall precautionary approach."

The lawsuits are led by Brown and Bonta, along with the attorneys general of Maryland and Massachusetts. The suits were also joined by the attorneys general of Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin.

The lawsuits were filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

In a statement, the Department of the Interior vowed to "vigorously defend its authority" to manage endangered species under the new guidelines.

"This lawsuit seeks to preserve a decades-old regulatory overreach that expanded the Endangered Species Act beyond the authority granted by Congress," the agency said, according to Reuters.

Stateline reporter Alex Brown can be reached at abrown@stateline.org.

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

Based in Seattle, Alex Brown covers environmental issues for Stateline. Prior to joining Stateline, Brown wrote for The Chronicle in Lewis County, Washington state.

Trump plan would bar millions of Americans from voting by mail, states tell Supreme Court

BY JACOB FISCHLER

The Democratic-led states and voting rights groups suing to block enforcement of President Donald Trump's executive order to restrict mail-in voting warned in briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court on Wednesday the policy would have disastrous consequences for the upcoming midterm elections if it is allowed to move forward.

Less than two months before the Nov. 3 elections, at least two states have already begun sending ballots to voters, and officials in several others have voiced serious concerns that complying with the U.S. Postal Service rule this election cycle is impossible, opponents said.

The Democratic attorneys general of 23 states, the District of Columbia and the governor of Pennsylvania told the high court they strongly object to the Trump administration's request that justices allow the rule to move forward.

"Whatever else may be said of USPS' new rule, it would wreak havoc on States and their voters if it takes effect at this late point—when some States, including North Carolina and Wisconsin, have already begun to mail out ballots," they wrote.

Only Democratic state officials have sought to challenge the rule in court, but Wednesday's brief noted that top elections officials in the Republican-led states of Utah, Florida and Ohio have also warned the rule would cause "catastrophic harms."

The suit, now at the Supreme Court, was brought by the attorneys general of California, Massachusetts, Nevada, Washington, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin, along with Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro.

"Allowing USPS' new rule to take effect would be virtually certain to prevent many millions of Americans from casting mail ballots in this fall's elections," opponents wrote.

The record in the Massachusetts federal court that issued the preliminary injunction blocking the rule's enforcement that the administration is seeking to overturn includes "unrebutted evidence" that "establishes that compliance with USPS' rule would be impossible ahead of the midterms," the state officials wrote.

Spokespeople for the White House, Postal Service and U.S. Department of Justice, which is representing the Trump administration in the case, did not respond to messages seeking comment Wednesday.

The case is on what's known as the court's emergency docket, and it's not clear when a decision on whether or not to keep the preliminary injunction in place will be issued.

Voting rights groups echo Dems

A coalition of voting rights groups also filed a response Wednesday, making similar arguments.

The groups, led by the American Civil Liberties Union, emphasized the likelihood of disenfranchisement for many of the roughly 50 million voters set to receive ballots from the states challenging the rule.

Even if the mail specifications under the rule could be met in time for the election, the online portal the Postal Service has rushed to develop is not ready, the challengers wrote.

Several friend-of-the-court briefs also made that argument, including the federal employee whistleblower who reported last week that the portal's rushed development would lead to numerous errors if used this election.

As of late last week, states had not yet been given access to the portal, which is supposed to be the mechanism for verifying compliance with the rule, even as some began mailing ballots.

"USPS's Rule gives states mere weeks to implement sweeping changes to their election systems—even though USPS has not yet established the necessary infrastructure to administer its new requirements," they wrote. "The Rule would disrupt the administration of mail voting mid-election and disenfranchise eligible voters nationwide, including voters in all-mail states like Colorado and Utah and elderly, rural, and disabled voters who must vote by mail."

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Beyond Postal Service power

In addition to the impossibility of states' complying with the Postal Service rule, which places new requirements on ballot mail and requires states to transmit voter data to the federal government, less than two months before Election Day, the regulation impedes states' constitutional authorities and oversteps the executive branch's powers, the state officials and groups wrote.

The U.S. Constitution specifies that administering elections is a state responsibility, though Congress may pass laws governing certain elements. The executive branch has virtually no role unless specifically delegated by Congress, the rule's challengers wrote.

And Congress never passed a law to give the Postal Service the kind of power over election mail that the rule claims, they said.

"To the contrary, Congress has exhaustively enumerated the types of materials that USPS can lawfully refuse to deliver," the state officials wrote. "Ballots are not among them."

The rule bans postal workers from delivering ballots that do not meet any of the conditions specified in the rule, including pre-approval of envelope designs and lists of eligible voters that the administration plans to check against a citizenship database maintained by the Department of Homeland Security.

Outsiders weigh in

A flurry of 17 friend-of-the-court briefs hit the Supreme Court docket Tuesday and Wednesday.

None sided with the administration.

The briefs, representing bipartisan former governors, state and local election officials, military voters, the Postal Service workers' union, good government organizations, Democratic campaign groups and others all said the rule was impossible to comply with at this point in the election cycle.

"The late-breaking USPS Final Rule—which was promulgated mere months before the November 3, 2026 general midterm elections, and which mandates sweeping, costly, and burdensome changes to mail-in voting procedures—would prove disastrous for election officials and election administration," local officials and the pro-democracy group Center for Election Innovation wrote. "And it would seriously undermine the upcoming elections."

In another filing, a bipartisan group of current and former local and state election officials said it was impossible to comply with the rule this year.

Their brief noted that many of their members were Republicans or represented Republican-majority districts and emphasized that they took no position on the rule's legality.

But they said implementing it now was infeasible and ran afoul of a Supreme Court principle that changes in election policy should not happen during or close to an election.

"The principle rests on incontestable facts about voters and about the people who run elections: that late changes breed confusion, that confusion keeps eligible voters from voting, and that a chaotic election erodes confidence in the result," they wrote. They "therefore suggest only this: that the November 3, 2026 general election be conducted under the rules that were in place when the election's administration began."

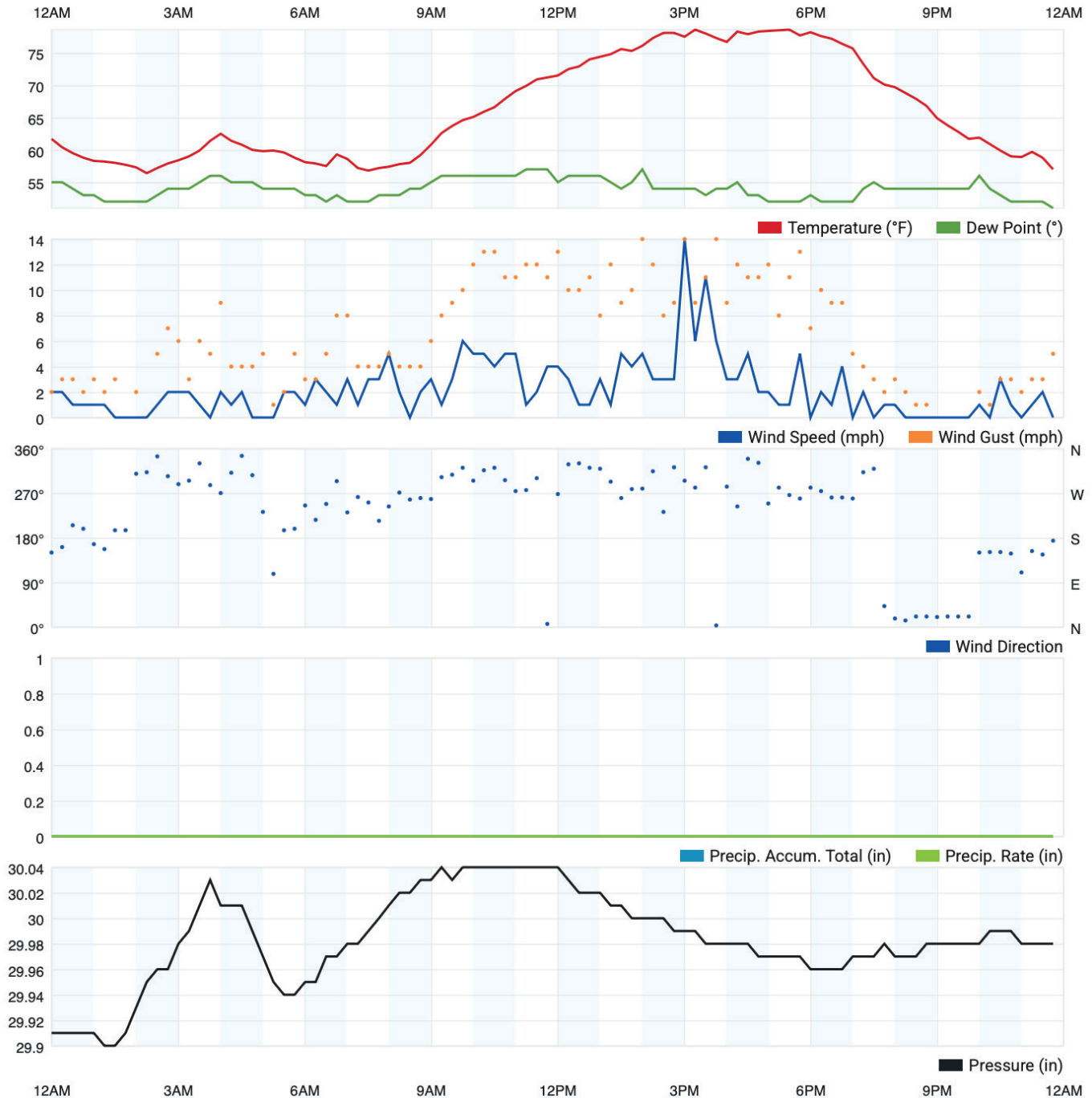
Jacob covers federal policy and helps direct national coverage as deputy Washington bureau chief for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

September 9, 2026



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Today



High: 85 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 64 °F

Partly Cloudy

Friday



High: 87 °F

Partly Sunny

Friday Night



Low: 50 °F

Partly Cloudy
and Breezy
then Partly
Cloudy

Saturday



High: 70 °F

Mostly Sunny



HIGH TO VERY HIGH FIRE DANGER ON FRIDAY

- Central and North Central South Dakota
- South winds becoming northerly in the afternoon
- Gusts of 30 to 40 mph in the afternoon
- Very Dry Conditions
- Abundantly Dry Grasses and Brush

WHAT TO DO

- **AVOID BRUSH/GRASS BURNING**
- **USE EXTRA CAUTION WITH HEAVY EQUIPMENT OR ANYTHING THAT COULD CAUSE A SPARK**
- **DO NOT CARELESSLY DISCARD CIGARETTES**

1

www.weather.gov/aberndeen

Wind gusts out of the south Friday morning will increase to around 35-40 mph and move around to be out of the north by mid afternoon. The winds, along with dry conditions and low afternoon relative humidity will increase grassland fire danger concerns. Avoid outdoor burning and report any fires to local authorities.

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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

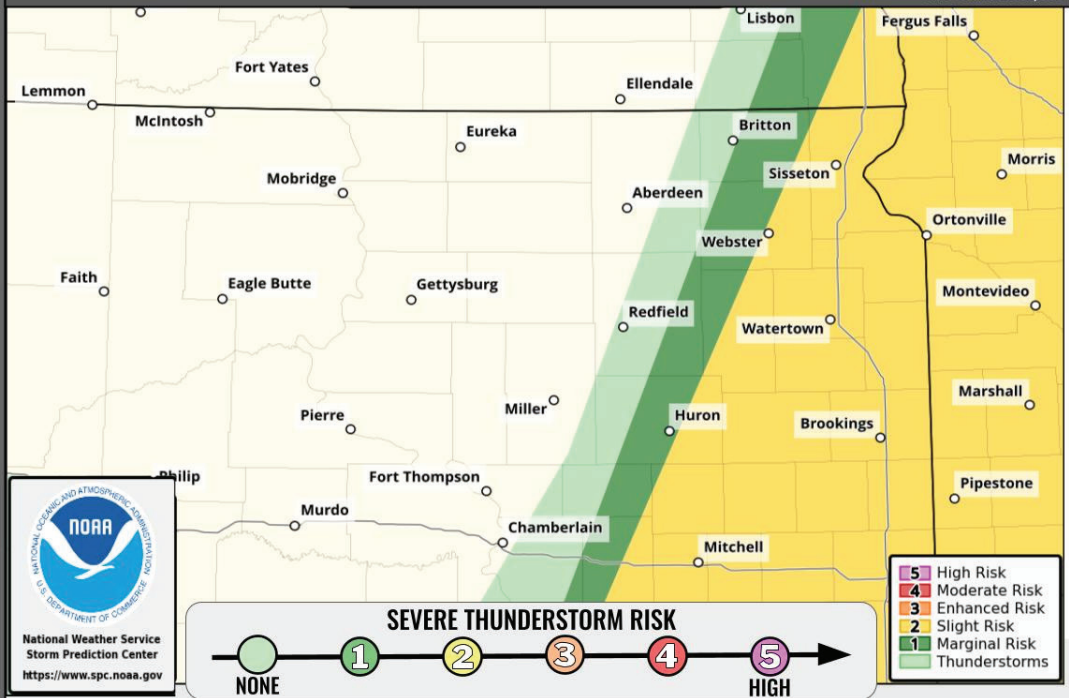


TORNADO Possible



Slight Risk For Severe Storms on Friday

NWS Aberdeen, SD



There is a slight risk (level 2 out of 5) for eastern SD into west central MN. Main hazards with these storms will be golf ball size hail and 60 mph wind gusts. However, can not rule out tornadoes. Peak timing for storms looks to be between 5 and 11 PM CDT.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 79 °F at 3:13 PM

Low Temp: 56 °F at 2:18 AM

Wind: 15 mph at 10:46 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 107 in 1931

Record Low: 27 in 1898

Average High: 77

Average Low: 49

Average Precip in Sept.: 0.68

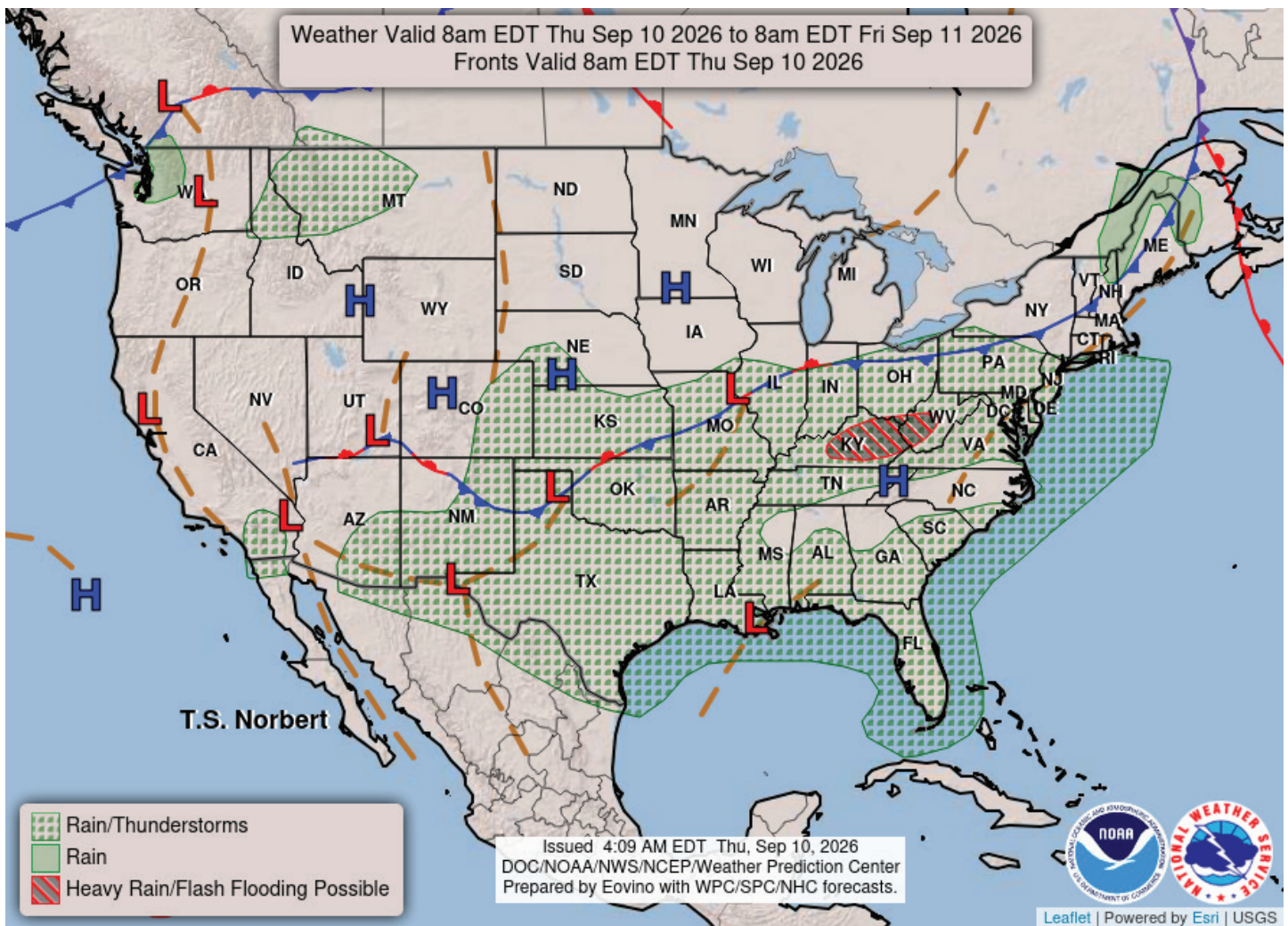
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 17.02

Precip Year to Date: 20.06

Sunset Tonight: 7:54 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:06 am



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Today in Weather History

September 10, 1961: In Webster between 1 and 2 am, a large farm implement was destroyed by a lightning-caused fire. Many farm implements, three cars, two trucks, as well as merchandise, were lost. Nearby buildings suffered damage from fire. The torrential rains helped reduce the spread of the fire.

