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Community Calendar

Tuesday, Sept. 15

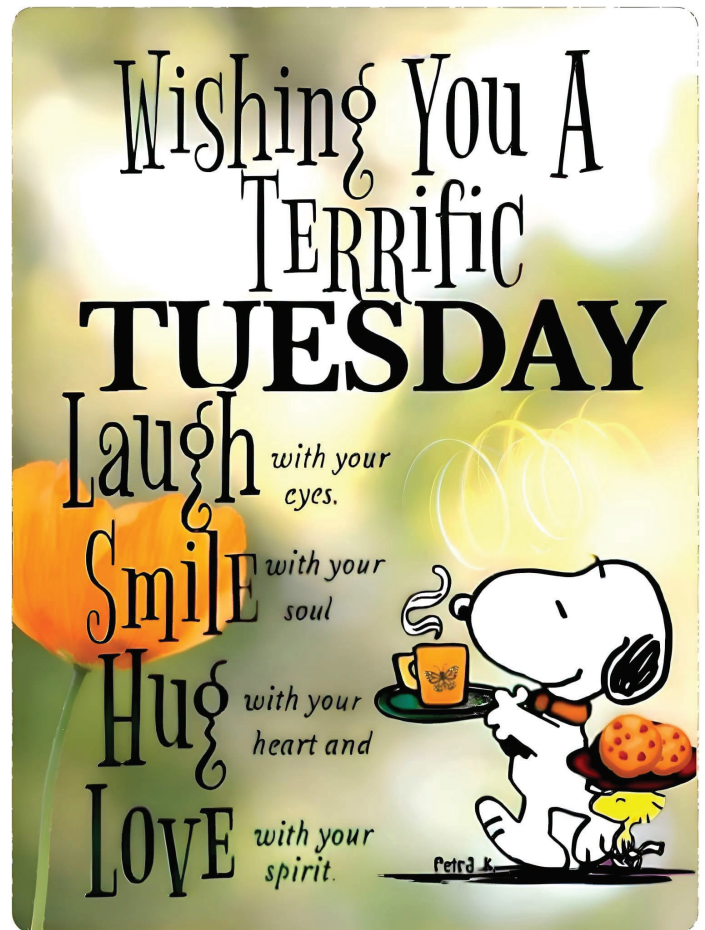
Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
JH Football hosts Clark/Willow Lake, 4 p.m.
Boys golf at Redfield Invitational, 10 a.m.
Girls Soccer hosts Lennox, 4 p.m.
City Council meeting, 7 p.m.

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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

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Wednesday, Sept. 16

Senior Menu: Swedish meatballs, mashed potatoes with gravy, winter blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

Thursday, Sept. 17

Senior Menu: Tuna noodle casserole, peas, fruit, whole wheat bread.
Cross Country at Aberdeen Roncalli Invitational
Volleyball hosts Clark/Willow Lake (7th/C @ 5pm, 8th/JV @ 6pm, Varsity to follow)
3rd-6th Grade Football hosts Warner, 6 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 18

HOMECOMING DAY!

Senior Menu: Taco bake with ground beef, Mexican rice with beans, Catalina blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

Homecoming Parade, 1 p.m.

Football hosts Elk Point-Jefferson, 7 p.m.

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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.

Emmy Awards

The 78th Primetime Emmy Awards, hosted by "Law & Order: SVU" star and three-time Emmy winner Mariska Hargitay, were presented last night. Hargitay was the first woman to host the ceremony in 15 years, following Jane Lynch in 2011.

HBO Max's "The Pitt" led all television programs with 25 nominations and won in six categories, including best drama for the second year in a row. The medical drama aims to be TV's most accurate representation of medicine, using real doctors as consultants. The final season of "Hacks," another HBO Max show, took home two Emmys—including best lead actress in a comedy (Jean Smart)—after receiving a record 24 nominations for a comedy series. However, "Hacks" lost best comedy to Apple TV's new horror comedy "Widow's Bay," whose 14 wins broke the comedy series record set by "The Studio" last year.

Pollution Limits Lifted

The US Environmental Protection Agency yesterday said it is repealing limits on planet-warming pollution from coal- and natural gas-fired power plants, a sector that generates about 25% of all US climate pollution.

The rollback follows previous moves by the Trump administration to eliminate or weaken policies aimed at restricting planet-warming chemicals and gases. The EPA says revoking the power plant regulations will save the industry over \$300B and lower Americans' energy bills. Environmental groups contend that rolling back the pollution limits could threaten tens of thousands of lives and exacerbate the impacts of climate-related natural disasters. The proposal is expected to face legal challenges, but if upheld in court, the rule could prevent future administrations from regulating power plants' greenhouse gas emissions.

If the US power sector were a country, its pollution production would rank fifth globally—behind only China, the entire US, India, and Russia.

Saudi Arabia Faces Militant Attacks

Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen captured two islands in the Red Sea yesterday. The seizure of Greater and Lesser Hanish further compromised Saudi Arabia's ability to bypass the Strait of Hormuz and deliver oil through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

The kingdom and allied Gulf states postponed planned talks with Iran Sunday amid the uptick in attacks. Houthis say their recent strikes, including on a Saudi military base yesterday, are retaliation for hundreds of airstrikes by the kingdom. Separately, Saudi Arabia faces attacks from Iranian-backed militants in Iraq, forcing the kingdom to close its East-West Pipeline for weeks amid repairs. The roughly 750-mile-long pipeline reroutes 4% of global oil to the Red Sea, feeding shipments to the Bab el-Mandeb.

President Donald Trump reportedly rejected Saudi calls last week to participate in Saudi airstrikes against the Houthis. The dayslong uptick in fighting has reportedly killed more than 500 people and displaced nearly 94,000 others, threatening a return to pre-2022 levels of violence.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Fashion designer Bob Mackie, who dressed Cher, Tina Turner, Diana Ross, and more stars in sparkling ensembles, dies at age 87.

Rapper Macklemore removed from Ed Sheeran's tour after pro-Palestinian speech; New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft and others are reportedly refusing to let him perform at their stadiums.

US women's basketball wins fifth straight FIBA World Cup title with 97-79 victory over France.

Science & Technology

Waymo launches public robotaxi service in Las Vegas, following successful launches in 14 other cities; riders are being invited on a rolling basis.

Single brain implant enables people with paralysis to speak and convey upper-body gestures simultaneously via a virtual avatar.

Water scarcity will likely limit the size and longevity of future lunar settlements, according to new analysis; estimates suggest a city of 1 million people could only survive about a century, even with 98% water recycling efficiency.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close down (S&P 500 -0.5%, Dow -0.3%, Nasdaq -0.6%) as leaders of OpenAI and Anthropic call for global slowdown of AI development.

Ten-year Treasury yield reaches 5% for the first time since 2023, a critical threshold that could make it more expensive to take out loans for homes, cars, and more.

Wegovy maker Novo Nordisk rebrands as Novo, in an effort to make the company more recognizable as it competes with Eli Lilly to lead the GLP-1 market.

Politics & World Affairs

More than 20 states and cities sue to block upcoming Homeland Security policy restricting green cards for some public benefit recipients.

Supreme Court rejects Trump administration's mail ballot restrictions for midterm elections.

Protests erupt across Syria after government announces it will raise oil prices as much as 40% amid Iran war.

Russian billionaire close to President Vladimir Putin hosted two nights of wedding celebrations for Donald Trump Jr., report reveals.

Russian drone strikes Ukrainian civilian train to Warsaw, narrowly missing former foreign officials.

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EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: How do zoning and development codes affect wildlife?

-- B.L., via email

Suburban and urban developments continue to push outward into natural landscapes, raising critical questions: How do our zoning laws and development codes impact wildlife? Not just mere paperwork, land-use planning is the foundation on which regional biodiversity either survives or collapses. Instead of relying solely on sprawling subdivision designs that fragment natural habitat, many planners are turning to smart zoning tools, environmental overlay districts and preservation regulations.

One of the most distinctions is how local authorities enforce their goals. Municipalities typically rely on master plans as guiding visions, but development codes provide the legal rules. As Michigan State U. Extension researchers explain in their guidelines, "...local governments utilize plans as guiding documents and zoning as the legally enforceable component." When communities integrate ecosystem services into these frameworks, they create structured protections for local wildlife.

The physical design of a community has a profound, measurable effect on animal populations. A comprehensive, decade-long study tracking wildlife dynamics in the Puget Sound lowlands demonstrated that sensitive species, such as the Wilson's warbler and Swainson's thrush, are acutely affected by how residential and commercial layouts are built. Rather than treating all construction as entirely destructive, researchers found that preserving native vegetation and tree cover between homes drastically changes animal survival rates. Commenting on these long-term trends, senior author John Marzluff, a professor emeritus of environmental and forest sciences at the University of Washington, noted in a university report on the findings: "This work shows that birds care how land is developed, which gives developers a choice during the planning process. There are trade-offs between developments designed for humans and those designed with the ecosystem in mind, but balancing the two can benefit both."

To achieve this balance, modern municipal codes use specific regulatory tools. Environmental ordinances, wetlands protections, stormwater management and riparian buffer requirements help shield critical corridors from disruptive construction. And site-plan reviews, overlay districts and large-lot preservations let local planners to prevent severe habitat fragmentation. For example, large-lot zoning in rural areas helps maintain continuous tracts of unfragmented forest and open space, giving wide-ranging mammals and forest-dwelling birds the room they need. Ultimately, zoning codes are powerful. When thoughtfully crafted, they bridge the gap between human infrastructure growth and the protection of vulnerable species, ensuring that community expansion does not come at the absolute expense of local wildlife.

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Girls Soccer

Lennox at
Groton Area
Tues., Sept. 15, 4 p.m.



Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

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For more info: GDILIVE.COM



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and The Meat House of Andover.

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GHS Homecoming Royalty

**GHS Homecoming Royalty
are Dylan McGannon and
Ashlynn Warrington.** (Photo by
Paul Kosel)



The Royalty couple are pictured above with their parents. Pictured left to right are Sarah Sigdestad, Dylan McGannon, Ashlynn Warrington, and Jason and Robyn Warrington. Not pictured is Travis McGannon. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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In front are the GHS Royalty Dylan McGannon and Ashlynn Warrington. In back is the rest of court, left to right: Zander Harry, Gavin Kroll, Blake Lord, Brody Lordy, Taryn Traphagen, Emerlee Jones, Avery Crank and McKenna Tietz. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Webers return home to be homecoming parade marshals

by Dorene Nelson

Mike Weber, originally from Tripp, South Dakota, worked in the family grocery store while in high school. He graduated from high school in 1982 and attended Dakota State College, getting a degree in Business Administration. Shortly after graduation, he learned of an opportunity to be the business manager in Groton.

Mike traveled to Groton and was interviewed by Superintendent Bob Olson and board members Duane Butrock and Dick Traphagen. As a result of that interview, he was hired and subsequently worked for the school district for thirty-seven years.

In the following years, Mike was part of the team that led to the transformation of the current football field and track complex as well as the construction and financing of the Groton Arena. He also was instrumental in the financing for new entrances at the elementary and high school/middle school.

Mike was also business manager for the North Central Special Ed Cooperative which hired speech therapists, early childhood teachers, and psychologists in a shared setting with nine other school districts. Mike also helped with the Groton/Bristol school merger.

Besides financial endeavors, Mike coached junior varsity boys' basketball with Les Hinds for two years and junior high football with Lance Hawkins for eleven years. He announced and served as referee for many, many Groton Arena, gym, baseball park and football sporting events. He was an active Emmanuel Lutheran Church member and served various positions for the Groton Chamber of Commerce as well as the Granary Fine Arts Center board.

Lorrie, originally from California, moved with her parents moved to Aberdeen, South Dakota when she was five. Her dad, Don Weifenbach, was a Columbia, South Dakota native. After graduating from Aberdeen Central, Lorrie got a college degree in Business Management from the University of Sioux Falls.

Mike and Lorrie married in 1996 and had their first and only child together, Allison, in 1997. Lorrie was also an active member at Emmanuel Lutheran, serving various positions including occasionally preaching as a lay minister when the church was without a pastor. She was a member of the Groton Lions Club and coached our kids in soccer, basketball and softball. She was also a varsity volleyball line judge for many years.

Lorrie and Mike retired in the summer of 2023 and moved into a 55+ retirement community in Henderson, Nevada, a town about the size of Sioux Falls. During our working years, we often vacationed in Las Vegas and knew that we someday wanted to move to a warmer climate. Realizing that Florida and Texas have hurricanes and tornados every year, the Webers settled on Nevada.

Although it can get rather hot in July and August, the dry heat is not unbearable. There is beautiful sunshine every day and best of all, no mosquitoes or snow shoveling! Lorrie does miss the green grass though. They are currently discovering and enjoying the 25 state and National parks located within a five-hour radius of Henderson. Lorrie likes to hike.

Together, Mike and Lorrie have six children, eight grandchildren, and a ninth on the way. Four of their kids graduated from the Groton School System and the oldest two from Aberdeen Central. Some of their children will be here celebrating homecoming week with the Webers. Mike and Lorrie especially miss the people in Groton and hope to visit and catch up with as many as they can during homecoming week.



Lorrie and Michael Weber

Groton Area voters to decide on multi-million school improvement bond

By Elizabeth Varin

Groton Area voters will decide in November whether to approve a bond to fund a major expansion and renovation project at the district's Middle-High School after the Groton Area School Board approved the bond election Monday evening.

The proposed \$31 million project would include construction of a new classroom wing to replace the existing 1934 building, new Career and Technical Education spaces, and a new commons and cafeteria. The project also calls for renovations and improvements to existing school facilities, along with associated site improvements, utility work, infrastructure and other costs related to completing, furnishing and equipping the project.

Board members spent part of the meeting discussing the proposed bond amount and the length of time it would take to repay the debt before ultimately approving a resolution calling for the \$26 million bond election. If approved by voters, the bond would be repaid over 30 years.

The district plans to finance the remainder of the project through a \$5 million capital outlay certificate, which would be repaid over 20 years.

The board discussed how much of the project should be financed through capital outlay certificates. Members weighed the potential benefit of using more capital outlay funds to reduce the amount included in the bond, which could result in a lower tax burden for taxpayers and potentially make the proposal more appealing to voters. However, board members also acknowledged that committing a larger portion of the district's capital outlay funds to the project would limit the flexibility those funds provide for addressing unexpected needs or costly repairs that could arise in the future.

"Being on the Buildings and Grounds Committee for nine years, I've seen all the projects we wish we could do," said board member Tigh Fliehs. "It's been nine years already, and we're not even close to doing a lot of them. So, my personal feeling, I'd like to go down to \$3 million (in capital outlay certificates)"

After considering the balance between reducing the tax burden and maintaining financial flexibility, the board settled on proposing a \$5 million capital outlay certificate.

"I did the math. When you talk about \$7.5 million versus \$5 million, it's basically \$182,000 a year of those payments," said board member Heather Lerseth-Fliehs "...If you don't have that (available capital outlay funding) too, then you don't have that flexibility when the bus breaks down."

Herseth-Fliehs added that the renovations would eliminate issues the district has faced with upkeep and maintenance through the last few years.

The board voted 6-1 to request issuing \$26 million in general obligation bonds and \$5 million in capital outlay certificates. Tigh Fliehs asked for an alternative that would lower the capital outlay certificate request to \$3 million and increase the general obligation bond request to \$28 million.

The bond election will be held from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 3, with the Groton Area School District High School Library serving as the sole polling location. Changes to state law require bond elections to be held on the same date as primary or general elections. Some county election offices expressed concerns about having enough precinct workers to staff both a school district election and a primary or general election when they occur at the same time.

The district includes portions of five counties, and the school board had previously approved using one polling site before the last school board election. As a result, the district will continue with one polling location for the bond election.

Voters who are registered within the Groton Area School District will also have the option to vote in person by absentee ballot beginning Friday, Sept. 18, through Monday, Nov. 2. In-person absentee voting will be available at the district office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Voters must be registered to vote and bring a driver's license or other identification card.

The School Board also plans to hold three informational meetings to give residents an opportunity

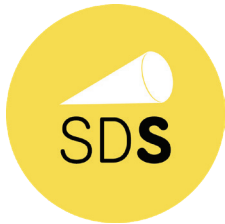
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to learn more about the proposed project and bond election. The first meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 7, at the Columbia American Legion, followed by a 7 p.m. meeting Tuesday, Oct. 13, at the Bristol Community Center. The final meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 21, at the high school in Groton.

Additional information about the proposed improvements, project costs and financing is available on the Groton Area School District's website.

- The board approved hiring Cole Anthony Holmes as the new middle school language arts/social studies teacher for the 2026-2027 school year. Holmes graduated from Northern State University with a bachelor's degree in K-12 music education with a vocal emphasis.
- Other hires approved Monday evening included Nikki Kotzer as FFA Advisor and Darren Locke as food service team member. The board also approved the resignation of Jana Simunek as food service team member.
- The board heard from Julie Erdmann, Megan Serr and Carrie Weisenburger about the special education work at the elementary school, as well as Reilly Ketterling, Sydney Kurtz and Todd Peterson about special education at the middle school and high school. Alexa Sperry and Lynette Grieve also gave a presentation to the board about the Title and RTI work at the elementary school to identify students who are struggling in math or reading and provide individualized support.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Lars Herseth, former South Dakota governor nominee from prolific political family, dies at age 80

Democrat's father was governor, mother was secretary of state, and daughter served in Congress

BY SETH TUPPER

Lars Herseth, a Democratic former South Dakota legislator and 1986 nominee for governor, died Saturday of cancer at age 80.

Herseth grew up in a politically active Democratic family in rural Houghton, where he returned to be a farmer and rancher after graduating from the University of South Dakota. His father, Ralph Herseth, was the state's 21st governor from 1959 to 1961, and his mother, Lorna Herseth, was South Dakota's secretary of state from 1973 to 1979.

Lars Herseth's daughter, Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, served in the U.S. House from 2004 to 2011 and is now the president of Augustana University in Sioux Falls.

Republican Lt. Gov. Tony Venhuizen paid tribute to Lars Herseth and the Herseth family Monday in a post on Venhuizen's personal website.

"Few South Dakota families can match that record of public service across three generations," Venhuizen wrote.

Lars Herseth served in the state House of Representatives from 1975 until 1986, when he won the Democratic nomination for governor but lost in the general election to Republican George Mickelson, who was also the son of a former governor. Herseth then served in the state Senate from 1989 until 1996. His legislative leadership positions included House minority leader, Senate president pro tempore and Senate minority leader.

During his time in the state Senate, Herseth served with Mike Rounds, a Republican who would go on to become governor and is now a U.S. senator. Rounds wrote about Herseth in a post Monday on the social media platform X.

"Lars was a statesman and a problem solver who was willing to work with anyone if it meant bettering the lives of South Dakotans," Rounds wrote.

Herseth's obituary said he focused his political career on issues including agriculture, transportation, economic development and healthcare. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, he worked with Republican Gov. Bill Janklow to preserve abandoned rail lines that were critical for transporting agricultural products.

"Lars was known for his legislative acumen, command of the issues, collegiality that knew no partisan bounds, and being true to his word," his obituary said. "He was exceptionally fair-minded and a steadfast advocate for women's rights and Native American issues. During his final legislative term, he spoke pas-



Lars Herseth, a Democratic former legislator and 1986 nominee for governor, died Sept. 12, 2026, at age 80. He's pictured here in a 2023 oral history interview. (Screenshot

courtesy of South Dakota State Archives/YouTube)

sionately in opposition to a bill that sought to prevent recognition of same-sex marriage."

In his later years, Herseth was president of the American Coalition for Ethanol.

A memorial service will be at 2 p.m. Central time on Oct. 4 at the Johnson Fine Arts Center on the campus of Northern State University in Aberdeen. South Dakota Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden has ordered flags at the state Capitol in Pierre to be flown at half-staff in honor of Herseth that day.

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

US Supreme Court blocks Trump rule limiting mail voting, sides with Dem states

BY JACOB FISCHLER

The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday kept in place a lower court's order blocking President Donald Trump's embattled plan to place new restrictions on mail ballots for this year's midterm elections.

The unsigned, one-paragraph order upheld a Massachusetts federal court's injunction on a U.S. Postal Service rule until after Nov. 3 and did not decide whether the rule itself was lawful. But a majority of the court said the Democratic state officials and voting rights groups challenging the rule were likely to succeed.

Two of the court's stalwart conservatives, Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito, dissented from the decision. Alito wrote that the Postal Service has "broad authority to regulate the mail" and that at this preliminary stage of the suit challenging the rule, its policy should remain in place.

"I express no view on whether the Government would be likely to succeed on de novo review of the Postal Service's powers," he wrote. "But for now, the Government has satisfied its burden of making a strong showing that the plaintiff States' ... claim is not likely to succeed."

In a brief concurrence, Justice Brett Kavanaugh said the rule, which codifies technical requirements on the envelopes carrying ballots and requires states to collect and send to the federal government lists of eligible voters, may be legal, but was unworkable for the midterm elections 50 days away.

"There is at least a fair prospect that the final rule falls within the Postal Service's statutory authority," he wrote. "But applying the rule in the 2026 elections would be arbitrary and capricious ... because state and local election officials do not have sufficient time to reasonably implement the rule before the elections."