September 10, 1975: Large hail up to the size of 2 inches in diameter damaged many acres of corn, flax, and millet fields during the evening. The area between Volga and Brookings received the most severe damage.

September 10, 1988: Lightning started fires in Todd County southwest of Mission that burned nearly 14,000 acres of grassland and 4000 acres of timber. The damages were more than 60,000 dollars.

1811: South Carolina was hit by a hurricane. The main highlight associated with the hurricane was a tornado that damaged downtown Charleston.

1919 — A hurricane struck the Florida Keys drowning more than 500 persons. (David Ludlum)

1960: The center of Hurricane Donna passed over the middle of the Florida Keys between 2, and 3 am on this day. Donna was a Category 5 hurricane over the Atlantic and a Category 4 at landfall. This storm caused the deaths of over 100 in Puerto Rico, 50 in the United States, and 63 in a jet crash. The plane crash occurred on August 29th as a French airliner was attempting to land at Dakar, Senegal during a "blinding rainstorm." The storm was likely a tropical disturbance at the time of the crash.

1961: On September 10th, the Television Infrared Observation Satellite observed an area of thunderstorms west-southwest of the Cape Verde Islands, suggesting a possible tropical cyclone. This storm is the first large tropical cyclone to be discovered on satellite imagery and would eventually become Hurricane Esther.

1987 — A late afternoon thunderstorm roared through Austin TX producing wind gusts to 81 mph, and 2.17 inches of rain in just sixty minutes. The high winds toppled six National Guard helicopters at the Robert Mueller Municipal Airport, and damaged or destroyed numerous other aircraft. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Cool air sweeping into the north central U.S. brought snow to some of the higher elevations of Montana. The town of Kings Hill, southeast of Great Falls, was blanketed with six inches of snow. Tropical Storm Gilbert strengthened to a hurricane over the eastern Caribbean. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Light snow fell in Montana overnight, with three inches reported at Fairfield. Billings MT reported a record low of 33 degrees. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the northeastern U.S., with record highs of 86 degrees at Caribou ME and 90 degrees at Burlington VT. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1998: Tropical Storm Frances made landfall near Matagorda Bay, TX, causing the worst coastal flooding and beach erosion since Hurricane Carla in 1961. The storm's heavy rains ended a drought in East Texas but caused severe river flooding in parts of Texas and Louisiana. The highest rainfall total noted was 21.10 inches at Terrytown in southeast Louisiana. A major disaster declaration was issued for Cameron, Jefferson, Lafourche, and Terrebonne parishes in Louisiana.

2017: Hurricane Irma crossed the Florida Keys as a Category 4 storm.



Avoiding Enslavement

Though sin may beckon, God has equipped us with the power to resist temptation.

Romans 6:16-19: 16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,

18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

Like a physical prison that's built brick by brick, a spiritual prison is erected one sin at a time. Ensnarement happens slowly, beginning with a thought. Over time, contemplation can turn into action.

But we can avoid spiritual chains. Our first step is to acknowledge two basic truths: All sin enslaves, and it begins in the mind. We cannot maintain a healthy relationship with the Lord while deliberately indulging in sin. When a wrong thought creeps into our consciousness, we have the choice to either expel or entertain it (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). Through the strength of the Holy Spirit, every believer possesses power to change his or her mind.

A long-term view of disobedient behavior is a strong antidote to temptation. Obeying the Lord will always bring more joy, fulfillment, and purpose than choosing our own way (Psalms 119:1-2). A second step, then, is to ask ourselves, Is the pleasure of this sin worth the consequences? Inevitably, the answer is no.

Third, we order our life according to Scripture. That is, we make the choice to surrender to the Father because we find true freedom in Him.

Ask God to speak to you through His Word today, and see what He reveals about your life.

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

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The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.09.26

2 25 54 55 57 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 25 Mins 51 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.08.26

17 30 43 58 66 20

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$209,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 10 Mins 51 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.09.26

3 4 44 47 49 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$4,160,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 25 Mins 51 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.09.26

3 12 14 15 17

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$52,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 40 Mins 51 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.09.26

32 33 58 62 69 18

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 9 Mins 51 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.09.26

9 40 42 55 65 23

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$232,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 9 Mins 51 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Todd County def. Pine Ridge, 25-9, 25-17, 25-7

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

Zelenskyy visits Canada to seek further military support for Ukraine

By The Associated Press undefined

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was in Canada on Thursday for talks with Prime Minister Mark Carney, his latest international trip aimed at locking in future support for Ukraine's fight against Russia's invasion.

Ukraine is under pressure from Russia's air war, which is using ballistic missiles and jet-powered drones to pierce defenses. Moscow's attacks have targeted Ukraine's power grid ahead of the upcoming winter as part of its campaign to demoralize civilians, Ukrainian officials say.

Recent U.S. efforts to stop the more than four years of fighting have delivered no significant breakthrough, although Washington-brokered talks between delegations from Moscow and Kyiv are expected to continue.

"The main focus will be on supporting Ukraine in protecting our skies and preparing for the winter," Zelenskyy said of his Canada trip in a social media post. "We will discuss how to strengthen our resilience, support our people, and ensure that Ukraine has the capabilities it needs to defend itself."

Zelenskyy's arrival on Wednesday night in Calgary, Alberta, came the day after his flight from Moldova to Norway was delayed when authorities closed Moldova's airspace because of a drone incursion.

The aerial drone battle between Russia and Ukraine has grown in scale since Russia's all-out invasion in February 2022, and Ukraine's neighbors Romania and Moldova have reported repeated drone incursions.

A Ukrainian sea drone wounded 28 people, including two children, on the waterfront in the Russian city of Sochi, local officials said. They said that beach infrastructure had been damaged but did not provide further details.

Russia's Ministry of Defense said Thursday that its forces shot down 448 Ukrainian drones overnight. The drones were destroyed over 13 Russian regions, as well as the annexed Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea and the Black and Caspian seas, the ministry said.

Falling debris from a Ukrainian drone set fire to a home in Russia's southwestern Voronezh region, killing one woman and wounding two other people, local Gov. Alexander Gusev said Thursday.

Hong Kong court convicts Wall Street Journal publisher of deterring reporter from taking union role

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — A Hong Kong court on Thursday convicted the publisher of The Wall Street Journal of deterring its reporter from taking up a trade union role, in a case that raised concerns about media freedom in the city. The court acquitted Dow Jones Publishing Co. (Asia) Inc. of the charge of dismissal over the union role.

Former WSJ reporter Selina Cheng, also chairperson of the trade union Hong Kong Journalists Association, launched a private prosecution against Dow Jones Publishing Co. (Asia) Inc. after losing her job in July 2024.

Hong Kong, once considered a bastion of press freedom in Asia, has seen its media landscape change drastically in recent years, including the forced closure of news outlets and the prosecution of newsroom

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leaders.

Cheng earlier said that her supervisor told her that her participation in the union election was problematic and that the supervisor needed to discuss the issue with WSJ's management in New York and Dow Jones' in-house lawyers. Cheng said that she was told that her union role would be incompatible with her employment.

In convicting the company, Principal Magistrate David Cheung pointed to the firm's requirement for its approval before Cheng ran for election for the union's leadership role. Cheung said that the election didn't take place within the journalist's working hours.

But he said that the defense has raised sufficient reasonable doubt for the second charge over her dismissal. The defense previously tried to convince the court that Cheng was terminated because of redundancy.

Dow Jones pleaded not guilty last year to two charges under the city's Employment Ordinance, each carrying a maximum fine of 100,000 Hong Kong dollars (about \$12,750). The first charge alleges the company had prevented or deterred Cheng from exercising union participation rights. The second alleges the company terminated her employment for exercising those rights.

During the trial, the defense argued the prosecution hadn't sufficiently proved that the firm's management instructed Cheng's supervisor. It also accused Cheng of abusing the criminal process in a previous hearing.

But the magistrate didn't find that Cheng's private prosecution was motivated by any improper purpose. Sentencing is expected to be handed down at a later date.

After the verdict, Dow Jones said that it respectfully disagrees with the ruling and is evaluating its next step. It said the Journal has a "long and proud history" as an employer in Hong Kong.

"Throughout that time, we have remained deeply respectful of its labor laws and supportive of our employees' rights, while publishing excellent, impartial journalism about the region," it said.

Cheng told reporters that the magistrate was fair to both parties. She said that the case has brought awareness of union suppression in Hong Kong and that she hoped employers will understand they have no right to have their employees consult with them before their workers join a union.

Cheng said that reporters' rights as employees are important to media freedom.

"The right for us to work without worry, without stress, without risk is the foundation of Hong Kong's press freedom, more than anything else," she said.

She said that she would have to discuss with her legal team whether to appeal the WSJ's acquittal on the dismissal charge.

Cheng's termination in 2024 alarmed many journalists, especially given that foreign outlets have traditionally faced less pressure than local news outlets in Hong Kong.

After Beijing imposed a national security law in 2020, two local news outlets known for critical coverage of the government, Apple Daily and Stand News, were forced to shut down following the arrest of their senior management.

Jimmy Lai, founder of Apple Daily, was sentenced to 20 years in prison in February. His staffers received prison terms ranging from six years and nine months, to 10 years.

Hong Kong, a former British colony returned to Chinese rule in 1997, ranked 140th out of 180 countries and territories in Reporters Without Borders' latest World Press Freedom Index, down from 18th out of 139 regions in 2002.

Trump, hoping to salvage midterms, makes dubious pledge to give every US adult \$5,000 if GOP wins

By JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

President Donald Trump pledged Wednesday to send every American adult \$5,000 if Republicans retain control of the House and Senate in the midterm elections, an extraordinary gambit to reverse his party's sagging fortunes in November.

The dubious promise would likely cost more than \$1 trillion and require congressional approval, and would

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further exacerbate the country's nearly \$1.8 trillion annual budget deficit and concerns about inflation.

"If the Republicans win, you win with us and you get \$5,000," Trump said during the GOP's midterm convention in Dallas. "It will be called the Trump Dividend."

He likened the payments to a corporation's distributions to shareholders, citing "our tremendous strength and success economically."

Within an hour, Vice President JD Vance appeared to try to walk back Trump's proposal — at least in part — by suggesting the dividend payments would not go to the wealthy. Vance suggested it could be paid for by U.S. tariff revenues, though the suggested payment dwarfs what the U.S. has taken in through the protectionist measures.

The White House did not respond to a message seeking details.

Congress would need to approve or otherwise acquiesce to the payment. The sum would far exceed U.S. tariff revenues even before the Supreme Court tossed much of the president's tariff program last year.

The national debt last month topped \$40 trillion for the first time.

Trump has frequently lamented that, during the modern era, the president's party almost always loses seats in Congress during the midterms, and he has looked for unorthodox ways to defy the trend, including this week's convention.

"We're going to change that," Trump said. "There's no reason for it."

Marc Goldwein, the senior policy director at the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a think tank in Washington, said Trump has no authority send money to Americans without approval from Congress.

Goldwein added that dividends are something that companies pay when there's a surplus, but the U.S. is running \$2 trillion annual deficits and has \$40 trillion in debt.

"The idea that we've had fiscal success is backwards and bordering on laughable," he said. "We don't have surpluses to give away."

The move was reminiscent of billionaire Elon Musk's efforts to buy votes in last year's Wisconsin state Supreme Court race, where he handed out million-dollar checks to voters to try to boost a candidate who ultimately lost.

Trump has discussed the possibility before but has never tied it to his party's electoral fortunes. Earlier this year, he proposed a \$2,000 dividend and said he didn't think he needed approval from Congress.

Last year, Trump gave members of the military a \$1,776 check that he called a "warrior dividend."

"I will get a bill ready so that we can get the Trump Dividend passed immediately after the November 3rd election," Republican Sen. Bernie Moreno of Ohio wrote on X late Wednesday. "Because Republicans (and America) will win!"

A \$5,000 check would give each American more money than they received in direct government payments from COVID-19 relief measures during Trump's first term.

Trump's proposal would be legal because the payment would go to everyone regardless of how they voted, or whether they voted at all, said New Mexico-based attorney John Day.

"This is a campaign promise," Day said. "It's not a payment to individuals to try to get them to vote in a particular way."

Republicans are on defense as they look to defend their narrow House majority against strong headwinds. Trump is unpopular, and Americans overwhelmingly oppose the war in Iran. Even the Senate, which Republicans once were well-positioned to keep, is up for grabs.

Foulkes defeats Rhode Island's Gov. McKee. He's the first governor in 8 years to lose a primary

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Helena Foulkes defeated Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee in the state's Democratic primary Wednesday, making him the first governor in any U.S. state to lose a party primary since 2018.

McKee's defeat ends his bid for a second full term and marks the first time in more than 30 years that a sitting Rhode Island governor has been beaten in a primary.

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Foulkes, a former senior executive at CVS and the retailer Hudson's Bay, wasn't the only challenger to oust an incumbent Wednesday. The mayor of Providence lost to David Morales, a young democratic socialist endorsed by U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders.

For Foulkes, the win was a redemptive rebound from 2022, when she narrowly lost to McKee in a more crowded primary field — on a night when the governor notably refused to take her concession call.

In their rematch, McKee was dogged by questions about his administration's work to replace a critical bridge in the state capital that was abruptly closed due to safety problems in 2023.

Foulkes leveraged public exasperation over the cost and pace of the bridge project for her argument that McKee's administration isn't working for most Rhode Islanders.

"Tonight, we may have won the Democratic primary for governor, but let me be clear about what happens next: You will have a governor for everyone," Foulkes told a large crowd in Providence during her victory speech Wednesday. "Because there is so much work that needs to be done, and we need to do this together."

McKee attempted to characterize Foulkes as an out-of-touch elite who turned a blind eye to the opioid crisis during her tenure at CVS, arguing that he had a stronger record.

However, in his concession speech in Providence, McKee promised to work with Foulkes to ensure a "smooth transition."

"This is something that I think is difficult to deal with, but we just got to hold our heads high," McKee said, adding that he has his head "very high because I know the work we've done together is really special."