The rule's challengers argued, in part, that the regulations would be impossible to install ahead of Election Day. Several election administrators, pro-democracy groups and others declared to the court that they agreed with that argument.

The Postal Service did not bring any evidence against those claims.

Democrats and voting rights advocates also argued the rule was illegal and unconstitutional. The executive branch has virtually no role in elections administration, which is a state responsibility with congressional oversight under the U.S. Constitution, they said.

The case, tried before President Barack Obama appointee U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani, will continue to evaluate the legality of the rule for future elections.

Challengers react

The groups and officials challenging the rule, as well as other Democrats, hailed the ruling in statements.

"Today's order from our nation's highest court makes clear that states cannot be forced to undermine their mail voting systems and risk voter disenfranchisement because of the President's political agenda," Massachusetts Attorney General Joy Campbell said. "Mail voting is safe, secure, and reliable, and I will continue to stand up for Massachusetts residents who rely on mail ballots to ensure that they can have their voices heard in the November election."

Virginia Kase Solomón, the president and CEO of Common Cause, one of the groups suing to block the rule, called the decision "a major win for the millions of everyday Americans," including elderly and rural voters, and those with disabilities, who depend on vote-by-mail.

"This executive order was a blatant power grab designed to silence voters and undermine our elections,

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but it failed because the people and the law were on our side," she said in a statement. "Our Constitution is clear: states run our elections, and voters choose their leaders—not the other way around. No administration can strip the people of their power."

California Gov. Gavin Newsom, whose state was the lead plaintiff in the case, said the rule was part of Trump's "attacks on democracy" for the past 20 months.

"California stood up for democracy and we won," Newsom wrote on social media. "Today is a good day for democracy, the rule of law, and the American people looking to exercise their Constitutional right to vote."

Phil Weiser, Colorado's attorney general and Democratic nominee for governor, said the court "just sent the message that President Trump and the Postal Service need to stay the hell away from our elections."

California and Colorado are among the eight states that send ballots to every registered voter.

Spokespeople for the White House, Postal Service and U.S. Department of Justice, which represented the administration in the case, did not respond to emails seeking comment late Monday.

In the hour following the ruling, Trump posted on his social media platform in opposition to slowing artificial intelligence development, the poor condition of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts building and his promise to send every voter \$5,000 if Republicans win the upcoming midterms, but did not address the ruling.

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.

COMMENTARY

Threats to our outdoor way of life present a test for South Dakota's US senators

Trump administration actions could damage the quality of the state's water and wildlife habitat

by BRAD JOHNSON

The Trump administration is moving on two fronts to weaken protection for South Dakota's wetlands and streams.

One proposal could remove most seasonal streams and wetlands from the Clean Water Act. The other could permanently certify old and potentially inaccurate maps associated with the Swampbuster program, which is supposed to discourage farmers from converting wetlands to cropland.

Together, they threaten prairie potholes, waterfowl, fishing, flood protection and South Dakota's outdoor economy. They also present a defining test for Sens. John Thune and Mike Rounds, who portray themselves as hunters and defenders of South Dakota's outdoor heritage.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is accepting comments on its Swampbuster rule through Sept. 28. Comments on the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers' supplemental "waters of the United States," or WOTUS, proposal are due Oct. 9.

This matters beyond environmental organizations and federal regulators. South Dakota sold more than 317,000 habitat stamps to hunters and anglers last year, with revenue used to support wildlife habitat and public access projects. A statewide survey, commissioned by the National Wildlife Federation, found that 53% of South Dakota voters consider themselves hunters, anglers or both. About 59% camp, half watch birds or wildlife, and 47% boat, canoe or kayak.

Those numbers describe how South Dakotans spend time with their families, teach children about the land and remain connected to this place.

The EPA proposal would limit Clean Water Act jurisdiction to relatively permanent rivers, lakes and streams, and wetlands directly connected to them. Under its narrowest alternative, streams would need to flow continuously except for predictable dry periods totaling no more than about one month a year.

That could eliminate federal protection for seasonal streams, including many streams in western South

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Dakota. Wetlands would need to be “indistinguishably part” of another protected water, with surface water present for at least 11 months of a typical year.

Waters excluded from the Clean Water Act could be polluted, filled or destroyed without federal review under that law. EPA estimated its original 2025 proposal would leave only about 19% of the nation’s wetland acreage federally protected. The September alternative could reduce that estimate further.

The Supreme Court had already narrowed Clean Water Act protection in its 2023 Sackett v. EPA decision. The administration is now deciding how aggressively to extend that ruling — and whether to adopt an interpretation leaving only a sliver of wetlands and seasonal streams protected.

The separate USDA interim rule concerns Swampbuster determinations issued between November 1990 and July 1996. Swampbuster does not prohibit farmers from draining wetlands. It conditions eligibility for crop insurance subsidies, commodity payments, farm loans and other federal benefits on protecting them.

But in a February 2019 memo, The Association of State Wetland Managers Inc. reminded everyone that of the 3 million pre-1996 wetland determinations about 60% were inaccurate. Over 90% in North Dakota were deficient.

A prairie pothole missed by both the Clean Water Act definition and an old Swampbuster map could effectively disappear from federal protection.

Those shallow potholes produce the insects that breeding ducks and other birds need when they return in spring. The Prairie Pothole Region produces more than half of North America’s waterfowl.

Wetlands also hold runoff and trap sediment and nutrients. Losing them can mean more flooded property, damaged roads and additional water treatment.

A study prepared for South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks found that hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, boating and trapping generated more than \$1.4 billion in annual spending based on 2021 activity. That spending supported more than 14,500 jobs and \$123 million in state and local tax revenue.

Thune and Rounds are not spectators in this debate.

Rounds has written about pheasant hunting with his children and grandchildren and acknowledged that habitat supports rural businesses. Thune has described pheasant hunting as an economically significant and treasured part of South Dakota’s heritage.

Thune is Senate majority leader, a longtime Agriculture Committee member and a past defender of conservation compliance and the Sodsaver program, which discourages the conversion of native prairie to cropland. He has the influence to challenge the administration and protect policies he previously championed. If those protections are dismantled on his watch, silence cannot credibly be called neutrality.

Rounds has advocated for stronger landowner discretion over wetlands on their property. Landowners deserve a fair process. But automatically certifying potentially inaccurate determinations is not fairness. It accepts possible errors permanently, with wildlife, downstream landowners and the public bearing the consequences.

Both have the standing and influence to demand changes.

Wearing blaze orange, attending pheasant openers and celebrating outdoor heritage are easy. Protecting the habitat that makes those traditions possible — particularly when that requires confronting an administration of one’s own party — is the meaningful test.

Thune and Rounds have made South Dakota’s outdoor heritage part of their public identity. If these protections disappear and they decline to intervene, that will become part of their legacy.

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

Trump EPA to strip greenhouse gas limits for power plants, a key Biden climate policy

BY JACOB FISCHLER

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will revoke limits on greenhouse gas emissions from power plants that run on coal and natural gas, according to regulatory documents Administrator Lee Zeldin signed Monday.

The administration framed the action to repeal 2024 limits on greenhouse gas emissions from virtually all power plants other than wind, solar or hydro-powered as lowering energy costs, which the war with Iran has driven up, as energy producers will save at least \$310 million on compliance. The move could produce a tenfold increase in coal power, the agency said.

"Americans will see a decrease in electricity prices, but this is just the beginning," Zeldin said in the release. "We are working to go even further so that American energy can be fully unleashed. Realizing the full potential of American energy means more jobs, lower prices, and a more prosperous America."

Environmental groups and elected Democrats blasted the move, which would roll back regulations set by Presidents Joe Biden and Barack Obama, for hastening climate change and increasing air pollution. Some called the action a corrupt favor to an industry that boosted President Donald Trump's campaign.

"It's simple. Big Oil & Big Coal give millions to help get Trump elected. He lets them pollute more. You get dirtier air, extreme heat, flooding, & droughts," Maryland U.S. Sen. Chris Van Hollen, a Democrat, wrote on social media. "Trump's trading away your health & safety to pad his donors' pockets. Polluters win, Trump wins, you lose."

Repeal of Biden carbon pollution standards

The EPA published two regulations in the Federal Register in a single effort Monday that it said would reduce energy costs and boost availability, while complying with judicial rulings in recent years that restricted the agency's power to regulate climate change.

A final rule would partially repeal the Biden-era Carbon Pollution Standards, which the agency said was not achievable by their 2032 target date and would lead to power plants shutting down. And a supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking considered stripping all greenhouse gas limits on fossil-fuel power plants since 2015.

U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, a West Virginia Republican who leads the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, applauded the move.

"Finally, under President Trump's leadership, we are ending the Biden-era Clean Power Plan 2.0, which was designed to eliminate coal and natural gas power generation, drastically increasing Americans' electric bills," she said in a statement. "I have long opposed this rule and warned of the devastating economic impacts it would have in West Virginia."

Zeldin laid the groundwork for the move last year by repealing the agency's "endangerment finding" that formed the basis of federal regulation targeting climate change.

Monday's release called concerns about greenhouse gas emissions' effect on climate change overblown, while elevating "baseload power" generation as a much more important issue for Americans.

"Models continue to show that (greenhouse gas) emissions from power plants have no material impact on global climate change," the release said. "In fact, if all carbon dioxides were eliminated tomorrow, there would be no meaningful climate impact."

That finding is disputed, including by an EPA webpage, the climate advocacy group Evergreen Action noted.

"Electric power generation is the second largest emitter of carbon dioxide pollution, contributing to climate change, which is threatening public health and affecting ecosystems at multiple levels," the EPA webpage, which was last updated in December, says.

"The EPA's own publicly available analysis contradicts the administration's laughable claims that the U.S. power sector doesn't meaningfully contribute to climate change or harm public health," Pete Wyckoff,

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Evergreen's vice president for policy, said. "If the U.S. power sector were its own country, it would rank as the world's fifth-largest emitter of climate pollution."

Regulation moving to states

Rhode Island U.S. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, the top Democrat on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, blasted the move and rebutted the EPA's cost-saving rationale, saying the agency's "own analysis" showed a 2024 Biden rule would have saved about \$20 billion annually in "prevented climate disasters and health care costs."

"The fossil fuel-captured EPA's decision to end its regulation of greenhouse gas emissions from power plants is a tragic and expensive mistake," Whitehouse said. "In refusing to address this national crisis, EPA is shifting the costs of climate change onto every family in America."

More frequent natural disasters driven by climate change cost lives as well as billions in damage to buildings and infrastructure, property insurance, agricultural losses and more "long-term destabilization of the national economy," he continued. "But the Trump EPA refuses to measure these costs and is only interested in tabulating, and inflating, the alleged costs to industry."

Whitehouse added that the decision could backfire on fossil fuel energy producers, as more states and local governments would seek to fill the void left by federal regulators and place their own limits on fossil fuel energy generation.

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

US Senate could soon take up bill to set standards for college athlete compensation

BY SHAUNEEN MIRANDA

WASHINGTON — With the U.S. Senate set to hold a procedural vote in the coming days on a sweeping bill to overhaul college sports, dueling press conferences Monday underscored the fierce debate over how to tackle the biggest issues plaguing that landscape.

Supporters of a bipartisan measure to set national standards for college athletes' compensation, including the bill's lead sponsor, GOP Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, argued it would "protect," "save" and "preserve" college sports.

However, opponents of the bill, including Connecticut Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy, blasted the measure over concerns that it "essentially ensconces a system of exploitation," and would provide "an unprecedented antitrust exemption to an industry that is violating the law every single day."

Name, image and likeness battle

The college sports world continues to grapple with the fallout from the NCAA's 2021 guidelines that allowed student-athletes to profit from their name, image and likeness, or NIL, as well as a patchwork of state NIL laws and gender inequity in NIL deals, among other major issues.

Earlier this year, Cruz and Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell of Washington state — the top members of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee — introduced the bill, with Republican Sen. Eric Schmitt of Missouri and Democratic Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware as original cosponsors.

Cruz likened the college sports landscape to the "Wild West," saying the bill is designed to "bring order to the chaos" and "put simple common sense rules in place so that college sports remain strong and vibrant for decades to come," during a press conference he hosted outside the U.S. Capitol alongside Cantwell, Senate colleagues, student athletes and coaches.

Cruz called for "a big bipartisan vote on the floor of the Senate, and with that momentum to go to the House and have it go to the president's desk."

President Donald Trump has thrown strong support behind what he dubs a "great" bill.

Patchwork of state laws

The Senate could take a procedural vote on the bipartisan measure as early as this week, where it would

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need at least 60 senators to advance.

The latest version of the bill would create a national NIL standard that preempts the patchwork of state laws, provide certain antitrust protections to the NCAA, establish a five-year eligibility timeline for athletes and bar professional athletes from competing in college athletics.

The measure is notably neutral on the classification of athletes as employees.

Meanwhile, Sen. Chris Murphy blasted the measure, saying: "What this bill does at its core is to protect a system of exploitation," during a virtual press conference earlier Monday with college athletes, professional athlete unions and advocates. The event was hosted by the AFL-CIO.

"This bill protects the billions of dollars that coaches and sports industry executives are making over the suppression of compensation for some of the most highly valued athletes in the world," Murphy added.

NAACP critical of bill

Derrick Johnson, president and CEO of the NAACP, also blasted the Senate bill Monday, saying "what makes this bill so inadequate, and in many ways offensive, is the overture as if it's going to do something special for historically Black colleges and universities," during the AFL-CIO's press conference.

"HBCUs, they deserve direct federal investment, not a political trade-off," Johnson said.

The NAACP in May urged pushback against GOP-led redistricting efforts in Southern states via college sports, including a boycott of public universities by athletes and supporters.

The Congressional Black Caucus, which rallied behind that call in May, has also opposed the legislation, saying in August the bill "falls short of providing Black athletes with the rights, representation, economic opportunities, and meaningful safeguards they deserve, while also failing to adequately recognize the interests of Black coaches, Black agents, HBCUs, and other professionals whose futures will be shaped by this legislation."

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

Congress returns to session before midterms sprint, but no action expected on AI fears

BY JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — Both chambers of Congress return to Capitol Hill this week for a brief session before heading back to the campaign trail until mid-November.

The House will be in for one week and the Senate for three, giving Republicans little time to enact any laws or confirm nominees before voters decide whether to give them another two years in power.

Lawmakers have already agreed to fund the government through Dec. 11, pushing off any need to reach bipartisan agreement on the dozen annual appropriations bills or risk a government shutdown.

But they haven't reached compromise on several other measures and are unlikely to do so until at least the lame-duck session, which spans five weeks in November and December.

Left undone

Congress has so far opted not to approve legislation that could provide tens of billions in additional funding for the Defense Department amid the war in Iran.

The two chambers haven't brokered compromise on the different versions of the annual defense policy bill known as the National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA.

There's no sign of significant progress on the years-delayed farm bill that is supposed to authorize agriculture and food aid programs.

Republicans had discussed approving a third party-line package through the complex reconciliation process they used to enact their "big, beautiful" law and three years of funding for immigration enforcement.

But the Senate needs to adopt a budget resolution before that process could begin and that doesn't appear to be on the horizon this September.

President Donald Trump's insistence lawmakers approve nationwide voter registration and identification

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requirements is also not expected to become law, lacking the votes in the Senate to advance.

AI stalemate

Lawmakers aren't expected to make any progress on how to place guardrails on artificial intelligence amid increasingly dire warnings the technology could "kill us all" before the end of the decade.

Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., said Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union with Jake Tapper and Dana Bash" that he wanted tech company executives to work with lawmakers on striking the right balance.

"We cannot put a moratorium on this because China will overlap us, and that's the challenge," he said. "It's national security balanced with the immediate security of making sure the models are safe."

Johnson said he and others in Congress understood the possible ramifications of letting AI run as it is now, but added that "the people who are creating these models have to have to ensure that their products are safe."

"But we also at the same time have to resist Congress jumping in and imposing some sort of emergency moratorium," he said. "It's got to be done right, safely, wisely."

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., had a different take on AI, writing in a statement released Monday that administration officials should brief senators in a classified setting.

"The American people deserve better from their government at such a consequential moment. I have long argued that we must keep the U.S. as the global leader in AI innovation and security. But that innovation must be coupled with serious guardrails that earn the trust of the American public," Schumer said.

"Warning bells are ringing louder than they ever have – and the Trump administration is looking the other way. Well, if they won't hold themselves accountable, we will. And if Trump does not act, Congress must."

Nominees on tap

The Senate does have several pending nominees on its list that it could push through in the coming weeks, including Keith Sonderling for labor secretary, Sean Kaufman for assistant secretary for preparedness and response, and numerous judges.

How much Congress accomplishes following the midterm elections will likely depend on what those results show.

Democrats are unlikely to negotiate major policy or spending bills with Republicans if voters give them control of both chambers come January.

A mixed result, possibly Democrats regaining the House but Republicans keeping control of the Senate, could lead to some deal-making later this year.

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

Trump's Canadian trade war stirs up trouble for Republican candidates

GOP incumbents in Kansas, Maine, Ohio must balance supporting the president with defending local manufacturers

BY KEVIN HARDY

President Donald Trump's escalating trade war with Canada is creating headaches for Republicans ahead of November's midterms as high prices remain a top concern among voters.

Responding to Trump's increased tariffs, Canadian officials have said they're deliberately targeting goods from states where there are close elections. And GOP candidates in Kansas, Maine and Ohio among others have been forced to balance supporting Trump with defending local manufacturers.

Trump has repeatedly targeted Canada, traditionally a close American ally, since returning to the White House last year. But his August move to impose 50% tariffs on billions of dollars of Canadian imports has heightened tensions, pushing Canada to retaliate with its own tariffs on hundreds of American-made products that went into effect Tuesday.

Nearly \$28 billion in U.S. exports to Canada now carry up to 50% tariffs, a dollar-for-dollar match on

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Trump's taxes on Canadian goods imposed last month, according to Canadian officials.

Trump has long argued that Canada is taking advantage of the United States because of a longstanding trade deficit — meaning more Canadian products are imported here than American products are exported to Canada.

"They don't pay for anything, and they want to be treated like a state, but they're not a state," Trump said last month after trade talks fell apart.

The fallout could affect consumers and businesses across the country, but Canada targeted many of its tariffs to inflict political pain just ahead of the crucial U.S. midterm elections that will determine control of Congress.

The trade standoff has put Republican candidates in a tough position with an electorate already fed up with high prices and underscores ongoing concerns about how federal trade policy will affect American business and state economies.

On Labor Day, Trump threatened to halt sales of the Canadian airplane manufacturer Bombardier, saying its planes weren't good enough and the company was treating America as a "piggybank."

That became immediate political fodder in Kansas, home to Bombardier's U.S. headquarters and competitive races for governor and U.S. Senate this year. The company employs more than 1,000 people in Wichita, the state's most populous city that calls itself the "Air Capital of the World" with a local economy dominated by aerospace and aviation manufacturing.

The state's senior Republican U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran immediately defended Bombardier, as did Ty Master-son, the Republican nominee for governor and current state Senate president. But the issue has put pressure on the state's junior Sen. Roger Marshall, a close Trump ally running for reelection in a competitive race.

"We cannot allow this chaotic economic policy to continue to hurt Kansans; they deserve so much better. As your Senator, I will always stand up for Kansas workers," the Democratic nominee in the race, Adam Hamilton, wrote on X Monday.

On Tuesday, Marshall said he would fight to keep Bombardier's jobs in Kansas, posting on social media, "I've already taken that concern inside the Oval Office." Marshall said he agreed with Trump's aim of bringing more manufacturing jobs, particularly in Bombardier's case because the company sells half its products in the United States.

Tariffs on Canadian and American goods are poised to especially hurt Northern and Midwestern states, according to an analysis from Oxford Economics. It identified North Dakota, Montana, Michigan, Illinois and Vermont as the states most likely to be affected because they trade the most with Canada.

Minnesota State Auditor Julie Blaha, a Democrat, said the trade feud is just the latest federal move to push up costs for businesses, consumers and local governments. Her office oversees some \$56 billion in local government spending through financial integrity audits and budget analyses. She said Minnesota cities and townships have had no choice but to raise property taxes as they encounter rising prices.

"It's just one wave after another. And it's piling up," she said. "All these rising costs are just coming home to roost, and they're hitting Main Street."

Minnesota shares a 547-mile border with Canada. Blaha said the state's crucial agricultural industry is especially threatened as businesses constantly send products back and forth for processing. She highlighted General Mills, the maker of well-known cereals, including Cheerios. The firm buys Canadian grain that is processed in Minneapolis before being distributed to domestic cereal plants and sold across the U.S. and Canada.

Grain is not on Canada's list of targeted products for retaliatory tariffs, but the country did enact new tariffs on agricultural equipment, dairy and other food products.

"These tariffs have a bigger impact than just one just one hit on a price," she said.

Canada's political pressure

Canada's retaliatory tariffs were aimed at pressuring the White House by targeting certain states and industries.

"We're being wise and strategic to put political pressure," Canada's Industry Minister Mélanie Joly said

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last week.

Canadian data show countermeasures will hit Ohio harder than any other state, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reported. Ohio is home to one of the most competitive Senate races this cycle as Republican Sen. Jon Husted defends his seat from former Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown.