Incumbent governors rarely lose party primaries. The last time it happened in Rhode Island was in 1994, when Democrat Bruce Sundlun lost to state Sen. Myrth York, ending his bid for a third term. In that race, Sundlun was facing multiple controversies and voter fatigue while York ran on reform.

In a separate election shakeup, Providence Mayor Brett Smiley lost his reelection bid to Morales, 27, in the Democratic primary. Smiley, 47, has held the seat since 2022. Aside from Sanders, Morales also had the backing of U.S. Rep. Ro Khanna and several high-profile labor unions.

McKee has been governor since 2021.

In 2023, McKee closed the Washington Bridge, a vital link that carries Interstate 195 over the Seekonk River and connects Providence to its eastern suburbs and the south coast of Massachusetts. During the summer, it also carries traffic bound for Cape Cod.

State transportation officials had flagged a "critical failure" in an older part of the bridge, but demolishing and replacing it has taken longer than the governor initially estimated. Traffic continues to flow but has been squeezed into fewer lanes on a newer part of the span, leading to lengthy commute times.

McKee maintains that his decisions kept people safe and that the bridge construction will be finished by 2028. He often points to Maryland, saying the Washington Bridge will be complete ahead of the replacement of Baltimore's much larger Francis Scott Key Bridge, which collapsed and killed six construction workers in 2024 after a container ship crashed into it.

Foulkes' grandfather and uncle, Thomas and Chris Dodd, were both Democratic U.S. senators in Connecticut. She worked at CVS for 25 years, eventually becoming president of the company's pharmacy division between 2014 and 2018. She then became chief executive officer of the Canadian retail giant Hudson's Bay before leaving in 2020.

When pressed on her time at CVS, Foulkes argued that CVS reduced its opioid dispensing by 40% when she was president of CVS' pharmacy division. In 2022, after Foulkes had left CVS, the company agreed to pay \$5 billion to settle lawsuits nationwide over the toll of opioids without admitting wrongdoing.

The last governor to lose in a primary was former Kansas Gov. Jeff Colyer, who narrowly lost the Republican nomination to Kris Kobach in 2018.

In the Republican gubernatorial primary, Aaron Guckian and Elaine Pelino were in a close contest for the nomination, separated only a few hundred votes with most of the vote counted. Guckian is a state trade association executive and was the nominee for lieutenant governor in 2022. Pelino is a former actor and first-time candidate. The state party has endorsed Guckian.

Trump defends Iran war, slams Democrats and promises cash at Republicans' midterm convention

By JILL COLVIN, THOMAS BEAUMONT and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — President Donald Trump capped Wednesday's opening night of the unusual Republican midterm convention by slamming Democrats as extremists and staunchly defending the war in Iran while making the extraordinary pledge to pay every adult American \$5,000 if his party retains its control of both chambers of Congress after November.

The proposal, which could cost at least \$1 trillion, was financially and politically implausible. But it reflected Trump's apparent calculation that he needs bold moves to revive Republicans' chances as Democrats try to take advantage of his low approval ratings in close races across the country.

Trump reveled in making the upcoming elections all about himself, even though it's unclear whether that will help or hurt his party. Many Republicans are skipping the two-day affair in Dallas, while others hoped their appearance would put them in the national spotlight as they work to turn out Trump's supporters in a year without him on the ballot.

"If we hand America's future to the radical-left Democrats, our nation will spend the next decade just getting back on its feet," Trump said. "Vote Republican and we will leave the world in our dust for generations to come."

The president urged the crowd to pretend he's running in November and said there were about 35 key races in the Senate and House as his party hopes to maintain congressional control. He pledged "to go to every one of those states," suggesting he might visit some repeatedly.

But Trump also frequently mentioned the unpopular war in Iran, even seeming to acknowledge that it had hurt the U.S. economy. "We were doing great," he said before he approached his economic advisers to say, "I hate to do this to you," explaining that he needed to start the conflict because Iran was perhaps "two, maybe three weeks away from having a nuclear weapon."

Trump similarly defended imposing sweeping tariffs on U.S. trade partners, insisting that the resulting economic turmoil would be worth it in the long run.

His most dramatic comments, however, were to promise, "If the Republicans win the Senate and House, because of our tremendous strength and success economically, I will issue a dividend to every adult citizen in the United States of America for \$5,000."

The president said the only caveat would be that recipients spend the money in the U.S. He provided no details on how such a plan would be implemented but declared, "It will be called the Trump dividend."

The convention was part rally, part fundraiser

The gathering took place as Republicans try to boost enthusiasm heading into the final stretch before Election Day, despite voters' economic concerns and dissatisfaction with the war in Iran. The event described Democrats as communists, anti-American or even evil. Republicans called themselves a "common sense" alternative.

Trump used several minutes of his speech to praise Republican Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, who is in a tough Senate race in what is normally America's largest red state.

"He may not talk exactly perfectly, and he may not be the best-looking guy I've ever seen," Trump said of Paxton, while adding, "he deserves to be your next senator."

The convention got a boost from an unlikely source, Democratic Pennsylvania Sen. John Fetterman, who said in a video message that "I'm always going to reject the extremes and socialism." Fetterman, who has clashed with his party's leaders, referenced his state's steel industry in pledging to "work with President Trump to fight and defend the steel way of life."

A lineup of Trump and more Trump

Normal political conventions are held every four years and serve a purpose beyond pomp and circumstance, with parties formally nominating their presidential picks. This week's convention, by contrast, is

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The Trump Show, through and through.

The walls of the arena where the Dallas Mavericks play were covered with photographs of Trump, even in the elevators. Plenty of attendees wore cowboy hats and boots and many sequins were on display — as well as “Make America Great Again” and American flag caps and other gear.

People in the crowd waved signs reading “Republicans Are Fixing Democrats’ Mess,” despite Republicans controlling the U.S. House, Senate and presidency.

During the early hours of programming, speeches were delivered to scores of empty seats, even in areas close to the stage. Crowds began mostly filling them before Trump’s speech, though areas in the upper decks remained sparsely populated.

Trump will follow up Wednesday’s address with closing remarks on Thursday, after Vice President JD Vance gives his own speech.

“I’m not doing a big deal like this,” Trump said, wrapping up his opening night address that approached the two-hour mark.

Ray Washburne, co-chair of the Dallas host committee, said the event is expected to draw roughly 30,000 people across both nights, but getting airtime was challenging. The NFL season kicked off Wednesday with a game between the Seattle Seahawks and the New England Patriots. On Thursday, the San Francisco 49ers and the Los Angeles Rams will play in Australia.

Key candidates have their turns on stage

Speakers included Republican congressional leadership and Cabinet members. Attorney General Todd Blanche also spoke, which is uncommon for the nation’s top law enforcement official, as Justice Department leaders don’t typically address such events given the agency’s tradition of political independence.

Blanche said Trump and Vance “put American families first. They prove that order and prosperity go hand in hand.”

Republican Michigan Senate nominee Mike Rogers, who is facing off against Abdul El-Sayed, isn’t giving his speech until Thursday night. However, many opening night speakers singled out El-Sayed as a sign Democrats were too radical.

There are 12 hours of programming over two nights, with 100-plus speakers and segments focused on subjects such as tax cuts, fraud allegations and border security.

Trump also hinted that he’d talk a lot about Iran even before leaving for Dallas. As he spoke to reporters on the tarmac prior to boarding Air Force One, the president said that oil prices — which have surged because of the conflict — likely won’t come down until after the midterms, a bit of economic forecasting that could darken his party’s fortunes.

“Right after the election, oil prices are going to be tumbling downward,” he promised, as oil prices jumped more than 3% Wednesday.

Organizers say they’re fine with some Republicans skipping the convention

Some Republicans balked at high attendance fees. Republican House members were being asked to pay \$25,000 for convention tickets and lodging, according to people familiar with the situation and granted anonymity to speak frankly about the private arrangement.

An additional 2,000 tickets were distributed by the National Republican Congressional Committee, largely to donors and others to attend the convention. Other tickets were allocated to state parties to distribute as they saw fit.

“Per the RNC, this is a ticketed fundraiser and rally, not a traditional national convention,” the Denton County Republican Party in Texas wrote in a Facebook post, which advertised packages from \$5,000 to \$20,000.

Trump’s political operation, which has been sitting on hundreds of millions of dollars, began spending heavily through a new group, the No Going Back PAC Inc., the New York Times reported Wednesday. The group has reserved \$49 million in six competitive Senate races and one competitive House race.

That’s in addition to the \$10 million that MAGA Inc., Trump’s super PAC, has spent on the Texas Senate race.

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Associated Press journalists who witnessed Sept. 11 remember what they saw, 25 years later

By JOSEPH FREDERICK, DAVID R. MARTIN and LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Karen Matthews was getting her 3-year-old daughter ready for preschool in her Manhattan apartment on Sept. 11, 2001, when she heard a loud boom, unlike anything she'd ever heard before. Holding her child, she went outside. Around her, people stared up at a gash in the north tower of the World Trade Center, smoke billowing from the building just blocks from her home.

"What did you see? What did you see?" people were asking one another. Matthews, an Associated Press reporter, began asking the same question, fumbling to get out her notebook and record what people had witnessed, all with her daughter still in her arms.

Matthews had planned to drop her daughter at school before working later to cover New York's primary election. Instead, she and other AP journalists found themselves documenting the Sept. 11 attacks as they lived through them.

Twenty-five years later, they remember what they saw.

At first, no one knew what was happening

On her way outside, Matthews passed a woman in her building's lobby with tears streaming down her face. Some people assumed a small plane had accidentally struck the tower.

Then she saw a "big fireball" erupt from the south tower as a second hijacked jet struck.

"I want to go to school, I want to go to school," her daughter started crying.

"That's when we all knew that we were under attack," Matthews said.

Matthews started toward the preschool anyway, until she saw teachers grabbing children and running north, many of them crying. She took her daughter upstairs, intent on getting her to a safe place, and put on Barney.

Then she heard two more impossibly loud roars — one tower collapsing, then the other. Nearly 3,000 people died in the World Trade Center, at the Pentagon, and on the four jets hijacked by al-Qaida militants.

Twenty-five years later, Matthews, now retired, still divides her life into before Sept. 11 and after.

"I'm not a really fearful person," she said. "But you lose a sense of security when something like that happens."

"I do think it helped to be part of telling the story of what happened," Matthews said.

The camera becomes a wall

Lower Manhattan's streets were filled with smoke and debris when Richard Drew got off the subway at Chambers Street and saw the burning twin towers.

His assignment that day had originally been to cover the opening day of Fashion Week — a whirlwind of glamour, models and runway shows.

He began taking pictures. Gray ash and soot covered his clothes, face and cameras.

An emergency medical worker pointed up and said, "Look at that." People were plummeting from the burning towers.

"I don't know whether they were jumping or they got forced out by the fire," Drew said.

Drew photographed them. One image became known as "The Falling Man." It shows a lone man falling headfirst, his body nearly aligned with the vertical lines of the towers. The photograph appeared in some newspapers the next day, but was rejected by other publications that worried readers would find it too upsetting.

Drew still thinks about the photograph — and the unidentified man in it— at least once a week.

"When I'm in a situation like September 11th, I go into professional photographer mode and I concentrate on whatever's happening in front of me," said Drew, who also photographed the 1968 assassination of Robert F. Kennedy.

He said his wife calls his camera a wall — a filter between the photographer and the reality they're capturing.

"I guess I'm in denial about whether those things really affected me," he said.

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The wheelchairs stayed empty

Dust from the pulverized towers was falling "like a snowstorm" when AP reporter Larry Neumeister made it to a hospital near ground zero that afternoon.

Doctors and nurses gathered outside. Lines of wheelchairs and gurneys waited at the entrance. Staff were preparing for a constant stream of injured survivors — potentially thousands, Neumeister said.

Then the hours passed.

"It became clear nobody else was being brought in," Neumeister said.

Around midnight, Neumeister walked by the World Trade Center site. A doctor told him: "You either walked away from the site or ran away from the World Trade Center buildings when they fell, or you were gone. There was no in-between."

Her training took over

Sept. 11 was supposed to be Amy Sancetta's day off.

Then based in Ohio, the AP photographer had traveled to New York to cover U.S. Open tennis. But the tournament was over and she had the day to herself. Then her editor called: A small plane had hit one of the towers. She needed to go downtown.

As she gathered her gear, Sancetta realized she didn't know where the twin towers were. She got into a cab and told the driver to get her as close as he could.

About a block and a half away, Sancetta was photographing the south tower when it began to collapse.

"The weirdest thing that went through my head at the time was, it was kind of muscle memory, like shooting a basketball game," she said.

When the cloud of debris came toward her, Sancetta ran into a parking garage. In a stairwell, she found a woman crying who had escaped from the towers and wanted to call her son. Sancetta hugged her and reached for her flip phone. Her hand was shaking. There was no signal. Sancetta took the son's number and promised to call him.

When she emerged onto the street, everything was white, "like covered with snow, but not snow." The screaming and pounding footsteps had given way to crying and whimpering. Loose-leaf office paper floated through the sky "like birds."

"I wish I'd shot that," Sancetta said. "I didn't, but I can see it — I see it right now."

Twenty-five years later, Sancetta held up a newspaper from Sept. 12 showing the burning towers she had photographed.

"NIGHTMARE," the headline read.

Outside her windows now are woods. But she can still remember the sound of the tower collapsing — "just unearthly."

"As a journalist, I'm glad I was there," Sancetta said. "But as a human being, I wish I'd gone home on Monday."

Trump says oil prices that spiked because of Iran war likely won't come down until after midterms

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Wednesday that oil prices that have surged because of the Iran war likely won't come down until after U.S. midterm elections.

Oil prices on Wednesday jumped more than 3%, pushing international Brent crude past the \$100 threshold for the first time since July as salvos between the U.S. and Iran escalated.

"Right after the election, oil prices are going to be tumbling downward," Trump said. "I think it's going to take a little bit longer than the midterm."

The comments were a striking acknowledgment from Trump about the conflict as his Republican administration faces mounting pressure to address high gas prices as the war in Iran grinds on with no conclusion in sight.

Trump, in an exchange with reporters before traveling to Dallas for the midterm Republican convention,

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added that he believes Iran will finally relent after the pivotal elections are held in the U.S.

"They're desperate to try and affect the election, so that we can get a nice weak group of people in there, and leave them alone and let them have their nuclear weapon," Trump said. He added, "I think the war's going to end immediately after the election because they can't hold out any longer."

Trump also spoke at length about the war in Iran during his keynote address to the convention Wednesday evening. He acknowledged it caused energy prices to spike and financial markets to struggle, but said it was necessary to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

Trump also polled the audience, asking, "Does anyone here think Iran should have a nuclear weapon?" The crowd responded with a resounding "no."

The president at the outset of the war said it would last a matter of weeks. The conflict is now in its seventh month. The U.S.-Israel war against Iran has led to a dramatic slowdown of Gulf oil moving through the Strait of Hormuz, which about 20% of the world's petroleum passed through prior to the conflict.

Trump last week downplayed the conflict as "small potatoes" even as Republicans expressed concern the war will loom large with voters left navigating elevated gas prices and higher inflation.

The U.S. has tapped its strategic petroleum reserves, which in early August fell below 300 million barrels, down by more than 100 million barrels since the start of 2026.

Trump's prediction that the war won't be wrapped up until after Nov. 3 comes after Vice President JD Vance last week steered clear of predicting that the conflict would be over by the midterm elections, in which Republicans are trying to hang on to their narrow majorities in Congress.

Vance told reporters he didn't want to set "artificial timelines" for the war's end.

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

U.S. benchmark crude on Wednesday stood at around \$96 a barrel, and U.S. gasoline prices rose sharply overnight.

The average price for a gallon of regular gasoline ticked up 7 cents overnight to hit \$4.22, now more than a dollar above what it cost at this point last year, according to AAA.

Diesel prices, which can have an outsize impact on consumers because it is used in shipping and production, hit an all-time high Friday and have continued to climb since. The average price per gallon rose to \$5.94 overnight, up 9 cents from Friday.