Husted has largely defended Trump's tariffs in the Senate. In an August interview with MS Now, he acknowledged the president's decision-making was not in line with how he would negotiate, but declined to second guess Trump's stance on Canada.

"It depends on how it ends," the senator said. "If we get a good deal, both Canada and America can come out of this well, but it's going to require both sides."

Canada is Ohio's biggest export market, sending \$17.5 billion in goods across the border — roughly a third of the state's total exports. More than half of the state's exports to Canada come from the equipment and machinery and the transportation industries. Ohio is a leading producer of automobiles, an industry deeply affected by tariffs because of interconnected supply chains that span American, Canadian and Mexican factories.

Trump's tariff "decision is going to make it very difficult for folks in the automobile supply chain to be able to succeed in Ohio," Rob Moore, principal at public policy firm Scioto Analysis, told the Ohio Capital Journal.

While Canada's countermeasures were politically targeted, they will sweep across the country, affecting solidly conservative and liberal states.

Connecticut State Treasurer Erick Russell, a Democrat, said the trade war will especially hurt New England states that trade more with Canada. He said the tariffs could raise prices of everything from electricity to consumer goods.

Though tariffs will hit businesses and consumers first, Russell said they will eventually put more strain on local and state government budgets.

And the president's on-and-off-again history with imposing and rescinding tariffs injects more uncertainty for both business and government, he said.

"Where things are right now, there isn't any certainty or clarity around where this is ultimately going to land," he said. "What is consistent through all of this is that consumers in Connecticut and all across the country are going to continue to pay for this tariff war."

Concerns across New England states

The trade standoff could further hurt New England's tourism industry that depends on steady Canadian traffic.

In New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont, tourism is big business year-round as travelers flock to beaches in the summer, leaf peeping in the autumn and skiing in the winter. Those businesses have suffered a drop in Canadian visitors amid Trump's ongoing aggression with the country.

Steve Wright, general manager of Jay Peak Resort in Vermont's Green Mountains, recently assured Canadians that they were welcome to the resort that sits just a few miles from the border and a roughly two-hour drive from Montreal.

"The border may feel different right now," Wright wrote online. "We do not. You are our neighbors. You are our friends. You are part of this place."

Vermont Republican Gov. Phil Scott recently characterized the president's executive order to rename Lake Ontario to Lake America as "petty and disappointing." Scott, who is favored in polls to win reelection in November, said the trade war harms communities on both sides of the border.

"Further escalating tensions does nothing to help American or Canadian families and businesses," he added.

In neighboring Maine, U.S. Sen. Susan Collins has criticized the tariffs and urged the administration to resolve its dispute with Canada. A Republican in a competitive race for reelection, Collins grew up just 20 miles from the Canadian border.

Troy Jackson, her Democratic opponent, has blamed Collins for not stopping Trump's trade policies.

Last week, Collins told reporters that the White House viewed tariffs in a macro sense without appreciating how damaging they are to border states such as Maine. Collins said Trump's tariffs were already

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hurting local governments that rely on Canada for imported salt to treat roads in winter and could further hurt the state's crucial lumber and blueberry industries.

While Maine's important lobster industry was spared retaliatory tariffs, Canada did impose 50% tariffs on wood products and agricultural products.

"Canada is not China. It is not an adversarial nation," Collins said. "It is our closest ally, our neighbor, our friend. And our economy is so intertwined with Canada that I am very worried about what the impact will be."

Stateline reporter Kevin Hardy can be reached at khardy@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.

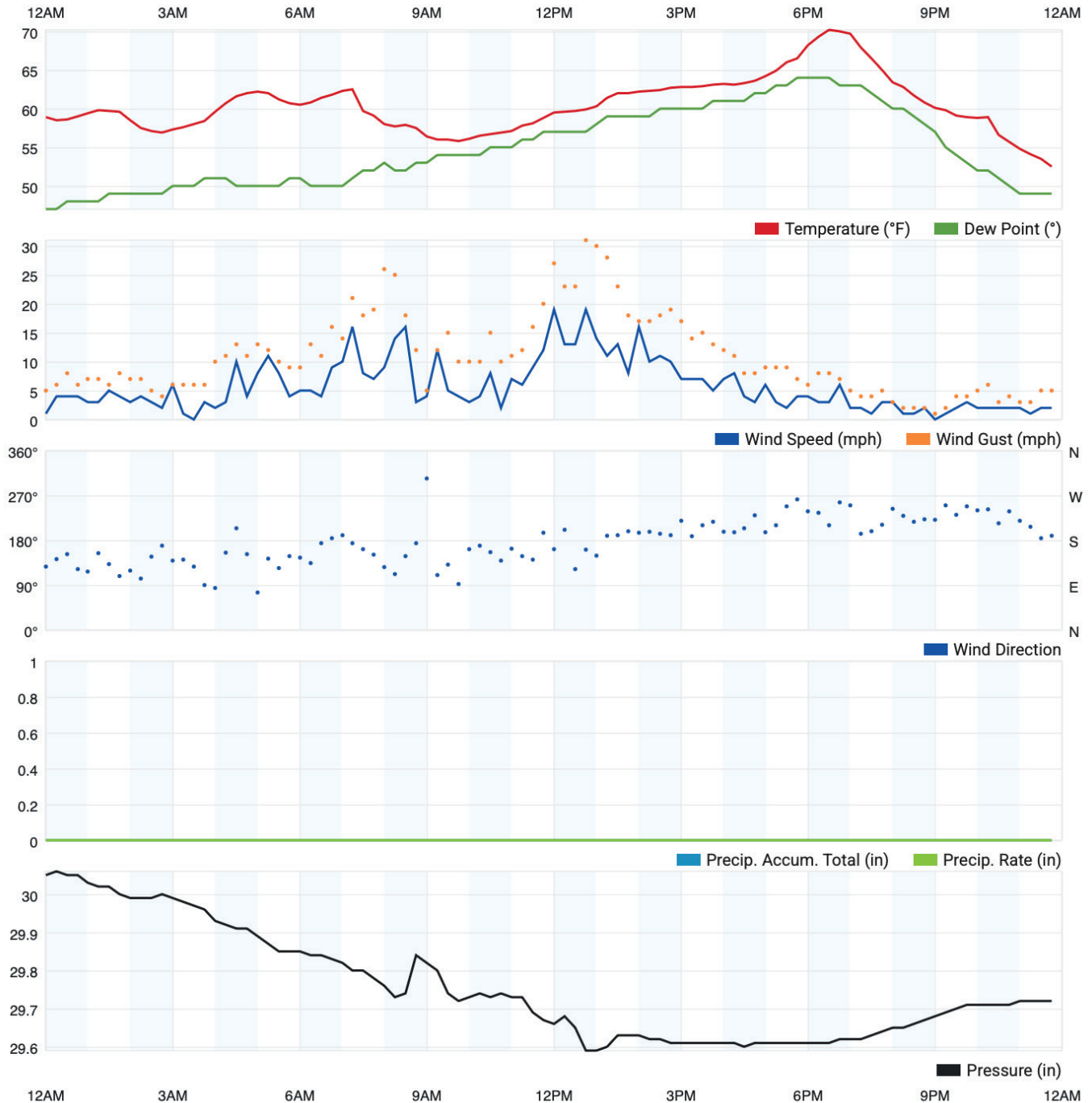
Kevin Hardy covers business, labor and rural issues for Stateline from the Midwest.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

September 14, 2026



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Today



High: 70 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 46 °F

Partly Cloudy

Wednesday



High: 68 °F

Chance
Showers

Wednesday
Night



Low: 50 °F

Decreasing
Clouds

Thursday



High: 72 °F

Partly Sunny

What's Ahead



TUESDAY

Mostly Sunny and slightly cooler than normal. 15 to 25 mph northwest breezes decreasing through the day.

Highs: 65-76°



WEDNESDAY

Increasing Cloudiness with a 15-35% chance for showers. Warmest across central SD.

Highs: 63-82°



THURSDAY

Mostly Cloudy with a 20-45% chance for daytime showers across central SD. A 40-90% chance of showers and thunderstorms overnight.

Highs: 67-77°



FRIDAY

Mostly Cloudy with a 30-80% chance for showers and thunderstorms. Highest chances across eastern SD.

Highs: 64-80°



NWS Aberdeen, SD
Tue Sep 15, 2026 3:55 AM

Sunshine and drier conditions will settle in for today. Northwest winds 15 to 25 mph will remain through about midday before diminishing in the afternoon. More chances for showers and thunderstorms return for the latter half of the week. Temperatures will remain near normal to above normal through the end of the work week.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 70 °F at 6:32 PM

Low Temp: 54 °F at 11:28 PM

Wind: 31 mph at 12:45 PM

Precip: 0.90

Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 1955

Record Low: 28 in 1964

Average High: 76

Average Low: 44

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.02

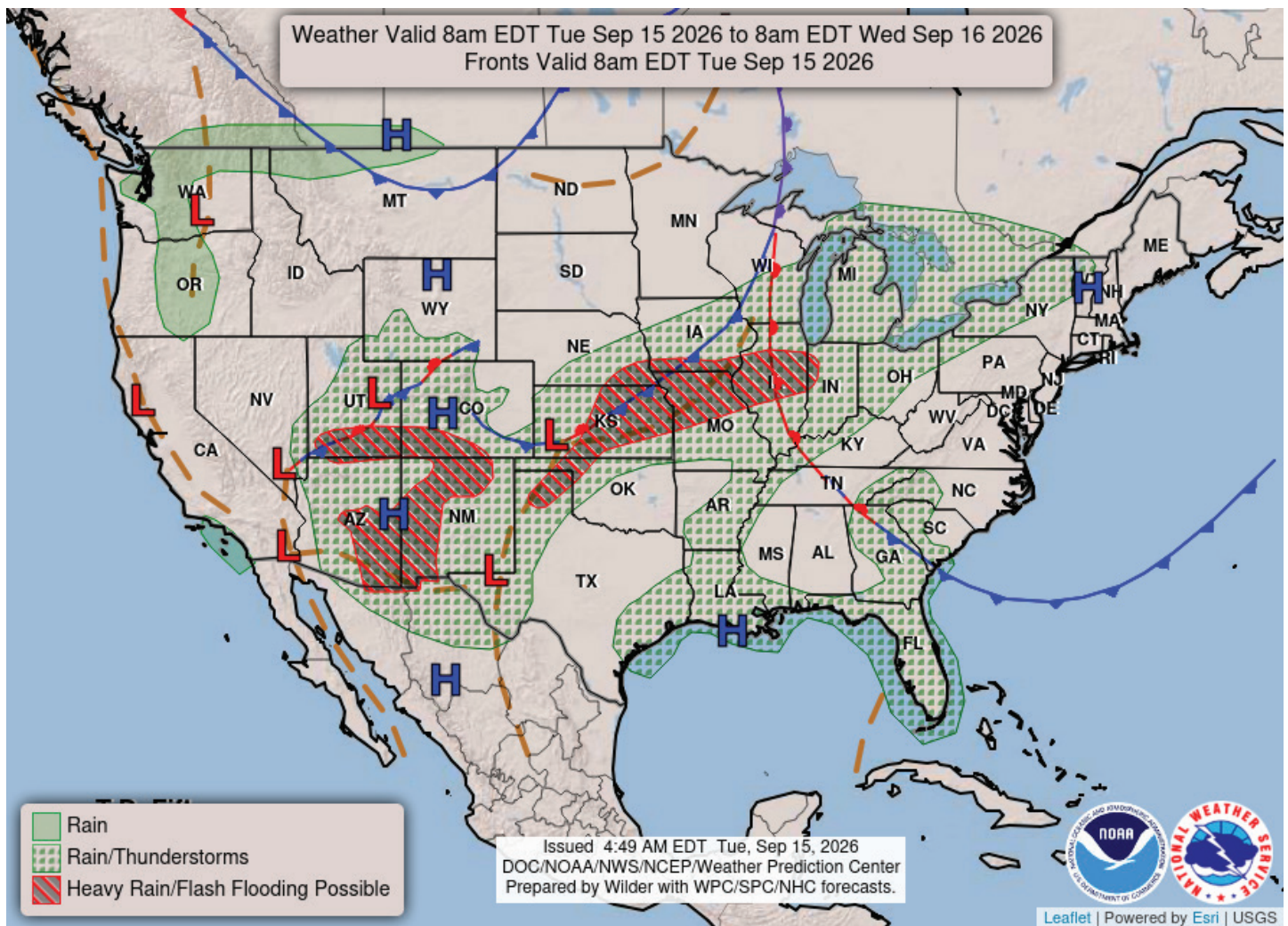
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.90