Jet fuel has become so expensive that U.S. and international carriers have cut flights while raising fares and fees.

The latest market gyrations come 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.

It's 'Pitt' vs 'Pluribus' in drama and 'Hacks' vs 'Widow's Bay' in comedy at the upcoming Emmys

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It's "The Pitt" versus "Pluribus" and "Hacks" against "Widow's Bay" at the 78th Emmy Awards on Monday night.

The stars of all four shows — Noah Wyle in "The Pitt," Rhea Seehorn in "Pluribus," Jean Smart in "Hacks" and Matthew Rhys in "Widow's Bay" — look to be runaway favorites for the top acting awards. And prognosticators are nearly all picking "The Pitt" to win its second straight best drama prize.

But the television competition should otherwise be tight at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. The ceremony will air live on NBC starting at 8 p.m. Eastern with one of the network's signature stars, three-time Emmy winner Mariska Hargitay, hosting. Peacock will stream the show live. The network is celebrating its 100th anniversary, and will have a "peacock blue" carpet in place of the usual red.

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Presenters announced Wednesday include Zendaya, Sally Field, Amy Poehler, Jon Hamm, Macaulay Culkin, Alan Cumming, Keke Palmer, Florence Pugh, Marcello Hernández, Odessa A'zion, Dan Levy, Niecy Nash-Betts and "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" stars Sarah Michelle Gellar and David Boreanaz.

HBO Max's day-in-the-life-of-an-emergency-room drama "The Pitt" has already become a cultural institution in two seasons, and after big wins as an upstart rookie, it was this year's top overall nominee with 25. "Hacks," which follows the travails of a stand-up comic fighting back against age prejudice, sexism and obscurity in the entertainment industry, led all comedies with a record-breaking 24 nominations for its fifth and final season.

Here's a closer look at where things stand and how they might play out.

The Emmys story so far

While the biggest stars are still awaiting the opening of the envelopes, the majority of this year's Emmys were already handed out at early ceremonies Saturday and Sunday.

"Widow's Bay," the first-year Apple TV horror comedy with Rhys as the mayor of a small New England town dealing with a centuries-old curse, won a whopping eight Emmys including best guest actress for Betty Gilpin.

The show had been widely acclaimed for its sly shifting between humor and dread, and it got 19 nominations, but few expected such a trophy haul. It can win up to six more on Monday.

"Hacks" managed just one win.

"The Pitt" won four early Emmys including an emotional first career victory for 73-year-old Ernest Harden Jr. as best guest actor in a drama.

"Pluribus," another Apple TV Emmy rookie, from "Breaking Bad" creator Vince Gilligan, also won four.

The soon-to-be-host Hargitay won two Emmys for the documentary she directed about her mother, Jayne Mansfield, to go with one she already had for her long-running role on "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit."

The early Emmys weekend will be edited down to a single recorded show that airs on FXX on Saturday at 8 p.m. in all time zones.

In drama, "The Pitt" competes with "Pluribus," and itself

The doctors, nurses and patients of "The Pitt" were flooded with Emmy nominations for Season 2. Many will be competing against one another. There's so much category overlap that despite having 12 nominations for Monday night's awards, it can win only six.

Wyle alone can win three Emmys including directing, best drama as a producer and best actor — an award he won last year in his role as Dr. Michael "Robby" Robinavitch.

The other best drama nominees are "Paradise," "Slow Horses," "The Diplomat," "The Gilded Age," "A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms," "Your Friends & Neighbors," and "Pluribus."

Rarely has a single actor carried a show as much as Rhea Seehorn does "Pluribus," where she plays one misanthropic woman taking on an alien hive mind that has enveloped almost everyone else alive. Voters are likely to reward the former "Better Call Saul" star with her first Emmy after four nominations.

Seehorn's fellow nominees include Zendaya, who has won the category twice before for "Euphoria."

Katherine LaNasa won best supporting actress last year for her "Pitt" portrayal of Nurse Dana, and the character had an even bigger second season, guiding patients through harrowing dramatic moments and becoming a viral phenomenon for the way she says "Baby Jane Doe" — an abandoned child in the ER who plays a key role in the season.

This year she'll have three castmates — Taylor Dearden, Fiona Dourif and Sepideh Moafi — as competition.

"It feels really exciting to have more of my colleagues up on the board," LaNasa told The Associated Press after the nominations were announced.

Three "Pitt" men — Patrick Ball, Shawn Hatosy and Gerran Howell — are up for supporting actor.

In comedy, will "Widow's Bay" spoil the "Hacks" graduation celebration?

The Emmys loves to give golden send-offs to outgoing shows, and it will be stunning if Jean Smart doesn't win best actress in a comedy for playing stand-up comic Deborah Vance, as she did for all four previous seasons.

But Emmy voters' clear affection for "Widow's Bay" could keep "Hacks" from winning much more. The

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two shows will be competing for best comedy along with "Abbott Elementary," "The Bear," "Margo's Got Money Troubles," "Only Murders in the Building" and "Shrinking."

Hannah Einbinder, who had a breakthrough win last year as best supporting actress in a comedy after four nominations for "Hacks," will be up against Kate O'Flynn, who wowed with a breakout performance in the debut season of "Widow's Bay."

Both shows also have nominees for best supporting actor in a comedy, but they could easily be upstaged by Harrison Ford, who many think will finally win his first major Hollywood award for his performance on Apple TV's "Shrinking."

Apple TV has become the dominant force in Emmy comedy. This year's nominees will benefit from the temporary absence of Apple's "The Studio," which had an all-time dominant Emmy performance last year, and of the streamer's "Ted Lasso," which put it on the Emmy map.

'Beef,' Colbert, Kimmel and the other nominees

The limited series categories will have a diminished role at the main Emmys show after four of them were demoted to the early Emmys weekend.

HBO Max's "DTF St. Louis" was the big winner of those awards, taking best supporting actor and actress for David Harbour and Linda Cardellini.

"Beef" brings star power to the lead acting categories, with Carey Mulligan the consensus favorite for best actress in a limited series and Oscar Isaac favored for best actor.

And after another year of antagonizing President Donald Trump, the late night shows of Jimmy Kimmel and the now-canceled Stephen Colbert are both up for outstanding variety series.

Temporary protections for about 200,000 Salvadoran immigrants are in limbo as deadline nears

By GISELA SALOMON Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Temporary legal protections for about 200,000 immigrants from El Salvador were in limbo Wednesday as a deadline neared for the Trump administration to decide if they should end, as they have for hundreds of thousands from Venezuela, Haiti and other countries.

The Temporary Protected Status designation expires Wednesday but the statute does not give a specific time for when that happens. If the Department of Homeland Security takes no action, protections are automatically extended for six months. This rare reprieve happened in May, when the protections were automatically extended to about 11,000 Lebanese, allowing them to stay and work in the U.S. for another 180 days.

DHS said in a statement Wednesday that it will announce a decision on El Salvador "at the appropriate time" and that protections would remain in place until then.

About 200,000 people from El Salvador have lived in the U.S. since 2001 under TPS, which allows people already in the country to remain with work permits for renewable periods of up to 18 months, if the secretary of homeland security determines conditions are unsafe for return. They are eligible for work permits.

The administration has ended protections for more than a dozen countries

During President Donald Trump's second term, Homeland Security has ended TPS for more than 1 million people from 13 countries, including Venezuela, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Syria. In addition to El Salvador, only people from three other countries remain protected with termination dates in October for Ukraine and Sudan, and November for Lebanon.

The Trump administration obtained a major victory when the Supreme Court ruled in June that Homeland Security acted within its authority by ending TPS for about 350,000 Haitians and 6,000 Syrians. The impact of the decision extends far beyond Haitians and Syrians, potentially affecting nearly 1.3 million people from 17 countries on TPS.

Tom Homan, Trump's "border czar" who has advocated for ending TPS, said Tuesday that the decision rests with the Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin.

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"If it expires, it's up to the secretary," Homan said when asked about TPS. "Temporary protected status means temporary. Let's face it, El Salvador is a much safer country than it's ever been now with a new president up there."

Congress created temporary protections in 1990

TPS was created by Congress in 1990 to prevent deportations to countries suffering from natural disasters or civil strife.

It was granted to El Salvador following two devastating 2001 earthquakes that left hundreds of thousands of people homeless. Just before leaving office, President Joe Biden extended TPS for El Salvador for 18 months to Sept. 9, 2026.

El Salvador has been a Trump ally

Once one of the most violent places in the world, El Salvador has become one of the safest countries in the Americas since Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele ordered mass arrests in 2022. In April 2025, the State Department upgraded El Salvador's travel advisory to its highest level, citing a drop in violent crimes and murders.

Bukele has been an ally of Trump's policy of mass deportations and El Salvador was one of the first countries to receive deportees and held them at a mega prison also known as CECOT.

Human rights groups and advocates have denounced mass and arbitrary arrests, torture, and disappearances in the Central American nation's prison system.

Trump received Bukele at the White House in April 2025 and invited him to participate in a military coalition to fight against drug trafficking and organized crime. In July 2026, Trump and Bukele met again in Washington, the Salvadoran president has not publicly stated whether he requested an extension of TPS from the Trump administration.

In 2019, during the first Trump administration, Bukele asked Trump to extend TPS. It remained because there were lawsuits.

Salvadorans in the U.S. sent \$9.9 billion in remittances to El Salvador last year, representing 24% of the country's gross domestic product, according to El Salvador's central bank. ____

This story has been corrected to show that TPS has ended for people from 13 countries during Trump's second term, not 14.

A pilot of the Amazon cargo plane that careened off Miami runway warned it was coming in too fast

By JOSH FUNK AP Transportation Writer

For nearly two minutes, one of the pilots of the Amazon cargo plane that careened off a Miami runway and killed five people repeatedly warned his counterpart they were going too fast as they approached for landing and after touchdown, according to flight information released Wednesday.

A summary of cockpit voice recordings compiled by the National Transportation Safety Board said the fellow pilot never gave "a consistent verbal response" to the warnings. The plane touched down awkwardly, briefly attempted to take off and then smashed into a van carrying the five victims.

The Amazon plane came in fast on Sunday afternoon and then barreled roughly 1,300 feet (396 meters) past the end of the runway and smashed into a van carrying workers at a plane cleaning company before hitting a compact SUV as it slid across a public road before catching fire.

All five people who died were in the van. Five others were hurt, including two who remained in critical condition on Tuesday. The two pilots survived and were interviewed Wednesday by investigators.

The pilots had time to correct or abandon their landing

At the point when the pilot first called out the plane was speeding, former FAA official Mike O'Donnell said the crew could have done a number of things to slow it down, including extending the spoilers, cutting the throttles and lowering the landing gear. Or the pilots could have just aborted the landing at that point and circled to try again.

"You have plenty of time to slow down, plenty of time to say, let's just do a go-around at two minutes

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out," said O'Donnell, who used to oversee airport safety and crash investigations.

Plane was unsteady as it approached the ground

Information from the flight data recorder that was released late Tuesday shows how unsteady the plane was as it came in to land amid strong winds, and then the pilots briefly disengaged the brakes and shoved the throttles up as if they were trying to take off again and retry the landing. But they abandoned that just four seconds later.

The cockpit audio recordings also captured a series of automated warnings from the plane about the speed of descent and the approaching terrain. O'Donnell said those terrain warnings reinforce that the plane was unsteady and suggest it may not have been configured correctly for landing.

The Amazon plane was well down the runway when its right and nose landing gear first touched down, reducing how much distance the plane had on the runway ahead of it to stop. Strong winds at the airport as storms moved in may have created a tail wind that helped propel the plane forward. Tracking site Flightradar24 estimated based on the NTSB data that the plane was nearly halfway down the 9,360-foot runway when it first touched down.

The full transcript of the cockpit conversation won't be released until later in the investigation.

Experts question how well the pilots worked together

Several experts have said the pilots should have aborted that landing while the plane was still in the air and circled around to retry it.

Former airline pilot and safety expert Steve Arroyo said the details released Wednesday show a lack of teamwork in the cockpit and suggest the pilot at the controls may have been too focused on the landing to acknowledge the speed warnings.

"Where's the coordination? Where's the leadership here in terms of managing the flight deck? And following the trained guidelines set forth in the company's flight manual?" Arroyo questioned.

Mary Schiavo, who is a former Inspector General of the Transportation Department, said she wonders if the pilot at the controls was the more senior captain while the less experienced first officer called out the warnings "and the junior pilot was not aggressive in challenging."

Investigators will consider everything that may have been a factor

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 that has been flying packages for Amazon since 2024.

The jet's ownership history, weather conditions at the airport, maintenance records and operations by 21 Air were expected to 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.

Cleaning crew killed in Miami cargo jet crash was wrapping up shift at hard, demanding job

By RIO YAMAT, ANNA WILDER and JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

Five members of a crew killed when an Amazon cargo jet smashed into their van were wrapping up their eight-hour shift cleaning planes at the Miami airport when they were struck, lawyers for one of the victims said on Wednesday.

The deadly crash has drawn attention to a workforce that largely operates out of sight of most travelers, tidying airplane cabins for often low pay while sometimes working in hot and dangerous conditions. But the job is also critical to keeping the airline industry moving 24 hours a day.

"This is certainly very tragic. You would not think riding in a van to clean an airplane, that this would

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happen," National Transportation Safety Board Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy said.

Two other workers in the van were in the hospital days after their Econoline van was crushed by the speeding jet that investigators said appeared to be reconsidering a landing Sunday before running out of runway.

Hard-working family men were among the victims

Yoel Rodriguez Naranjo, 53, came to the U.S. from Cuba in 2011 and worked multiple jobs for his family over the past 14 years, said attorney Jorge Garcia, who is a friend of Naranjo's family and filed a wrongful-death lawsuit on their behalf against Amazon, 21 Air, which operated the plane, and the pilots.

Naranjo was driving the van and working a 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. shift for Professional Ocean Service Corp. His wife started frantically texting him when he didn't arrive home on time. After seeing her texts weren't being read, she found a news story about the crash, Garcia said.

Naranjo was a "very hardworking man, very loved by his wife, very loved by his son, and as you can imagine what they've gone through is really unimaginable," Garcia said at a news conference.

Julio C. Pineda also came to the U.S. from Cuba. The 75-year-old was known as "El mago" — "The Magician" — because he was always doing magic tricks, his neighbors told NBC News.

He was calm, helpful, and there was always music and fun when his children came over, they said.

"He was someone who was always laughing and telling stories," Alberto Leandro said. "You'd see him and he'd crack a joke in the elevator."

Killed along with Naranjo and Pineda were Rolando Aleman Leon, 55; Carlos Acosta Fajardo, 53; and Javierkys Reyes Quevedo, 47.

Ridoel Averhoff Diaz, 32, and Roosevelt Sebastian Perdomo Torres, 36, remained in the hospital in critical condition Tuesday, the sheriff's office said.

Cleaning planes is a demanding and intense job

Professional Ocean Service Corp. has been cleaning planes at the Miami International Airport for at least 15 years.

"Our employees are far more than the people who work beside us each day, they are family, and they are deeply loved," the company said in a statement after the crash.

The company cleans and disinfects the inside and outside of both private and commercial jets. Its workers can clean and replace carpet and paint cabins too, according to photos from its website.

Cleaning an airplane is physically demanding work done under intense time pressure, experts say. Crews lug mops, brooms and other supplies up and down aircraft stairs, reach into seat backs and overhead bins, scrub bathrooms and wipe down surfaces.

"They're in a van. They get rushed to the airplane and are standing by on the jetway when the airplane arrives. The minute the passengers are off, their foreman is rushing them to get into that airplane to grab every piece of trash, do a wipe down of the bathrooms and countertops, and get the heck out of there," said Soma Priddle, a retired commercial airline captain and attorney who represents pilots and other aviation workers.

Workers deal with harsh chemicals and large aircraft

Inside a plane, workers can be exposed to harsh cleaners as well as bodily fluids and other contaminants left by passengers. Outside the plane there is hydraulic fluid, jet fuel and de-icing fluids, she said.

And they are working around some of the most powerful equipment on an airport ramp. At any given moment, workers can be alongside aircraft weighing hundreds of thousands of pounds, moving across busy tarmacs and working in extreme heat before climbing into airplane bellies that can be even hotter, said Manny Pastreich, president of 32BJ Service Employees International Union, which represents more than 20,000 airport workers along the East Coast.

"It's dynamic and dangerous work," Pastreich said.

Workers often have little experience and are typically paid close to minimum wage with few or no benefits, Pastreich said. High turnover means crews are frequently made up of newer workers, which can add another layer of risk in an already demanding environment.

"It's an incredibly hard job and not as well compensated as it should be," said Pastreich, whose union did not represent the workers killed in Miami.

The tight turnaround times can add to the pressure. Cleaning contracts are competitive, Priddle said, and companies that cannot consistently get planes cleaned and ready on time risk losing their business.

"It's a god-awful job," Priddle said. "They work long hours. They're just pushed and pushed and pushed."

Former volunteer sues César Chavez nonprofits over failing to stop union leader from sexual abuse

By TERRY TANG Associated Press

One of the organizers who said she was sexually abused by Latino labor leader César Chavez decades ago has sued nonprofits tied to him.

The complaint filed last week in Southern California is the first legal action since the explosive allegations surrounding Chavez were first reported by the New York Times in March. The newspaper also first reported the complaint in Kern County Superior Court on Wednesday.

Filed on behalf of a Jane Doe, it names the César Chavez Foundation and the United Farm Workers Foundation as defendants. Both organizations are accused of failing to investigate complaints over the years about Chavez. They are being sued for several violations including negligent supervision, negligent infliction of emotional distress and sexual harassment. The woman was moved to go to civil court after learning more about the scope of Chavez's alleged abuse of girls and women, including labor figure Dolores Huerta.

The Associated Press does not name victims or survivors of sexual assault and abuse unless they come forward publicly.

"This has been a long time coming for her to take this step," V. James DeSimone, one of the attorneys representing her pro bono, told the AP. "She's committed to the process and is grateful she can legally do something about this all these years later. She suffered a lot over the years. It continues to cause her stress and anxiety."

DeSimone says he expects to hear from other abuse survivors.

The woman, now in her 80s, first met Chavez when she moved to California's Central Valley after graduating college, according to the suit. Inspired by a previous summer volunteering there, she wanted to join in organizing farm workers. In 1973, she and her family were among several workers who moved into the compound in Keene that was the offices of the organization now known as the United Farm Workers.

She says Chavez tried to ply her with alcohol and dance with her at a party that year. He later followed her to her home and raped her in a bedroom. A few years later, she said Chavez assaulted her again.

The woman believes the United Farm Workers Foundation and the César Chavez Foundation in previous years "made concerted efforts to hide evidence of sexual harassment and sexual assaults of girls and women by UFW members and leaders, including César Chavez." Women in the movement were "verbally attacked" by Chavez's top lieutenants and accused of trying to ruin the movement if they spoke up about him or their safety, according to the suit.

She is asking for a jury trial and damages including for past and future earnings as well as punitive damages.

The César Chavez Foundation, in a statement, said it only recently became aware of the complaint. "We are reviewing with our legal counsel and will respond in a way that stays true to our mission and values."

When claims about Chavez's behavior first came to light, the foundation called them shocking and painful. The organization also vowed to stand by the victims and achieve "restorative justice."

"To the survivors: we believe you. We honor your courage, and we are very sorry for the harm you have carried in the shadows for so long," the foundation said back in March.

The UFW Foundation did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment. The United Farm Workers union, which is not named in the complaint and operates separately, declined to comment.

Chavez continued to be the face of workers' rights until his death in 1993. In the wake of the sexual abuse

revelations, Chavez's storied legacy was dismantled practically overnight. César Chavez Day celebrations planned around his March 31 birthday were immediately canceled or postponed. State and local governments began to rename schools, streets and other places that honored him.

DeSimone, a workers' rights attorney who once admired Chavez, said they are not looking to stop these nonprofits from carrying out their missions. But, they said, survivors are owed accountability and a sense of closure.

No matter how noble, "no cause, no organization, should be above the law," DeSimone said. "Sexual abuse and assault are not the price you should have to pay for it."

Missouri's congressional map is back before the U.S. Supreme Court, sowing still more confusion

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — A battle over Missouri's congressional districts vaulted back to the U.S. Supreme Court on Wednesday, two months before a pivotal November election that will determine control of Congress and affect the fate of President Donald Trump's agenda.

A series of conflicting court rulings has left a scar on Missouri — and left voters befuddled and unsure which U.S. House districts they will be voting in and which candidates will appear on their ballots.

A federal appeals court panel on Wednesday sided with Republicans, declining to halt a federal judge's order favoring a new map backed by Trump. But that decision immediately was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which just a day earlier had let stand a ruling by Missouri's top court against the Trump-backed districts.

Time is rapidly expiring to figure it out. Federal law sets a Sept. 19 deadline to mail absentee ballots to overseas citizens and military voters.

Here's a look at how Missouri arrived at this point and the difficulties it now faces.

Missouri acted quickly to draw districts to Trump's liking

Trump urged Republican-led states last year to redraw congressional districts to their advantage ahead of the midterm elections. Texas went first. Missouri was the second GOP state to act. State lawmakers passed new U.S. House districts last September targeting a Kansas City-based seat held by Democratic Rep. Emanuel Cleaver.

The new districts were intended to help Republicans win seven of the state's eight House seats in the midterm elections — a gain of one seat.

Opponents gathered petition signatures to force a vote

Redistricting opponents collected hundreds of thousands of petition signatures seeking to force a state-wide vote on the new districts. They submitted the signatures in December. But Republican Secretary of State Denny Hoskins waited until August — on the same day as Missouri's primary — to reject the petition. Hoskins asserted that a referendum petition could not be used for congressional redistricting.

The delay by Hoskins was intentional. It allowed Missouri's new congressional districts to be used in the primaries.

Missouri's top court said the new districts never became law

The Missouri Supreme Court said Hoskins was wrong. It ordered him to put the redistricting referendum on the November ballot, which he did. But more than that, the court said the new districts never became law and instead were suspended retroactively to the December petition submission.

The court barred Hoskins from using the new map and said the old map — passed by Republican lawmakers in 2022 after the last census — must be used in the November election. The U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to hear an appeal.

A federal judge issued a conflicting ruling

Mere minutes after the U.S. Supreme Court's action, federal District Judge Stephen Clark of Missouri issued a contradictory decision. He temporarily barred Hoskins from using any map other than the new congressional districts in the November election. Clark said switching districts between the primary and

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general election could violate voters' federal rights.

Redistricting opponents asked the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to reverse Clark's order, but it declined to do so. So they quickly asked the U.S. Supreme Court to intervene.

Redistricting opponents also have asked the Missouri Supreme Court to hold Hoskins in contempt for taking steps to use the new districts in November. The court set a contempt hearing for Thursday.

State attorneys for Hoskins, meanwhile, want the federal judge to block the contempt hearing. They contend Hoskins was merely following orders, arguing that a federal court order — based on the U.S. Constitution — supersedes a state order based on the state constitution.

Changing districts after a primary is unusual

After a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in April weakened the federal Voting Rights Act, Alabama lawmakers voted to change some of their congressional districts. The high court allowed it to happen, even though voting had occurred in a May primary. Alabama instead held a new primary for the revised districts in August.

A similar scenario unfolded in Texas three decades ago. After Texas held its 1996 primaries, a federal court struck down several congressional districts. The state subsequently held an open primary for those districts in the November election, putting candidates from both parties on the same ballot. If no one got a majority, the top two advanced to a runoff.

In Missouri's case, no court has suggested redoing the primary. Candidates who won in August already have been certified for the November ballot according to the number of the district that they won.

There is no clear-cut example for Missouri to follow

"Here in Missouri, we've witnessed a series of unprecedented actions, one after another," said Travis Crum, a law professor at Washington University in St. Louis, who specializes in election law.

Do voters have a right for congressional district boundaries to stay the same from the primary to the general election? "That is a tough and complicated legal question, and there is no definitive ruling from the Supreme Court that one could point to for an answer," Crum said.

Candidates knew of the ongoing litigation when they signed up to seek office.

"The fact that the district lines changed, that was a chance that you take when you run," said Michael Wolff, a former Missouri chief justice who later served as dean of the Saint Louis University Law School.

Some voters are frustrated by Missouri's redistricting

Over the past year, more than a dozen lawsuits have been filed over Missouri's redistricting. Some voters have rallied against it at the state Capitol and courthouses. Others have winced in confusion when listening to explanations about which district they reside in.

Toby Thacker, who lives on a farm near Sedalia, has shifted from the 4th District, currently held by Republican Rep. Mark Alford, to Cleaver's 5th District under the new map. Thacker said he generally supports Republicans, who redrew the map.

But "I'm not very happy with them for doing that," Thacker recently told The Associated Press.

Cliff Keith, of Washington, Missouri, recently joined protesters outside the Missouri Capitol.

"They have absolutely no business redrawing the districts right now, just before an election," Keith said.

Alcohol, whey and motorcycles are in the crosshairs of the US import ban on Canada products

By MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The trade war between the U.S. and Canada escalated again this week as the U.S. announced import bans on most alcoholic beverages from Canada, along with other products including whey, molasses and motorcycles.

The U.S. had already imposed 50% tariffs on about \$20 billion in Canadian products — about 5% of the \$381.92 billion worth of products that the country sent to the U.S. last year. The import bans announced late Tuesday target some of those products.

Exporting products to the U.S. with a 50% levy would have been difficult for Canadian businesses. But the import bans, set to be implemented on Sept. 29, are designed to increase the pain even more.

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Import bans are “extremely unusual as a artifact of trade policy,” said Jonathan Doh, professor of international business at Villanova University. “I can’t remember any action in the modern era that involved an absolute ban.”

But he said they are, “in terms of the material impact, not that great overall,” except in specific categories like alcohol.

Here’s a look at the products in the cross-hairs of the import bans.

Alcohol brands under pressure

The trade war has escalated boycotts on American alcohol in Canada, as some provincial liquor boards and stores started taking U.S. labels off store shelves beginning in 2025.

“What that effectively meant was that U.S. liquor, wine, beer, was banned from the Canadian market,” Doh said. “And I think this perhaps appears to have stimulated the U.S. trade policy officials to think, ‘Well, you’re gonna ban some of our imports, we’re gonna ban some of yours as well.’”

The U.S. import ban covers a wide array of categories: beer made from malt, certain types of wine, and spirits like bourbon, whisky, gin, vodka and others.

In 2023, 17.5 million 9-liter (2.4-gallon) cases of Canadian whisky were sold in the United States, worth about \$2.3 billion in revenue for distillers, according to the trade group the Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S.

Overall, the U.S. imported about \$846.1 million of the products on the import ban list in 2025, per U.S. trade data.

“I see this very much in the spirit of kind of tit-for-tat,” Doh said.

Protein-additive whey is a target

The dairy import ban focuses on whey, a byproduct of cheese-making that can be used to add protein to products.

The demand for products with added protein has skyrocketed, causing shortages of food-grade whey protein and pushing prices to new records.

According to U.S. trade data, almost half of the \$73.6 million in general whey and modified whey that the U.S. imported in 2025 came from Canada, although the whey products included in the ban are a smaller fraction of that.

Eight different types of whey, including protein concentrates and modified whey, are included in the current ban.

Some molasses products are also included in the ban.

Most Canadian motorcycles will be banned

The import ban includes motorcycles and mopeds with larger engines, which make up the vast majority of motorcycles imported to the U.S. from Canada.

But it isn’t a big percentage of U.S. imports of motorcycles overall. Of the \$943.7 million in motorcycles imported by the U.S. in 2025, the type of motorcycle under the ban that came from Canada made up less than 9% of that, or about \$80.6 million, according to U.S. trade data.

Other products will be removed from tariff list

The changes made to the tariff list weren’t all bans. Several products — including cement, toilet paper, bedsheets and fishing rods — will be struck from the tariff list.

Republican U.S. Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, who is locked in a tough fight for reelection, had urged the administration to spare cement and paper from the tariffs, saying last month that the levies “could jeopardize” the viability of Maine companies and “the jobs that they support.”

Barry Appleton, co-director of the New York Law School’s Center for International Law, said the administration’s latest moves — banning products and adding key products like steel and aluminum to the tariff list — risk provoking further Canadian retaliation.

“None of it is beneficial in terms of economic efficiency or affordability,” he said. “It’s going to reduce consumer choice. It’s going to mess up supply chains.”

The Tate brothers must stay locked up during their UK extradition fight, US judge says

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

Social media influencers Andrew and Tristan Tate must remain in custody as they fight extradition to the United Kingdom, where the brothers are accused of rape and sex trafficking, a federal judge in Miami ruled Wednesday.

U.S. Magistrate Lauren Louis denied a defense motion for release, meaning the Tates will remain jailed during what could be a monthslong extradition process. The Tates failed to demonstrate that they do not present a flight risk or danger to the community or that special circumstances warrant their release, Louis said in her ruling.

"Having failed to meet these three factors, Respondents' Motion for Release Pending Extradition Proceedings is DENIED," she said in the ruling.

The Tates' attorneys decry the decision

The Tates' legal team said in a statement that the decision to keep them in custody creates a legal contradiction. The brothers are being detained in the United States because of a British extradition request while simultaneously being required to defend themselves against charges in Romania, the statement said.

"They are now facing an extraordinary situation in which they are being held thousands of miles from Romania while Romanian proceedings continue, deadlines approach, an additional indictment is said to be imminent and their own Romanian lawyer says he cannot properly prepare," the lawyers said.

"No serious person can pretend that this can be reviewed properly through occasional conversations from a federal detention center in another country."

The attorneys said they are considering whether to appeal the judge's decision.

The Tates have become among the world's most polarizing internet personalities with their promotion of wealth, male dominance and misogyny through their social media empire. Prosecutors say the brothers are a flight risk because they appear to have money and have bragged about multiple passports.

The brothers face charges in multiple countries

During a hearing last month in Miami, the brothers denied criminal accusations spanning several countries, blasted their critics and described their brash online personas as characters and not their true personalities. The Tates said they exaggerate their claims of wealth to boost their clout on social media.

The new allegations are the latest in the Tates' long-running international legal saga spanning the U.S., Britain and Romania. They have been held at the Federal Detention Center in Miami since making a brief court appearance two days after their July 18 arrest.

Lawyers for the Tates asked the judge to allow them to be freed from custody at least until an extradition hearing can be held on their U.K. rape and trafficking charges.

They have repeatedly argued that Britain's request is out of line because their criminal case in Romania is going first. Romanian officials have let the brothers remain free until the proceedings conclude, and they have not tried to flee and are complying with all court restrictions. Earlier this month, Romanian prosecutors indicted the brothers on additional charges.

Andrew Tate is banned from some social platforms

Andrew Tate, 39, and Tristan Tate, 38, are dual U.S.-British citizens known for their social media empire promoting wealth, male dominance and misogyny.

Andrew Tate is a former professional kickboxer and self-described misogynist who has amassed more than 10 million followers, most of them boys and young men, on X. He has been banned from platforms like YouTube, TikTok and Instagram for violating hate speech guidelines.

He also runs an online academy where he says he teaches young men how to get rich and attract women. Tristan Tate is also a former kickboxer.

The brothers are avid supporters of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Democrats say Trump's 'bizarre' convention is a distraction from his faltering presidency

By BILL BARROW and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — It's not just Republicans descending on Dallas for the midterm convention — Democrats are there too as they try to convince voters that the reality of Donald Trump's second presidency doesn't match the spectacle of his made-for-TV event.

"This bizarre Republican midterm convention here can't paper over the fact that Republicans have done nothing to earn your vote," Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, a potential 2028 presidential contender, said Wednesday morning.

Trump organized the two-day gathering in an attempt to boost Republican enthusiasm despite his low approval ratings, economic concerns and dissatisfaction over the war with Iran. Democrats are trying to capitalize on voters' frustration to retake control of Congress.