Average Precip to date: 17.36

Precip Year to Date: 20.96

Sunset Tonight: 7:44 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:12 am



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Today in Weather History

September 15, 1977: Sioux Falls residents received a rude awakening during the morning hours as thunderstorms rolled through the city. Over two and one-half inches of rain fell in the town in an hour and 15 minutes. A large amount of rain in a short period led to street flooding in some areas. Lightning strikes from the storms also started several small fires.

1747: Some historical accounts of a hurricane caused flooding on the Rappahannock River in Virginia. A slave ship was overturned, and several fatalities were reported.

1752 — A great hurricane produced a tide along the South Carolina coast which nearly inundated downtown Charleston. However, just before the tide reached the city, a shift in the wind caused the water level to drop five feet in ten minutes. (David Ludlum)

1910 — Rains of .27 inch on the 14th and .73 inch on the 15th were the earliest and heaviest of record for Fresno CA, which, along with much of California, experiences a "rainy season" in the winter. (The Weather Channel)

1939 — The temperature at Detroit MI soared to 100 degrees to establish a record for September. (The Weather Channel)

1945: A hurricane entered the south Florida coast at Homestead, curving northward right up through the center of Florida, remaining over land, and exited near Jacksonville Beach with winds gusting to 170 mph. The following is from the Homestead Air Reserve Base. "On Sept. 15, 1945, three years to the day after the founding of the Homestead Army Air Field, a massive hurricane roared ashore, sending winds of up to 145 miles per hour tearing through the Air Field's buildings. Enlisted housing facilities, the nurses' dormitory, and the Base Exchange were all destroyed. The roof was ripped from what would later become building 741, the Big Hangar. The base laundry and fire station were both declared total losses. The few remaining aircraft were tossed about like leaves."

1982 — A snowstorm over Wyoming produced 16.9 inches at Lander to establish a 24 hour record for September for that location. (13th-15th) (The Weather Channel)

1987 — The first snow of the season was observed at the Winter Park ski resort in Colorado early in the day. Eight inches of snow was reported at the Summit of Mount Evans, along with wind gusts to 61 mph. Early morning thunderstorms in Texas produced up to six inches of rain in Real County. Two occupants of a car drowned, and the other six occupants were injured as it was swept into Camp Wood Creek, near the town of Leakey. Late afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in central and northeastern Oklahoma. Wind gusts to 70 mph and golf ball size hail were reported around Oklahoma City OK. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Thunderstorms brought much needed rains to parts of the central U.S. Rainfall totals of 2.87 inches at Sioux City IA and 4.59 inches at Kansas City MO were records for the date. Up to eight inches of rain deluged the Kansas City area, nearly as much rain as was received the previous eight months. Hurricane Gilbert, meanwhile, slowly churned toward the U.S./Mexican border. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Showers and thunderstorms produced locally heavy rain in the Central Appalachians. Virgie VA received 2.60 inches of rain during the evening hours, and Bartlett TN was deluged with 2.75 inches in just ninety minutes. Heavy rain left five cars partially submerged in high water in a parking lot at Bulls Gap TN. Thunderstorms over central North Carolina drenched the Fayetteville area with four to eight inches of rain between 8 PM and midnight. Flash flooding, and a couple of dam breaks, claimed the lives of two persons, and caused ten million dollars damage. Hugo, churning over the waters of the Caribbean, strengthened to the category of a very dangerous hurricane, packing winds of 150 mph. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2010: The largest hailstone in Kansas was found in southwest Wichita. It measured 7.75 inches in diameter.

2011: An EF0 Waterspout moved ashore in Ocean City, Maryland.

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Daily Devotion

Do Not Be Afraid

When you fall to the ground, Jesus is there to pull you back to your feet.

Matthew 17:1-8: 1 Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves.

2 And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"

6 When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified.

7 And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Get up, and do not be afraid."

8 And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone.

Have you ever noticed that the more time you spend with someone, the better you understand where that person is coming from? Our relationship with Jesus is similar. When we have a close connection with Him, we're not praying to some cold and distant deity "out there somewhere." Instead, we are speaking with a God who is near (Psalm 145:18)—a God who loves us, sustains us, and molds us into His own image. That changes how we approach Him, doesn't it?

In today's passage, Peter, James, and John witnessed Jesus' transfiguration and were terrified. Their reaction was understandable, as they were seeing divine glory with human eyes. But even in that overwhelming moment, Jesus didn't leave them lying on the ground where they had fallen. Instead, He came to the three disciples, touched them, and said, "Get up, and do not be afraid" (v. 7). That's the kind of compassionate, personal God we serve—One who meets us in our awe and gently draws us back to our feet.

It's wise to keep this picture in mind when spending time with the Lord. If you are struggling to connect with God, remember that He loves you, forgives you, and rejoices in your prayers.

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.14.26

1 12 37 40 44 4

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 9 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.11.26

3 30 33 53 62 22

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$227,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 54 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.14.26

1 10 26 47 52 8

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$4,550,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 9 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.12.26

14 15 22 23 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$55,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 24 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.14.26

12 23 48 61 67 8

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 53 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.14.26

19 20 57 61 67 22

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$271,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 53 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Britton-Hecla def. Langford, 25-23, 25-23, 25-17

Elk Point-Jefferson def. West Sioux, Iowa, 25-16, 25-19, 25-11

Lemmon High School def. Wakpala, 25-5, 25-8, 25-4

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

A Christian pastor called Arapaho ceremonies 'idol worship.' Now the tribe wants her church gone

By SAVANNAH PETERS Associated Press

ARAPAHOE, Wyo. (AP) — Every Sunday morning on the Wind River Reservation, congregants gather at Foundations for Nations Church to pray while protesters outside do the same.

The two rituals have unfolded in parallel since the Christian church's pastor, Sarah Lucas, preached a sermon condemning Arapaho ceremonial ways.

The Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone Tribes that share the reservation have made clear that Lucas is no longer welcome. Lucas, who is not Native American but owns the land under her church, says she isn't going anywhere. The standoff tests the boundaries of religious freedom and the right of a tribal nation to govern according to its own values and protocols.

The conflict stems from a video that circulated in July as Arapaho people surfaced from their weeklong sundance ceremony. In it, Lucas called that cornerstone of Arapaho spiritual life "idol worship."

"Jesus is the chain breaker. He is the only God that we should be praying to," Lucas said.

Lucas says her words reflect her interpretation of the Bible and are constitutionally protected. Many Arapaho people say she took aim at something central to who they are, reopening wounds from a not-so-distant era of religious assimilation and abuse.

With the smell of coffee and sweetgrass swirling, regular Sunday demonstrators were recently joined by activists from the American Indian Movement and Arapaho Chairman Keenan Groesbeck as they marched past ranchland and scattered homes toward the church.

"We brought in our ceremonial elders. We heard them loud and clear," said Groesbeck. "They don't want them here no more."

Lucas condemned the highest Arapaho ceremony

The sundance marks a time of connection, offering and collective renewal. As Arapaho people closed this year's ceremony and welcomed a new year according to their traditions, Lucas and her smaller-than-usual congregation prayed for them.

"You have generations, centuries of people doing this offering, going in and making vows to change," Lucas said. "Father God, we see no fruit."

Many Arapahos were stunned to hear an outsider not only disparage the ceremony but talk about closely held details that aren't meant to be discussed openly.

Big Wind Carpenter, who was among the protesters, said Lucas couldn't have chosen a more painful target.

"There's nothing I could say to make non-Arapahos understand," Carpenter said.

Lucas said she regrets her sharp delivery captured in clips that went viral but not the message itself. Since founding her church nine years ago, she said she has had "hard conversations" urging Native congregants to renounce sundance, sweat lodges and burning cedar during prayer, traditions she equates to idolatry.

"The Bible makes it very clear to only worship one God," Lucas said.

Some members of her mixed Native and white congregation were unaware of her stance. Lucas said Sunday turnout is down half from 150. Some weeks, the protest crowd has rivaled church attendance.

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Arapaho congregant Tearany Black, who considers Lucas a stand-in parent, said she agrees Native Christians should turn away from ceremony but found the tone of the sermon racist.

"She cares for our people," said Black. "I just don't think she understands where we're coming from."

On Wind River, ceremony and Christianity coexist

DJ Gardner grew up praying in sweat lodges and reading the Bible. He joined Lucas' congregation last year and didn't anticipate being asked to choose.

"I thought they accepted us," Gardner said. "In my view, why else would you be on a reservation?"

The 28-year-old, who has walked away from Foundations for Nations, associates Lucas' rhetoric with assimilationist boarding schools like the one his grandfather survived.

In part to repair that dark history, the Episcopal and Catholic missions that have been active on Wind River since the late 1800s now embrace ceremonial practices.

"It's an irony of colonialism, the degree to which Native people have remade Christianity according to their own values," said Michael McNally, a professor of religious studies at Carleton College in Minnesota.

Lucas interprets the Bible differently.

"I don't believe you can have mixture," she said.