Besides Pritzker, several leading House Democrats were traveling to Dallas for events, as well. And Texas Democrats hope the spotlight on the state ends up benefiting their candidates.

James Talarico, a Texas state lawmaker who is running against state Attorney General Ken Paxton in a closely watched Senate race, held a food drive Wednesday at Friendship West Baptist Church in Dallas. He compared volunteers' work with Republicans' festivities.

"While we're here serving our neighbors, billionaire megadonors and their puppet politicians are clinking their Champagne glasses," Talarico said. "They are toasting to their own corruption. They are celebrating corrupt tariffs, billionaire tax breaks and a new forever war that are all driving up costs."

Several Democrats on Wednesday mocked Trump's idea for a midterm convention, an unusual affair that, unlike presidential nominating conventions held every four years, does not involve official party business handled by delegates from across the country. Trump will be featured both nights and is also using it as an opportunity for fundraising.

Talarico smiled as he thought about wealthy Republicans spending thousands of dollars for a picture with Trump.

"If you want a picture with me," he said, "it's free."

Texas Democratic chairman Kendall Scudder added, "Trump's trickle-up economics is taking money out of your pocket and giving it to the richest people in this country," but he insisted that Democrats are determined to do more than criticize the president.

"This party has stood in modern history on the side of working-class people," he said. "We're recapturing that narrative."

Gina Hinojosa, the Democratic candidate challenging Gov. Greg Abbott, went to Dallas to visit a venue featuring thousands of volumes of files related to Jeffrey Epstein and met with those who have accused him of sexual abuse. Trump had resisted releasing the files.

"It's really incredible that we live in a country where the justice system is so broken at every level that there has not been accountability of what we know was extensive sexual abuse, exploitation that happened for decades," Hinojosa said. "And that powerful people who run this country are still living their lives without having been held to account."

The Democratic members of Congress who traveled to Texas said their mission is not just to highlight Trump's shortcomings, but also to show voters what they would prioritize as a congressional majority.

"We want to ensure that people can actually live their lives, be able to work, have access to health care," said Rep. Robert Garcia of California, "and the president's more interested in sending bizarre, deranged social media posts and having his party in Dallas."

Garcia is the ranking Democrat on the House Oversight Committee and is in line to chair the panel should Democrats win the majority. That would put him at the forefront of the party's promised investigations of the Trump administration and the first family's business dealings.

The would-be chairman said those efforts are not a distraction but instead dovetail with Democrats' message on the economy.

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"We just got to be very clear that this is the most corrupt administration in the history of the United States," he said, "and as Donald Trump and his family get infinitely richer, the average American continues to struggle and can barely afford to make ends meet."

Rep. Jason Crow of Colorado added that Democrats, both while campaigning and then potentially as a House majority, can balance policies aimed at helping voters with a range of likely investigations.

"Do you do oversight and accountability or are you legislating other things?" he asked, immediately answering that a Democratic Congress must do both. "And that's actually not our decision. That is what the Constitution says the job is, right? ... And we don't get to decide not to do our job."

New Apple CEO unveils latest iPhone lineup, including a foldable model called Duo

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

CUPERTINO, California (AP) — Apple on Wednesday unveiled its latest generation of iPhones, including a widely anticipated foldable version called Duo.

The company's new CEO, John Ternus, who took over from Tim Cook on Sept. 1, introduced the latest lineup at the company's Cupertino, California headquarters.

After cycling through other updates to the iPhone, the Apple Watch and AirPods, Ternus told the audience inside the Steve Jobs Theater that "actually there is one more thing," in a nod to the trademark phrase from Jobs that the company's legendary late founder himself borrowed from the 1970s detective show "Columbo."

The foldable phone has the "largest display ever on an iPhone, yet fits into your pocket," Ternus said.

The phone opens to a 7.6 inch display that is 80% larger than the newest iPhone 18 Pro. It will let people use an Apple Pencil on the phone, a capability previously reserved for iPad users. Duo, Ternus said, "will redefine the experience of using a foldable phone."

The Duo lets users split the screen to use two different apps on the device, or two windows of the same website for things like comparison shopping. With a starting price of \$1,999, it is the most expensive iPhone yet.

The Duo "was always going to eclipse Apple's other announcements at the event," said Ben Wood, chief analyst at CCS Insight. "The device adds a distinctive new design to the iPhone lineup and marks the company's entry into the niche foldable smartphone category."

Wood said that while there is certain to be demand for the Duo, which costs less than some analysts had anticipated, foldables still account for less than 5% of the overall smartphone market.

New iPhone 18 models

The iPhone 18 Pro and 18 Pro Max, Ternus said, bring improvements to the battery, camera, and performance. They will start at \$1,199 and \$1,299, respectively. Customers can preorder the phones starting on Sept. 12 and they will be available on Sept. 18, although the Duo will be available on Oct. 23.

The new models feature a long battery life — 45 hours of video playback for the Pro Max — and faster charging. The camera offers what Apple called "cinematic effects" from regular video captured on the phone, as well as new options for manual controls and "smart focus tracking," which lets users focus on a single moving subject, such as a kid during a soccer game.

Apple is also focusing on Siri's new AI capabilities with the new phones, emphasizing privacy and security to stand apart from rivals who are further along in incorporating AI.

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. But, he added, the question will be whether it can expand demand for what's still a niche product category.

Compared with earlier generations, the iPhone 18 costs about \$100 more due partly to a global memory

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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.

Ternus takes center stage

The keynote address for Ternus was his opportunity to 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."

Wood noted that, with all the excitement around the Duo, the official arrival of Ternus as CEO "felt like less of a story" than he'd expected.

"This event marks a seamless transition from Tim Cook, and its timing to coincide with the iPhone Duo was undoubtedly planned," Wood said. "However, despite the media frenzy about this new device, it is the broader strength of Apple's hardware, software and services that will drive the company forward."

A NYC firehouse was first to respond on 9/11. 25 years on, Sal Argano is the last still on staff

By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Sal Argano got lucky. When the World Trade Center was struck by hijacked jets on Sept. 11, 2001, the New York City firefighter was in Brooklyn, on loan to another station, rather than at his usual post at the small Manhattan firehouse just across an intersection from the twin towers.

He rushed downtown to find his firehouse badly damaged but still standing. Six of its members, he'd later learn, were among the 343 New York City firefighters killed in the World Trade Center's collapse.

"If I wasn't sent out on rotation there would have been a good chance I would not be here today," Argano says. "I think about that all the time."

Almost 25 years later, Argano, now 65, is still on duty at the firehouse — the last of the firefighters assigned there in 2001 who still works there.

Today, the crews at the firehouse respond to emergency calls but also serve as a de facto part of the 9/11 memorial, visited by crowds of tourists daily.

Some visitors come specifically to see the large bronze relief along the side of the building listing the names of the firefighters killed on 9/11.

Others pause to take selfies as they pass by on their way to the National 9/11 Memorial plaza across the street, drawn by the sight of Engine 10 and Ladder 10, the gleaming trucks sitting in the garage that give the station its nickname: Ten House.

"This is definitely one of those companies where if you don't want to ingratiate yourself to the public, it's definitely not the right place," said Capt. Terence Brody, who commands Ladder 10 and has worked at the station since 2016. "People around the world know this firehouse. They're going to come by and say hello."

Ten House served key roles during and after 9/11

Brody, now 55, was still in the fire academy on 9/11. Cadets grabbed their gear and were bused to ground zero.

The debris hung so thickly in the air around the fallen towers that it looked like it was snowing, he said.

"It was a beautiful sunny Tuesday, and then you're in this kind of apocalyptic atmosphere," Brody said.

"It was a little overwhelming, to say the least."

In the days after the attack, Ten House served as both command center and safe space for weary first responders, he said. As the years passed, its crew had a front-row seat to the area's rebirth.

Robert Favata joined Ladder 10 in 2008, fresh out of the academy.

In those early years, he worked beside a giant hole teeming with construction activity. Now 46, he looks

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out at a transformed landscape.

A pair of waterfall pools sit in the footprint of the old towers, ringed by parapets etched with the names of nearly 3,000 victims. Below ground, the 9/11 Museum houses mangled steel beams, a destroyed fire truck and other artifacts. New skyscrapers ring the memorial.

"When I got here, there was nothing," Favata says. "I never thought they were gonna finish."

Today, an endless stream of visitors stop at firehouse

Argano can be found most days perched near the station's open bay doors, patiently answering questions, shaking hands and posing for photos.

He says Ten House firefighters have a unique charge: they're both living testimonials to the events of 9/11 as well as public faces of the centuries-old FDNY.

Argano says he tries to impress on younger firefighters — many increasingly not even born before the attacks — the importance of treating every visitor with respect.

"This is not like any other firehouse," he said. "We have our fire duty, we have our responses, and then we have a responsibility toward the people outside."

He acknowledges the task is not always easy. The packs of gawking tourists can be relentless. Their questions can sometimes come across too personal, too insincere or just simply too out there.

Many of the younger firefighters tend to keep a lower profile for that reason, he said.

After responding to an early morning call this particular day, most of the crew heads to the back of the station to stow their gear or upstairs to help prepare lunch.

Argano meanwhile chats up a firefighter from France and his wife and then invites them into the station.

He points to a wall of patches from fire departments across the world that have been gifted over the years, as well as the well-worn helmets hanging in the rafters.

At another point, though, a lady asks — perhaps a bit too flippantly — what's so special about Ten House.

Argano shrugs: "It's just a fire station." After she departs, he says it simply wasn't worth the effort.

"If I need to explain to you all of that, then it's like, 'Pull up a seat,'" Argano said. "Let me get another cigarette. It's gonna be a long one."

Ten House members reflect on 9/11 milestone

Favata considers the approaching 25th anniversary as likely one of his last before retirement. He worries, though, if he's done enough to keep the memories of Ten House alive.

"When I got here, so many of the guys worked 9/11 and they told me their stories of that day," Favata said, choking on tears. "I just hope I can give like a percentage of what they've told me to the younger guys."

Brody, meanwhile, handed in his retirement papers Tuesday. His last day will be in October.

"It's interesting to think that my first day in the field was right across the street, and this is where I'm gonna end my career," said Brody, who writes screenplays in his spare time and has already had two of them turned into Hallmark Channel movies.

But Argano, who drives Engine 10, isn't quite ready to pack it in. He fears something will be lost when no one is there who still remembers.

"I'm not done. I'm gonna be here as long as I can," Argano said. "I'm going to keep telling them what I know, what I saw, what I've been through. Telling them the history of this firehouse. Everything I can remember."

An appeals court is considering a push to restrict most common abortion method

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

A panel of federal judges heard arguments Wednesday over whether prescribing rules should be tightened for a key drug used in the most common abortion method in the United States, one of several ongoing efforts to restrict abortion access four years after the U.S. Supreme Court allowed states to decide the issue.

The case before the New Orleans-based 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals is one of three making its way

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through the courts as abortion opponents try to block providers in states where abortion is legal from sending drugs for medication abortions into states where it is not.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration also says it's reviewing the rules and could call for a change — and that the agency process should take precedence over court action.

It comes in a midterm election year in which President Donald Trump's anti-abortion supporters are frustrated that a legal workaround to abortion bans remains. At the same time, most voters favor legal abortion access in most cases.

It will be up to the Supreme Court to sort out

At least 3 in 5 U.S. abortions are now obtained using a two-drug combination. At issue before the appeals court is just one: mifepristone.

Wednesday's arguments were part of a case brought by Louisiana Attorney General Liz Murrill and Rosalie Markezich, who says she was coerced into taking abortion pills. A survey conducted for the Society of Family Planning, which supports legal abortion access, estimates that between 770 and 900 women in Louisiana obtained abortions each month in 2025 by using pills prescribed online or by doctors or nurse practitioners in other states that have "shield laws" intended to protect those prescribers.

The three judges hearing the case are two nominated by Democratic presidents Barack Obama and Joe Biden and one nominated by Republican George W. Bush.

Three other three-judge panels on the 5th Circuit — one in this case and two in an earlier one — and two district courts have already agreed that rules for prescribing mifepristone are too loose.

But the Supreme Court unanimously rejected an effort to roll back availability in 2024 — not because of the core legal argument, but because the court found the anti-abortion groups who brought the challenge didn't have legal standing to make it.

On Wednesday, lawyers for the FDA and mifepristone manufacturers argued that Louisiana also lacks legal standing. One of the judges, Stephen Higginson, questioned whether the FDA's role is a reason pills are flowing into Louisiana. "Those are state shield laws," he said. "The government has nothing to do with the shield laws."

Benjamin Aguinaga, Louisiana's solicitor general, said the state is impacted, though, because some women who use the pills seek treatment for complications and, he said, perhaps half also have state-funded Medicaid health coverage.

Another ruling from the 5th Circuit would not immediately change the landscape because the Supreme Court has also blocked changes to the prescribing rules until it sees the case again. Even if the FDA makes changes without court approval, such an action would surely be challenged.

Other GOP state officials are also challenging the FDA's rules. The attorneys general of Florida and Texas have filed one lawsuit and the top government lawyers of Idaho, Kansas and Missouri have another. Separately, Louisiana and Texas have attacked shield laws by bringing criminal and civil cases against some out-of-state providers.

Meanwhile, over the past year, federal judges in Hawaii and Virginia found that current FDA rules for mifepristone prescribing are too restrictive.

Abortion methods have changed since Roe was overturned

Abortion pills were already widely used before the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in the 2022 Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization case that allowed states to enforce abortion bans.

Currently, 13 states ban abortion at all stages of pregnancy. Another four do so after about the first six weeks, before many women realize they're pregnant.

Opponents say the shield laws in some Democratic-controlled states, along with the rules allowing mifepristone to be mailed to patients, have undermined the bans.

"This case is going to have a huge impact," said Gabriella McIntyre, legal counsel at Alliance Defending Freedom, which is representing Murrill and the other plaintiff in the case. "The promise of the Dobbs decision was that states would be able to decide on their own how to regulate abortion."

A lawyer for mifepristone maker Danco Laboratories, though, told judges Wednesday that the 2023 rules

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were not intended to do so.

Abortion rights advocates also believe major consequences would arise if Louisiana eventually prevails. "They're asking to restore an in-person requirement for every person across the country to access this medication regardless of whether they live in a state with strong legal protection for abortion access," said Amanda Allen, executive director of the Abortion Coalition for Telemedicine.

The political situation is tricky for Trump

Anti-abortion groups who want to rein in pill access have been Trump's key supporters.

Abortion opponents have called on the FDA to settle the lawsuit with Louisiana and roll back prescribing rules to how they were before telehealth prescriptions were allowed. They also want the administration to enforce an 1873 "anti-vice" law to bar mailing the pills.

Some states, including Mississippi and Texas, have adopted laws with civil or criminal penalties for those who prescribe abortion pills.

But on state ballot questions and in public opinion polls, voters have generally supported legal abortion access in most cases.

The administration has been mostly quiet through the legal battles, even though the FDA, whose scientists have repeatedly found mifepristone to be safe and effective, is the defendant in the cases.

The FDA says it's studying mifepristone's safety and reviewing prescribing rules around the drug. But Trump's latest nominee to head the agency, Dr. Heidi Overton, the deputy director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, has publicly criticized the agency for relaxing its prescribing rules for the drug — the most recent change coming in 2023.

One judge ordered the agency to provide a status update by Oct. 7, less than a month before the mid-term elections in which control of Congress is in play. It's not clear how detailed an update might be — or when the full study could be completed.

Prescribers are preparing to shift which drug they ship

Even if mifepristone access is curtailed, advocates say it won't end access to abortion pills.

The most common regimen for pills in the U.S. is a combination of mifepristone and misoprostol. Misoprostol, which is commonly used to treat stomach ulcers and has never been formally approved for abortion, can cause abortions on its own. According to the FDA label on mifepristone, the combination completes medical abortion 97.4% of the time. Some studies have found misoprostol's individual effectiveness at around 80% or higher.

Organizations that prescribe abortion pills by telehealth for women who are in states with bans say they would shift to sending misoprostol alone if mifepristone could be dispensed only at medical clinics rather than at pharmacies and through the mail.

As midterms approach, new poll finds that few Americans trust campaigns or Trump

By AMELIA THOMSON-DEVEAUX and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans are more skeptical of government information than they were a few years ago, with majorities now saying they have little or no trust in federal government information about elections and politics, foreign affairs or the environment, a new poll finds.

The survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and USAFacts shows that while mistrust of government information has grown since 2024, it's also higher than it was at the end of President Donald Trump's first term, underscoring how his recent attempts to dismantle parts of the federal bureaucracy may have affected public confidence in the executive branch, particularly among Democrats.

Those suspicions extend to the results of the coming midterm elections. Only 34% of U.S. adults trust government certifications of election results "a great deal" or "quite a bit," which is down slightly from 40% in 2024. Certification is a typically routine process in which local and state officials confirm the vote count, but it's become politicized since Trump lost the 2020 presidential election.

Trust in government information has also become more partisan since Trump's first term, the survey found.

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"It's pretty hard to trust anything that's being communicated," said Shannon Ingram, 46, a Democrat who lives in Maryland, pointing to shifting health recommendations as an example of "questionable" government information she's seen since Trump regained office. "There is a significant amount of bias, and it comes from the people who are authoring the content."

Lower trust in federal government information

About 6 in 10 U.S. adults have low trust in information from the federal government about the environment, foreign affairs, elections and politics, abortion or immigration — saying they trust it "only a little" or "not at all."

Mistrust in what the federal government says has risen at least slightly on nearly every topic that was asked about in an AP-NORC/ USAFacts survey from 2019. That includes education — which has risen from 37% in 2019 to 53% now — with a 9-percentage point spike in the last year.

The findings come after a year and a half of upheaval in the executive branch. Trump began to dismantle key parts of the federal bureaucracy soon after entering the White House for the second time, moving to end longstanding programs and shutter entire agencies.

Since then, thousands of federal employees have been fired or left their jobs, substantially reducing the ranks of the government statisticians and leading experts to warn about risks to data quality.

Shifting regulations and recommendations have also led to dramatic changes in government policy. Recent changes to longstanding health advice have put doctors and medical organizations at odds with the Trump administration on vaccination recommendations. Earlier this year, the Environmental Protection Agency rescinded a scientific finding that has underpinned government action to fight climate change for more than a decade.

Jeremy Cove, a 44-year-old Republican from Missouri, trusts the Trump administration's guidance on matters like vaccines, but he disagrees with their assertion that climate change is not happening, or that humans are not contributing to it.

"I love Trump; I voted for Trump, but some of the things he's doing just makes me distrust more," Cove said. "Stuff like renaming Lake Ontario to Lake America, it just makes you think about what their priorities are. Then you realize it's not what it should be, which in turn, makes you distrust even more."

Belief in government information has become more partisan

The gap between Republicans' and Democrats' trust in government information is much wider than it was during Trump's first term, a shift that first began to appear under former President Joe Biden.

Democrats were generally less likely to trust government information in Trump's first term, but not dramatically more than Republicans. That shifted when control of the White House changed hands. Republicans' mistrust in government information rose while Biden was president and fell after Trump took office. Meanwhile, Democrats' doubts declined under Biden and spiked when Trump regained power.

For example, 61% of Democrats now have low trust in information about the federal budget, compared with 42% of Republicans, while 60% of Democrats have low trust in information about crime, compared with only 32% of Republicans.

Larry Haith, a 76-year-old Republican from Idaho, says he tends to trust the federal government — though, he acknowledges that it can vary based on the current administration.

"Generally speaking, I've got more confidence in the federal government today than I've had in years," he said.

Independents, meanwhile, became more mistrustful of government information under Biden and haven't shifted under Trump.

The only issue without a substantial partisan divide in the new survey is vaccination recommendations and safety: about 6 in 10 Democrats, Republicans and independents trust the federal government on vaccination recommendations and safety "only a little" or "not at all."

Few trust political messages, even from their own party

As the 2026 midterms approach, public concern about the accuracy of the election results is widespread. Just under half of U.S. adults are "extremely" or "very" concerned the federal government will publicly discredit or question election results, tamper with election results, or pressure state election officials to

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change how they certify or report results.

Over the past few months, Trump has repeated long-debunked allegations of mass voter fraud in the 2020 election, attempted to place new restrictions on mail voting in time for the midterms and pushed Congress to enact a proof-of-citizenship requirement to register and vote. Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin has also warned state officials that they could lose funding or face investigations if they fail to go along with Trump's election security demands.

At the same time, few Americans trust the information they get from political campaigns. Only about 1 in 10 U.S. adults say the Democratic Party or Republican Party campaign messages are "always" or "often" based in factual information.

In a sign of how deep the mistrust runs, only about one-quarter of Democrats trust their party's campaign messages to be factual at least "often," while a similar share of Republicans say this about their party.

Less than half of Democrats, 44%, trust government certifications of election results "a great deal" or "quite a bit," a substantial decline from 65% in 2024.

Even with Trump back in the White House, though, Republicans haven't seen a similar increase in confidence. Only 29% of Republicans have high trust in government certifications of election results, up just slightly from 2024.

Trust in other sources of information about election outcomes — such as national news outlets or cable news networks — is also low overall.

Kim Murza, a Democrat from Colorado, has faith in the country's ability to run fair elections but blames the Trump administration for eroding Americans' trust in the process.

"My concern is more about what the current administration is doing," said 45-year-old Murza. "I think they are doing whatever they can to try to put that distrust in people's minds."

Zelenskyy urges more international pressure on Russia for civilian deaths

By SAMYA KULLAB and SRDJAN NEDELJKOVIC Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy chided the international community Wednesday for not taking a tougher stance against Russia over its escalating bombardment of civilian areas of Ukraine.

At the end of August, Russia launched a week of nighttime and daylight attacks on Kyiv in its heaviest sustained bombardment of the Ukrainian capital since its full-scale invasion began more than four years ago. The relentless missile and drone strikes have continued this month and aim to sap civilian morale, Ukrainian officials say.

International economic sanctions on Russia and efforts to isolate Moscow diplomatically haven't stopped the invasion. Zelenskyy urged countries to step up the pressure.

"Unfortunately, there has been too little response from the international community to these strikes, which are taking people's lives practically every day," he said on social media.

"But a response is needed — Moscow must not go into the winter believing that it can get away with missile and drone terror without consequences," he said.

The United Nations said last month that increasing Russian aerial attacks killed or wounded more Ukrainian civilians in July than in any month since March 2022, with 437 killed and more than 2,600 wounded. In all, more than 16,800 Ukrainian civilians have been killed and more than 51,000 wounded since the Russian invasion, according to the U.N. Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.

Moscow always denies it aims at civilians and says it is targeting military-related facilities.

The U.S. has renewed its push to end the fighting, sending special envoys over the weekend to Kyiv and Moscow, although Washington's efforts haven't yet delivered any substantial progress. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said late Tuesday that the Ukraine-Russia talks were "substantive" but much remains to be done.

Kyiv apartment block residents reel from a drone strike

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Russia's aerial attacks overnight into Wednesday killed at least two people and wounded seven, Ukrainian officials said, as Moscow fired ballistic and cruise missiles as well as drones at six regions.

Four of the wounded were in a 22-story residential building in Kyiv's Darnytskyi district, where a drone damaged the 11th floor and started a fire on the 12th floor, Ukraine's State Emergency Service said.

Olha Smal, 62, who lives on the 12th floor, said the blast wave flung her across her kitchen. One of her bedrooms caught fire, and smoke quickly filled the apartment, she said. Her pregnant neighbor was wounded.

"You live one day at a time. You don't know what will happen to you tomorrow, or even what will happen today," she told The Associated Press. "It's very, very hard."

Russia's Defense Ministry said that its forces hit a drone factory warehouse in Kyiv.

It also claimed strikes on fuel reservoirs and an electric substation in the port city of Mykolaiv in southern Ukraine.

The Russian military also struck a ship heading to Odesa with military cargo and logistical facilities at Ukraine's Starokozache border crossing with Moldova, the ministry said. The border strike killed two people, Ukrainian authorities said.

On Wednesday evening, three people were killed in a Russian drone attack on the grounds of a shopping mall in Sumy, said Oleh Hryhorov, head of the Sumy regional military administration. He called the strike "targeted."

Artem Kobzar, acting mayor of Sumy, said 14 people were injured in the strike.

Ukrainian drones target a Siberian industrial facility, Russian officials say

Zelenskyy said Ukraine is responding to Moscow's strikes with daily long-range attacks on infrastructure deep inside Russia.

Ukrainian drones on Wednesday targeted an unspecified industrial facility in the remote Russian city of Novy Urengoy in northwest Siberia, local authorities said. The attack was repelled and there were no casualties, but falling drone debris sparked a fire, Yamalo-Nenets region Gov. Dmitry Artyukhov said on Telegram.

Novy Urengoy is located some 2,800 kilometers (1,700 miles) from the border with Ukraine, and Russian independent news outlet Meduza said it was Ukraine's first attack on the city. About 80% of all natural gas in Russia is currently extracted in the Yamalo-Nenets region, according to the Interfax news agency.

Fire Point, a Ukrainian company that makes deep-strike drones and cruise and ballistic missiles, posted on X: "Guess who just traveled over 3,300 km and successfully hit the target?" It did not elaborate, and Ukrainian officials made no immediate comment.

Zelenskyy said Ukrainian strikes targeted Novorossiysk, a Black Sea port in Russia's Krasnodar region. The attack hit a naval base, including a terminal used to load oil, military port facilities, and warships carrying cruise missiles, according to Zelenskyy.

The Novorossiysk naval base is a key hub for Russia's Black Sea Fleet, providing maintenance and logistical support for its ships, according to Ukraine's General Staff.

Krasnodar Gov. Veniamin Kondratyev said that four people, including a child, were killed and 29 others were wounded in the drone attack on Novorossiysk.

Russia's Defense Ministry said that air defenses downed 596 Ukrainian drones from late Tuesday until early Wednesday.

What to know about Europe's push to compete in space

By SYLVIE CORBET and KELVIN CHAN Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Key figures from Europe's space industry and other international players have converged on Paris to discuss how to advance the continent's ambitions in a global market dominated by the United States.

The two-day International Space Summit that started Wednesday gathers officials, astronauts, researchers and industry leaders from about 120 countries to discuss the future of the space industry and pursue

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potential business deals.

"Europe is taking its destiny into its own hands, including in space," French President Emmanuel Macron said in a message posted on X. He called for innovation and investment "to build a powerful Europe, independent even in space."

Here's what to know about Europe's efforts to compete in the global space race.

Europe seeks to build up sovereign space capabilities

Macron's space summit underlines his push to reduce Europe's reliance on the U.S. for vital tech services, which extends to space launches as well as satellites for communications and reconnaissance.

European nations have sought to build up their sovereign space capabilities since 2022 and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which highlighted how Elon Musk's Starlink satellite communications service has become both a critical partner for Kyiv and a potential vulnerability.

Immediately after the war erupted, there were initial doubts about whether the billionaire would continue to fund Starlink services in Ukraine. Reports said Musk refused to let Starlink to be used to support an attack on a Russian naval base in 2022.

The European Union is working on a "sovereign satellite" constellation called Iris2 that is designed to rival Starlink by providing secure communications and connectivity to the 27-nation bloc's citizens. However, it's not expected to be fully operational until 2030.

Another inflection point came this year after the Iran war broke out and U.S. satellite imaging companies Planet Labs and Vantor started withholding images of the conflict region in the Middle East, apparently to prevent adversaries from attacking the U.S. and allies.

The Middle East conflict has fueled demand from countries for their own satellite imaging capabilities, said Emiliano Kargieman, CEO of Satellogic, which signed a deal earlier this year to supply Portugal with two high-resolution imaging satellites.

"For Europe there's a lot at stake," the director general of the European Space Agency (ESA), Josef Aschbacher said. "Satellites are really being utilized day in, day out. It's what we call a critical infrastructure, therefore extremely important for every citizen."

The United States is far ahead in the race

The United States remains the global leader in the space sector, with NASA conducting major exploration missions and overseeing the Artemis program, which aims to establish a human presence on the moon.

Musk's rocket company, SpaceX, has transformed the commercial launch industry by making reusable rockets operational, lowering costs and increasing the frequency of launches.

Meanwhile, Amazon launched its first internet satellites in 2025. The company plans to deploy more than 3,200 satellites to provide broadband service around the world. Amazon's founder Jeff Bezos also established the rocket company Blue Origin.

SpaceX and Blue Origin canceled plans to attend the Paris summit, the French government said. News outlet Politico reported that the White House had urged U.S. space companies not to attend because it could appear to support European Union policies.

"There can be tensions, as well as technological competition between major powers, particularly the United States and China," a French presidential official said, speaking anonymously in keeping with the presidency's customary practices. "We do have strengths, but we can see that things are accelerating and that much more money is needed."

Ariane is the flagship of Europe's rocket industry

The Ariane program allows Europe to launch satellites through missions including the Galileo navigation system, the Copernicus Earth-observation program and military and scientific satellites.

Ariane also operates commercial missions. Since the beginning of the year, the most powerful version of the rocket, Ariane 64, successfully put in orbit 100 Amazon Leo satellites in three launches as part of a contract for a total of 18 launches.

But Ariane, which relies on multiple European nations, requires complex logistics. The core stage of the rocket is assembled in France, while its upper stage is built in Germany with the support of hundreds of

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subcontractors across Europe.

Rocket components are transported by cargo ship across the Atlantic to Europe's spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana, well-located for missions to geostationary orbit.

The rocket is also expendable, making it more expensive to operate than reusable competitors. There are only a handful of launches a year — in contrast to more than a hundred flights annually for SpaceX's Falcon 9 rockets.

The continent needs more launch capabilities

European leaders are trying to build up domestic space launch capability so that the continent is less dependent on SpaceX rockets.

Musk has indicated that the company plans to "wind down" Falcon rockets and replace them with the bigger Starship, but space industry executives worry there could be a gap that could result in a "launch crunch" in a few years.

"Not being able to put your own satellite into orbit is a huge problem for Europe," said Kargieman.

"China has its own launch capacity and Europe still doesn't have a high-cadence, low-cost launch capacity, similar to SpaceX. This will undoubtedly be on everyone's minds at the summit," he said.

However, German startup Isar made a major breakthrough on Saturday in European efforts to catch up with SpaceX, when it successfully launched a rocket carrying satellites into space from Norway. It was the first such launch for a commercial European space company.

Aschbacher, the head of the ESA, said Europe should also build up its strength in space exploration. "One topic we discuss in particular is should Europe also build up astronaut flight capabilities?" he said. "That means bringing our own astronauts, with our own rockets or our own crew vehicle, to lower orbit and eventually beyond."

In North Carolina, a race is on to restore critical peatland before it dries up or is destroyed

By TAMMY WEBBER and JOSHUA A. BICKEL Associated Press

BELHAVEN, N.C. (AP) — The birds are up with the sunrise — warblers, flycatchers, sparrows and towhees calling across the treetops. Deer browse on tender buds emerging from dense shrubs. Black bears scrounge for roots, insects and other edibles.

It's an idyllic setting in North Carolina's Inner Banks, where fields of cotton, soybeans and corn stretch for miles, country roads wind through stands of pines and thousands of bird watchers converge to witness the spring migration.

But it's what's underground that has drawn scientists and investors to this 23-square-mile (60-square-kilometer) tract: spongy, dense peat up to 15 feet (5 meters) deep.

They're here to save it.

Fifty miles (80 kilometers) of ditches dug decades ago for an abandoned farming venture drained much of the water from thousands of years of accumulated peat, leaving the site vulnerable to drought and wildfires, altering its native habitats — and allowing it to emit 130,000 tons of climate-warming carbon dioxide a year.