Foundations for Nations grew through community aid

Mary Rose Goggles was struggling with the costs of raising her grandchildren in 2017 when Lucas knocked on her door and warmly invited her to join her new church.

Goggles, who practices Arapaho ceremonial ways but dabbles in Christianity, liked the worship band and activities that kept her grandchildren busy. As Foundations for Nations grew, she visited its food bank, clothing giveaways and events like a fall harvest festival.

"It was good to see the kids enjoying themselves. It was good to see my relations getting help," Goggles said.

Lucas built relationships on Wind River by filling gaps. Her church offers free after-school and summer day camps. Visiting missionaries fill tribal members' gas tanks and replace their sagging roofs.

Foundations for Nations' website solicits outside donations to "revive, raise up and restore" Wind River, listing grim statistics about addiction, sexual assault and unemployment. The Associated Press found those numbers were pulled from national studies not specific to the reservation or could not be traced to a verifiable source.

A page asking donors to "sponsor" a child in exchange for photos and letters was recently removed.

Goggles left Foundations for Nations several years ago after moving away but thought warmly of the church until seeing Lucas' sermon, which she said left her "heartbroken."

Jenea Mandan has cycled through feelings of anger and shame about sending her children to the church's summer camp. An Arapaho traditionalist, Mandan had misgivings about the Christian program but needed childcare help.

"At that time I was a single mom, I was in a low-income situation," Mandan said. "It feels like they took advantage of that."

The church sits on private land. The tribe still wants it gone

Lucas believes God called her to Wind River. But she deliberately built her church on private property within the reservation's boundaries rather than tribal land where, she said, the tribes would effectively be her landlords.

Foundations for Nations is located amid a patchwork of federal, tribal and private property — the legacy of 19th century federal policies designed to eliminate tribes by breaking up collective land bases.

"That era has cascading effects that are devastating for tribal sovereignty," said Jessica Shoemaker, a professor at the University of Nebraska College of Law.

Shoemaker said tribes have broad civil authority over non-Natives on tribal land, including to banish them. But jurisdiction over private property within reservations is litigated case-by-case.

Lucas and her attorneys with the Liberty Counsel, a conservative Christian legal organization, assert that her ownership of the property shields her from banishment.

In July, the Arapaho and Shoshone councils passed ordinances requiring religious groups to seek their

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approval before operating on Wind River.

"That's the law of the land on our reservation," said Groesbeck.

That has forced Foundations for Nations to suspend youth programming since it is now prohibited from picking up and dropping off children on the reservation.

In an Aug. 31 memo, the Arapaho council acknowledged that "jurisdictional limits" likely prevent it from regulating church activity on private land. And any tribal court enforcement of those ordinances could face federal review, where there's a high bar for proving non-Native conduct threatens tribal well-being.

Meanwhile, the 21,000 square-foot (1,950 square-meter), steel-sided building that houses Foundations for Nations' sanctuary, community spaces and indoor playground has been unusually quiet. Construction on a neighboring youth center continues.

"God would not have us build this and provided all of it to empty it out," Lucas said.

Gardner has returned to the Catholic church of his childhood, where Arapaho geometric motifs adorn the sanctuary and he is welcome to burn cedar.

He has been praying for guidance on forgiveness.

"In order for me to strive to be like Jesus, I would have to forgive," Gardner said. "But there are some lines you just don't cross."

____ This story is published through the Global Indigenous Reporting Network at The Associated Press.

NATO jets down drone in Lithuanian airspace after bloc warns strikes will drive support for Ukraine

By LIUDAS DAPKUS Associated Press

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP) — NATO fighter jets shot down a drone that entered Lithuanian airspace overnight, officials said Tuesday, less than a day after NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said that strikes close to the alliance's territory would drive the trans-Atlantic organization to increase its support for Kyiv.

The drone was downed near the village of Pratkūnai in the Kaišiadorys district, about 60 miles (100 kilometers) west of the country's capital, Vilnius, and near the Kaunas Reservoir, Lithuania's National Crisis Management Center said Tuesday.

Lithuania's military said that the incident marked the first time that a drone had been shot down in the country's airspace. Authorities didn't comment on the drone's origin or purpose, saying the incident needed further investigation.

The incursion follows a speech by Rutte on Monday at NATO headquarters in Brussels, where he said that strikes "close to NATO territory" showed Russian President Vladimir Putin's "desperation and also his desire to sow fear and terror."

"Russia is growing increasingly reckless as it continues its terrible war against Ukraine," Rutte said. He also pledged to bolster the 32-nation alliance's own defenses along its long eastern border with Russia.

Drone 'likely' to be carrying explosives

The menace of drones has repeatedly loomed over the skies of Lithuania, which shares borders with Belarus, a key ally of Moscow, and the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad.

Antanas Matutis, commander of the Lithuanian air force, said that the wreckage had been found, and the drone "likely" was carrying explosives.

Vilmantas Vitkauskas, head of the crisis center, told Lithuanian public broadcaster LRT that the drone most likely entered from Belarus. It remained in Lithuanian airspace for about 30 minutes and flew along the outskirts of populated areas before being intercepted, he said.

Kyiv says it's 'ready to support de-escalation'

Meanwhile, Russian drone strikes continued across Ukraine following a social media post from U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday that Russia and Ukraine had agreed "not to hit" each other's energy infrastructure.

Trump didn't offer further details on the purported agreement, and Russia didn't immediately comment on Trump's post. Previous efforts to broker even a partial ceasefire have repeatedly fallen apart within

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hours, with both sides accusing each other of violations.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said late Monday that Kyiv was “ready to support de-escalation.”

“We see that the Russians feel the pressure from our precise strikes on Russia’s war economy. And so far, no one has seen any genuine desire on Russia’s part to move toward ending the war,” he said. “But if our American partners can ensure that Russia is genuinely ready to stop this war aimed at destroying life — and to do so for real and for the long term — Ukraine will take its own de-escalatory steps.”

Ukraine’s State Emergency Service said Tuesday that eight people were wounded in Russian strikes on Kyiv since the start of the day, including two who were wounded in strikes on the capital’s gas stations.

Elsewhere, Russian forces shot down 222 Ukrainian drones overnight, Russia’s Defense Ministry said Tuesday.

A “massive” Ukrainian drone attack sparked several fires in the Russian city of Taganrog, regional Gov. Yuri Slyusar said. He said on Telegram that two apartment buildings and three private homes had been damaged, as well as an educational institution, agricultural warehouses and a site belonging to Russian e-retailer Ozon.

Supreme Court lifts a cloud over midterms, letting mail ballots flow as normal to voters

By JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

Even with voting already underway, uncertainty about what might come next had been hovering over preparations for this year’s midterm elections.

The U.S. Supreme Court lifted much of that uncertainty late Monday when it rejected President Donald Trump’s push to have the U.S. Postal Service play a central role in deciding who would be able to receive a mail ballot.

The decision is a win for the status quo. The thousands of election offices around the country can send out mail ballots as they had intended without worrying about complying with new Postal Service rules imposed at the 11th hour.

“Now, we can finally move forward and get back to what we do best: conducting our elections without a dark cloud hanging over us — fairly, openly, for the people, by the people,” California Secretary of State Shirley Weber, a Democrat who oversees voting in a state where all voters receive a mail ballot, said in a statement after the decision.

Executive order and ongoing litigation had created confusion

The case before the court stemmed from an executive order Trump signed in March.

The administration developed a plan that would require states to adopt a uniform envelope style for mailed ballots and submit lists of eligible voters to an online portal it was developing. The Postal Service could refuse to deliver ballots to states that didn’t comply.

A whistleblower report said the postal system’s requirements could lead to millions of mail ballots never being sent, disenfranchising many of the country’s voters during an election that will decide control of Congress during the final two years of Trump’s term.

A tangle of legal challenges, rapid-fire rulings and appeals left election officials uncertain about what rules would ultimately be in place. But they agreed on one thing: Introducing such massive changes so close to a general election would be chaotic and nearly impossible to pull off in a country where roughly a third of voters use mail ballots.

The Supreme Court’s decision comes as mail voting is already in progress in some states. Some election officials have said they were worried that the dispute, coming late in the election cycle, would leave voters confused about what’s allowed.

Voting rights advocates and state election officials moved swiftly after Monday’s decision to make clear that elections will function as they always have in each state.

“Utahns can have confidence that the 2026 election will proceed as normal,” said Utah Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson, a Republican serving as the state’s chief election officer.

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The uncertainty was most pressing in the states that rely on mail voting

The concern was particularly acute in the eight states where voters cast ballots almost entirely by mail: California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Vermont and Washington.

They had faced the daunting challenge of adapting in short order without an extensive network of polling places.

"This is a victory for Oregonians, the right to vote, and the rule of law," said Oregon Secretary of State Tobias Read, a Democrat. "This provides voters and elections officials with the certainty they need ahead of a major, federal election, and it sends a clear message to this country: Presidents don't run elections, the people do."

Nevada Secretary of State Cisco Aguilar said his reaction to the Supreme Court's decision is "one of relief, but also excitement, because today the voters really won across America."

In Nevada's June primary, more than half of voters cast ballots by mail. It's a state where mail voting is "critical" to voter voices being heard, Aguilar said.

But the Democrat said "some of the damage has already been done," with false claims about mail ballots affecting people's confidence in the voting method.

"You can trust the process," Aguilar urged voters. "Please participate."

What about future elections?

Lower courts had blocked the Trump administration from implementing its rules. The Supreme Court rejected the its attempt to stay those decisions, even as three justices — Samuel Alito, Brett Kavanaugh and Clarence Thomas — expressed various levels of willingness to let Trump carry out his plan in current or future elections.

Yet a majority of the justices noted in the decision that the administration was "unlikely to succeed on the merits" in defending its plan. It was heartening to some voting rights experts to see that language inserted.

"The court didn't have to explain that it was disinclined to side with the government on the merits, but it did that, and that is a sign for the future," said Derek Muller, a Notre Dame law professor.

David Becker, a former U.S. Justice Department lawyer who is now executive director of the Center for Election Innovation & Research, said implementing Trump's executive order "would have done nothing for election integrity but would have imposed a vast and expensive new bureaucracy on the states" and disenfranchised voters.

He said the majority's language about the merits of the case meant "it is unlikely these rules will ever apply to any election."

He added, "Thanks to the rule of law, voters will not need to worry about this."

Zelenskyy says Ukraine will pause strikes on Russia if Kremlin spares critical infrastructure

By CLAUDIA CIOBANU, ELISE MORTON and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Monday that Ukraine is ready to halt its strikes on Russian territory if allies can secure a genuine Russian commitment not to hit Ukraine's critical infrastructure.

His comments came after U.S. President Donald Trump claimed in a social media post that Russia and Ukraine had agreed "not to hit" each other's energy infrastructure, though Trump did not offer further details on the purported agreement.