"Our goal is for perpetuity to conserve these lands so they can't become oil and gas fields, so they're not mined for phosphorus or turned into parking lots and shopping centers," said Tripp Wall, CEO of Colorado-based company Pantheon Regeneration. "They're just these incredible systems that I feel are underappreciated here in the U.S. (that) for 10,000 to 15,000 years have been climatologically resilient until we screwed them up."

Peatlands are a climate paradox. Though they account for just 3% of global land surface, they store one-third of the Earth's carbon dioxide, more than all forests combined. But when degraded — primarily when farmers lower the water table to grow crops — destroyed or burned, they become part of the problem, releasing huge volumes of greenhouse gases, now about 6% of the annual global total from all sources.

And the type of peatlands found in North Carolina, and for hundreds of miles along the Eastern Seaboard,

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are among the most threatened in the world.

Pantheon plans to reverse the damage by blocking off ditches to control the water table and significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Then it will cull invasive species and replant native grasses, flowers and other plants.

The restoration is modeled after other projects by nonprofits and government agencies, including at the adjacent 175-square-mile (453-square-kilometer) Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge — one of the largest peatland restoration projects in the U.S. — which provides habitat for threatened and endangered species such as red wolves, yellow pitcher plants and Atlantic white cedar, and has become an important stopover for migrating birds such as Tundra swans.

But what sets apart Pantheon's project is a plan to sell carbon credits to tech companies and other corporations that want to compensate for their own greenhouse gas emissions, then use the money to restore and preserve a million acres (1,562 square miles, or 4,047 square kilometers) of peatland from Virginia to northern Florida over the next decade.

Each property will be permanently conserved and rewilded — "big corridors, big birding habitats, big biodiversity hotspots that have an outsized impact on climate," said Wall.

Ancient ecosystems under threat

Neal Flanagan pushes a metal tube through roots and around buried logs until it sinks about a meter (3 feet). When he pulls it out, it's packed with black soil.

Near the surface, it's dry and full of dead fibers from plants like wood fern, blueberry and Lyonia. The middle is crumbly, moist and odorless, with bits of charcoal from long-ago fires. But the saturated bottom, 50% carbon, is the consistency of axle grease.

"This is the black gold," said Flanagan's colleague, Duke University ecologist Curtis Richardson, as ancient peat oozes from his closed fist. Its "magnitude and importance cannot be underestimated," he added.

When peatlands are intact, gases generated by decomposing plants are trapped in a waterlogged, oxygen-deprived environment, while surface vegetation absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, scientists say.

That makes ancient, intact peatlands a carbon vault up to 50 feet (15 meters) deep in some parts of the world. They also store about 10% of global fresh water, help control flooding and can help stem wildfires.

But two-thirds of temperate peatlands — mostly in Europe and the U.S. — have been dewatered, while about 45% of tropical peatlands have been similarly disturbed, according to a 2025 study published by The Society for Conservation Biology.

Boreal peatlands, or those in colder climates in places like Canada and Russia, are about 90% intact, but face growing pressure from thawing permafrost and intense fires, both linked to climate change, as well as mining and critical minerals exploration.

At the same time, only 17% of global peatlands are officially protected, according to the study.

In the U.S., significant amounts of peat are also found in Alaska, Florida, parts of the Northeast and the northern Great Lakes, though the type of domed peatlands found in North Carolina exist only along the Eastern Seaboard. Called Pocosin peat, it formed from coastal pine forests and evergreen shrubs that decayed over millennia.

In North Carolina alone, 11,000 miles (17,702 kilometers) of canals drain peatlands before the water empties into coastal estuaries, Richardson said.

Combined with climate change, that leaves them vulnerable to the greatest threat to peatlands globally: catastrophic fire.

Peatland fires can burn for months

Blackened tree trunks rise above bushes and dry grasses, the only sign that a fire burned almost 2,000 acres (809 hectares) here four years ago, lowering the ground by a foot and a half (0.5 meters) in some places.

It could have been worse, but the North Carolina Forest Service and other agencies extinguished it fairly quickly — in about three weeks — pumping water from nearby lakes to prevent it from spreading into the wildlife refuge, which borders Pantheon's property on three sides.

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A 2008 fire that began during a drought burned for three months above ground and smoldered for another four underground, damaging more than a quarter of the refuge and lowering the ground by several feet in some areas, refuge manager Sarah Toner said. In areas where water-level restoration had begun, though, the fire burned less deeply.

Saturated peatlands are nearly fireproof: Just the surface vegetation and a few inches of peat burn, which releases nutrients, regenerates seed banks and creates beneficial biochar. But when they're dry, fire can burn underground for weeks or months — drying out and destroying even the saturated layers — emitting enormous volumes of carbon dioxide and destroying thousands of years of accumulation.

"We'll lose 5, 6 feet of peat in a matter of weeks, which equates to millions of tons of carbon loss — ancient carbon loss that we simply can't ever get back in human lifetimes," Richardson said.

That's why Pantheon is moving quickly to restore the North Carolina site, Wall said. Although the company hopes to also buy intact peatlands, its first priority is drained sites.

"There's this urgency to start with what's degraded now," Wall said, "before it goes away."

Project aims to restore native biodiversity

Steve Apfelbaum steers his SUV down grassy, rutted lanes, then hops out to listen intently, occasionally peering through binoculars. He smiles when he hears prairie warblers, a bird whose population is declining.

"We heard hundreds of them today," said Apfelbaum, a plant and animal ecologist conducting breeding and migratory bird surveys at the site. "What that tells me is that this ecosystem is really important" for the species' migration.

He hears Nashville warblers that call from the tops of trees, but nest in cavities in the peat.

Peatlands are key to helping preserve bird populations, which are declining across all habitats, said Apfelbaum: "All sorts of cool birds will be back."

So will native reptiles, plants, fish and insects, said Vlad Roosevelt, Pantheon's operations director, who's overseeing the restoration. The company already released a pair of red wolves a couple years ago that have since had pups.

Carbon credits, sometimes controversial, are central to the project

Carbon credits work like this: companies, governments or individuals seek to offset their carbon pollution by investing in projects, such as a peatland restoration, that capture carbon. Their effectiveness, however, has been questioned, as over the years some programs have been exposed as exaggerating how much carbon they were capturing or were simply fraudulent.

Pantheon says it's aware of those concerns and guarantees high-quality, scientifically verified credits, based on Richardson's decades of data on carbon loss at the site and ongoing measurements of groundwater levels and the use of sophisticated monitoring equipment, including a tower that measures how much gas is absorbed by and released from the site, as well as computer modeling and core sampling. Those results will be verified by an outside third party.

Investors including Microsoft are providing Pantheon the initial capital to acquire peatland, Wall said. Income from carbon credits — each credit represents a metric ton — will help fund future land purchases.

The changes will be exciting, Apfelbaum said. But everything comes down to first rewetting and restoring the peat, a natural climate solution often overshadowed by other efforts, including reforestation — important, he said, but not as effective.

"We've all been bear-hugged and distracted by trees," Apfelbaum said, "when it's really soil and peat that hold the most carbon."

Takeaways from AP story on a major effort to restore peatland in North Carolina

By TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

BELHAVEN, N.C. (AP) — Investors and scientists are restoring a 23-square-mile (60-square-kilometer) tract of peatland in North Carolina's Inner Banks to curb emissions of climate-warming carbon dioxide and

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regenerate native habitat.

Fifty miles (80 kilometers) of ditches dug decades ago for an abandoned farming venture drained much of the water from thousands of years of accumulated peat — partially decayed organic matter up to 15 feet (4.6 meters) deep — leaving the site vulnerable to drought and wildfires, altering native habitats and allowing it to emit 130,000 tons of carbon dioxide every year.

Here are key takeaways from The Associated Press' reporting:

Why are peatlands important?

Though they account for just 3% of the global land surface, peatlands store about one-third of the Earth's carbon dioxide, more than all forests combined. But when degraded, destroyed or burned they become part of the problem, releasing huge volumes of greenhouse gases, now about 6% of the annual global total from all sources.

When peatlands are intact, gases generated by decomposing plants are trapped in a waterlogged, oxygen-deprived environment, while surface vegetation absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, scientists say.

They also store about 10% of global fresh water, help control flooding and can help stem wildfires, as well as provide important habitat for many species.

What's happening to peatlands?

Two-thirds of temperate peatlands — mostly in Europe and the U.S. — have been dewatered for farming, mining and other uses, while about 45% of tropical peatlands have been similarly disturbed, according to a 2025 study published by The Society for Conservation Biology.

Boreal peatlands, in colder climates in places like Canada and Russia, are about 90% intact, but face growing pressure from thawing permafrost and intense fires, both linked to climate change, as well as mining and critical minerals exploration.

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But when they're dry, fire can burn underground for weeks or months — drying out and destroying even saturated layers — emitting enormous volumes of carbon dioxide and destroying thousands of years of accumulation.

What's happening in North Carolina?

In North Carolina, 11,000 miles (17,702 kilometers) of canals drain peatlands before the water empties into coastal estuaries. And the type of peatlands found there, and for hundreds of miles along the Eastern Seaboard, are among the most threatened in the world.

Colorado-based Pantheon Regeneration plans to restore its property by blocking off ditches to control the water table and significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Then it will cull invasive species and replant native grasses, flowers and other plants.

Pantheon plans to sell carbon credits to tech companies and other corporations that want to compensate for their own greenhouse gas emissions, then use the money to restore and preserve a million acres of peatland from Virginia to northern Florida over the next decade.

Venezuelans in the US still navigate the aftermath of deadly earthquakes, grieving and helping

By SOFIA BALTODANO/Caplin News, PAULA DIAZ/Conecta Arizona, DORANY PINEDA and GABRIELA AOUN ANGUEIRA undefined

LOS ANGELES (AP) — After her parents went missing under the rubble of their Venezuela apartment building, Kelly Granado Montano spent her days here "lost, worried, on the phone," her body in one country, her mind in another.

"The desperation, the pain, and the anguish grew — from not knowing" their fate, she said.

She was among the more than one million Venezuelans living in the United States who watched one of

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the worst disasters to hit the South American country unfold from afar.

The powerful back-to-back earthquakes that struck north-central Venezuela on June 24 killed more than 6,500 people, left an untold number missing and damaged thousands of buildings.

As the news overtook social media feeds and family WhatsApp chats, survivor's guilt, anger toward Venezuelan authorities and a devastating feeling of powerlessness overcame many in the diaspora, a group whose numbers reached 1.2 million by 2024, as people sought relief primarily from economic hardship.

More than two months later, some Venezuelans in the U.S. still navigate the earthquakes' aftermath — confronting loss and leading recovery efforts — against a backdrop of deepening uncertainty in both countries.

As President Donald Trump tightens his grip on Venezuela's domestic affairs following the stunning U.S. military operation that deposed then-President Nicolás Maduro in January, his administration is also ending programs that allow more than 700,000 Venezuelans to live and work here legally.

Some immigrants feel a responsibility to keep shining light on Venezuela's ongoing needs and unique challenges. "People think we are fine, but we are not," said Dariela Merchan, an emergency room nurse in Austin, Texas.

A distant search

Granado Montano, 43, had not seen her parents, Marina and Jesús, for 11 years.

Unable to leave the U.S., she fundraised for the search efforts and pleaded on social media for more help to reach the collapsed 10-story building in coastal Caraballeda where her family had been vacationing at the beach.

A group searching for their loved ones spent thousands hiring a machine to move debris, to little avail. Progress began when someone donated an excavator and a drone operator helped locate missing remains.

Granado Montano was working at her arepas restaurant on Aug. 19, when a cousin texted: Her parents' van was found in the underground garage, covered in rubble. Inside were her parents and five other family members and their friends, including two children.

Recovering her family after 57 days was "bittersweet," she said. "We were happy because we had finally found them, but ... it wasn't the way we had wanted — alive."

Solace in helping

In the weeks after the earthquakes, Alejandro Marquina rarely left his house in Doral, Florida. Going out with friends or his girlfriend sometimes triggered panic attacks.

"I was just feeling like, 'I'm here having fun, but my family is dying,'" said Marquina, who lost five relatives in his home state of La Guaira. "Many people in Venezuela... they're fighting for their lives."

He enrolled in therapy, which helped him begin working through what happened. But it was sending aid that kept him moving forward. He raised \$2,000 for earthquake survivors, including his own displaced family members.

"I needed to do something," he said. "I couldn't just stay in my house."

From Tucson, Arizona, Diana Ramos raised \$4,000 to help repair her badly damaged elementary school in Guatire, a city 45 minutes east of Caracas.

But soon came a new blow: Another huge earthquake in Colombia, home to 2.8 million Venezuelans, including her sister Duneida. Her sister was safe, but her workplaces were badly damaged.

Ramos wonders how much more her people can take after two decades of political turmoil and economic crisis. "All these things are accumulating without anything being solved," she said.

The recent deal that gives the U.S. access to roughly a fifth of Venezuela's oil reserves — which some tout as an economic lifeline, while others criticize it as an affront to Venezuelan sovereignty — didn't change Ramos' outlook.

She's moving forward, clutching to her routine in Tucson and the hope of seeing her family again soon. "The earthquake put into perspective how life can go within a second."

Messages of hope

Merchan, the emergency room nurse, longed to put her medical skills to use on the ground. But an expired Venezuelan passport prevented her return, a common issue after Venezuelan consulates in the

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U.S. were shuttered years ago.

Last Friday after a long week of night shifts, Merchan, 28, packed donated supplies for overwhelmed and under-resourced healthcare workers in Venezuela.

In each box, she tucks a handwritten note thanking health workers, reminding them, "We're watching, and we're with you."

Today in History: September 10, Clarence Thomas' Supreme Court nomination hearings begin

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Sept. 10, the 253rd day of 2025. There are 112 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 10, 1991, the Senate Judiciary Committee opened hearings on the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court. The proceedings would become a watershed moment in the discussion of sexual harassment when Anita Hill, a law professor who had previously worked under Thomas, came forward with allegations against him.

Also on this date:

In 1608, John Smith was elected president of the Jamestown colony council in Virginia.

In 1846, Elias Howe received a patent for his sewing machine.

In 1960, running barefoot, Abebe Bikila of Ethiopia won the Olympic marathon in Rome, becoming the first Black African to win Olympic gold.

In 1960, Hurricane Donna, a dangerous Category 4 storm blamed for 364 deaths, struck the Florida Keys.

In 1963, 20 Black students entered Alabama public schools following a standoff between federal authorities and Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace.

In 1979, four Puerto Rican nationalists imprisoned for a 1954 attack on the U.S. House of Representatives and a 1950 attempted killing of President Harry S. Truman were freed from prison after being granted clemency by President Jimmy Carter.

In 1987, Pope John Paul II arrived in Miami, where he was welcomed by President Ronald Reagan and first lady Nancy Reagan as he began a 10-day tour of the United States.

In 2005, teams of forensic workers and cadaver dogs fanned out across New Orleans to collect the corpses left behind by Hurricane Katrina.

In 2008, the Large Hadron Collider at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) was powered up for the first time, successfully firing the first beam of protons through its 17-mile (27-kilometer) underground ring tunnel.

In 2022, King Charles III was officially proclaimed Britain's monarch in a pomp-filled ceremony two days after the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II.

In 2025, conservative activist Charlie Kirk, a close ally of President Donald Trump who had an influential role in rallying young Republican voters, was shot and killed at an outdoor speaking engagement at a Utah university.

Today's Birthdays: Scientist-author Jared Diamond is 89. Singer José Feliciano is 81. Former Canadian first lady Margaret Trudeau is 78. Rock musician Joe Perry (Aerosmith) is 76. Actor Amy Irving is 73. Actor-director Clark Johnson is 72. Actor Kate Burton is 69. Film director Chris Columbus is 68. Actor Colin Firth is 66. Cartoonist Alison Bechdel is 66. Baseball Hall of Famer Randy Johnson is 63. Actor Raymond Cruz is 62. Rapper Big Daddy Kane is 58. Film director Guy Ritchie is 58. Actor Ryan Phillippe is 52. Ballerina Misty Copeland is 44. Former MLB All-Star Joey Votto is 43. Actor Gabriel Bateman is 22.

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