Russia did not immediately comment on Trump's claim. Previous efforts to broker even a partial ceasefire have repeatedly fallen apart within hours, with both sides accusing each other of violations.

Trump did not offer further details about the agreement but it comes a day after the U.S. president called on Zelenskyy to stop targeting Russian oil refineries and other infrastructure used to produce and distribute diesel, claiming the attacks are causing a global shortage. Diesel prices have surged in the U.S.,

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and high fuel costs associated with the Iran war have become a major issue for Trump's party in upcoming congressional elections.

Ukraine still awaits concrete ceasefire plan from allies

He also claimed that the rise in the price of global diesel fuel "is mostly caused by the Russian/Ukraine war" and not Iran. But restricted shipments caused by the slowdown of oil flowing through the Strait of Hormuz and damaged refining systems in Russia are causing strains in the energy market.

In his post, Zelenskyy said Ukraine has proposed that partners help secure an agreement with Russia for a ceasefire. It's not the first time Kyiv has floated the idea.

"Every day, Ukrainian energy facilities, port infrastructure, logistics, even food and pharmaceutical warehouses become targets," he said. "The war must be ended. And a de-escalation step regarding critical infrastructure could be a first step toward peace."

Zelenskyy said he "expects concrete proposals from our partners."

Trump on Sunday called on Zelenskyy to stop the strikes. Afterward, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said any call on Kyiv to stop strikes on civilian economic infrastructure "can only be welcomed."

NATO chief Rutte vows more support for Ukraine after Russian drone strikes near Polish border

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said Monday that Russian drone strikes near the Ukraine-Poland border — one of which hit a train shortly after senior visiting officials had passed through the same station — would drive the military alliance to increase its support for Kyiv, calling Sunday's attacks a sign of Moscow's growing desperation.

The strikes "close to NATO territory" show Russian President Vladimir Putin's "desperation and also his desire to sow fear and terror," Rutte said at NATO's political headquarters in Brussels. "Russia is growing increasingly reckless as it continues its terrible war against Ukraine."

Rutte pledged to increase support for Ukraine and bolster the 32-nation alliance's own defenses along its long eastern border with Russia.

"He thinks that he can stop us from supporting Ukraine and that he can undermine our unity. He is wrong," the NATO chief said of Putin.

Sunday's strikes near the Polish border are the latest in a string of incidents that officials say point to a deliberate pattern of escalation by Putin, as Moscow tests NATO's response while pressing its offensive in Ukraine.

Poland and Ukraine increase security cooperation along border

Rutte's comments came as Poland pledged increased security along its border with Ukraine after a wave of Russian drone strikes near the frontier, including two that landed within kilometers of Polish territory.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk warned Sunday that Moscow appears poised to intensify its campaign against Ukraine's borders with European countries. Ukraine is under mounting pressure from Russia's intensifying air campaign that uses ballistic missiles and jet-powered drones to pierce defenses.

"These coming weeks and months will be a time of very intensified actions on the Russian side, and unfortunately we cannot rule out that this escalation will also affect our territory," Tusk said Sunday after a governmental security briefing in Warsaw. He issued a similar warning on Thursday.

Defense Minister Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz said Monday in a post on X that the Polish army recovered what was believed to be a Russian military drone from the Baltic Sea near the coastal village of Jarosławiec.

Polish officials said intelligence reports, including a CIA briefing last week, suggested Russia was likely to attack border points and intensify sabotage actions inside European countries as part of its efforts to discourage partners from supporting Ukraine.

Kremlin says Russia will continue strikes throughout Ukraine

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, asked Monday about the strike on the train near the Polish border, said Russian forces were operating "across the entire territory of Ukraine and continue to do so — and will continue to do so."

Peskov noted the potential role of Global South nations in a settlement, saying "any country can use its influence on the Kyiv regime to encourage it to show greater flexibility."

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi each expressed willingness to

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help broker a settlement during recent meetings with Putin, who briefed them on the situation in Ukraine, Peskov said.

Peskov also addressed U.S. President Donald Trump's call for Ukraine to halt strikes on Russian diesel fuel facilities, saying "any call on the Kyiv regime to stop strikes on civilian economic infrastructure can only be welcomed."

Trump on Sunday called on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to halt strikes on Russian oil refineries and other infrastructure used to produce and distribute diesel, saying the attacks are causing a global shortage. He spoke after diesel prices in the U.S. hit a record on Friday, soaring past an average of \$6 per gallon.

As the last US troops pack up in Iraq, militias signal their weapons will stay

By ABBY SEWELL and QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Two deadlines are looming for Iraq at the end of the month: the end of a decades-long U.S. military presence and the disarmament of non-state armed groups.

The U.S. withdrawal is underway, and officials say the hundreds of troops remaining in northern Iraq will be out by the Sept. 30 deadline.

The Iraqi government has linked the U.S. withdrawal to an ultimatum for militias to lay down their weapons. But most have indicated they have no plans to do so.

That leaves major questions about what the day after will look like in Iraq.

Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have struck U.S.-linked targets both inside and outside of Iraq since the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran on Feb. 28. They also have coordinated with Yemen's Houthi rebels to attack Saudi Arabia.

With the war between the U.S. and Iran raging, Tehran is unlikely to give up the leverage it has in neighboring Iraq. U.S. officials are concerned about the militias' ability to continue carrying out attacks — but not enough to delay their withdrawal.

The end of the US mission

U.S. troops invaded Iraq in 2003 to topple Saddam Hussein. They departed in 2011, but three years later, Iraqi authorities invited a smaller U.S.-led mission to fight the Islamic State group, which had rampaged across Iraq, seizing large swaths of territory.

With the extremist group now reduced to scattered sleeper cells — a result of the intervention of Iran-backed militias as well as the U.S.-led coalition -- Washington and Baghdad agreed in 2024 to wind the mission down.

U.S. troops pulled out of bases in most areas of Iraq last year but maintained a presence in the semi-autonomous northern Kurdish region. Bases there have regularly come under attack since the U.S. and Israel launched their war against Iran.

A U.S. military official said the withdrawal would be completed by Sept. 30, and the hundreds of troops still present in northern Iraq would mostly be redeployed to Jordan and other countries in the region. Military equipment, including air defense systems, will also be removed. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment publicly.

A "normal bilateral security cooperation" agreement could then be negotiated with the central government in Baghdad, he said, but it remains unclear what form that would take.

The official said that the counterterrorism base in Irbil had lost its importance for U.S. troops with the Islamic State threat receding.

During the war with Iran, northern Iraq for the most part did not serve as an "offensive platform," but U.S. forces there were frequently targeted by Iran and Iran-backed Iraqi militias, so pulling troops out "will reduce our risk," he said.

But the U.S. military remains concerned about the ability of the Iraqi militias to launch attacks on targets elsewhere in the region, including in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel, and about the presence of Houthi

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rebel forces in Iraq, he said.

In the past, the U.S. has sometimes struck militia sites in Iraq in retaliation for attacks. Washington has slapped sanctions on some of the groups and could impose more.

Militias take a hard line on disarmament

Iraqi government officials have waffled over whether Sept. 30 is a hard deadline for disarmament of militias or merely the starting point for negotiations.

"There will be no disarming of any groups by the 30th of September," said Iraqi analyst Sajad Jiyad, speaking at a panel convened by the Atlantic Center think tank last week. "I think that's probably clear to anybody who watches Iraqi politics."

While a handful of less-influential militias have agreed to turn over their weapons, the most powerful groups — and closest to Iran — Kataib Hezbollah, Harakat al-Nujaba and Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada have rejected the prospect or set conditions for disarming that they know the government is unlikely to meet in the near future.

Those include bringing the Kurdish peshmerga security forces in northern Iraq under control of the central government's military and expelling Iranian Kurdish dissident groups and the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, that have bases in the region.

"After establishing these parameters, discussions will focus on regulating weapons, not surrendering them," an official with one of the Iran-backed Iraqi militias said. "There is absolutely no decision among the factions to surrender weapons, and we have not surrendered any weapons."

A government official said the government's strategy currently focuses on bringing armed factions under the control of the Iraqi military. Already many of the militias are part of the Popular Mobilization Forces, a coalition of armed groups that is officially part of the Iraqi armed forces, although the individual militias often act on their own.

The official said the government wants the armed factions to hand over "dynamic weapons" including missiles and long-range aircraft, to the central leadership of the PMF and for the individual factions to be dissolved and placed under the command of the PMF and the Iraqi army.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

Iraqi government spokesperson Sabah al-Numan said last week that "discussions and dialogues are ongoing, and the file will be resolved after the withdrawal of the international coalition forces."

Kurds are anxious about the day after Sept. 30

While the withdrawal of U.S. troops removes one target from the Kurdish region, it may not halt the attacks.

Mohammed A. Salih, a non-resident senior fellow at the U.S.-based Foreign Policy Research Institute, and an expert on Kurdish and Iraqi affairs, noted that Iran and affiliated groups "have targeted other locations in the Kurdistan region that have not been related to the U.S. troops' presence."

Those include the bases of exiled Iranian Kurdish dissident groups, energy facilities, and even the office of the Kurdish region's Prime Minister Masrour Barzani.

"The withdrawal will expose the Kurdistan region even further and make it an even easier target," Salih said.

Regional government officials declined to comment, but Barzani has publicly expressed anxiety that the removal of U.S. air defenses would leave the area more vulnerable.

Numan said last week that the Iraqi government was close to procuring new air defense systems from South Korea, Turkey and the U.S.

He told The Associated Press that the new systems "will be deployed according to carefully devised military plans to ensure the complete protection of Iraqi airspace, including the Kurdistan region."

A crisis is shaking Brazil's Supreme Court. Here's what to know

By ELÉONORE HUGHES Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Brazil's Supreme Court is in the throes of an unprecedented crisis. Sessions are being canceled. Justices are overruling one another's decisions. And suspicions of graft, political bias and police interference loom over several of its members ahead of the country's presidential election in October.

The justices at the heart of the crisis are perceived as being at opposing ends of Brazil's polarized political spectrum. Next month, incumbent Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva is expected to face off with Sen. Flávio Bolsonaro, the son of former President Jair Bolsonaro, in what is likely to be a close election, as it was four years ago.

The court is set to meet Tuesday to discuss whether one of the justices should be investigated for corruption.

Here's what to know.

What's behind the current crisis

The chaos gripping the court stems from the collapse of Banco Master, a mid-sized bank worth up to \$16 billion in assets, which was shut down last November after a sprawling investigation into a fraud scheme involving billions of reais. Several top politicians and members of the judiciary were linked to it.

Justice Andre Mendonca, an appointee of former president Jair Bolsonaro, was in charge of the case at the Supreme Court.

Banco Master's former head Daniel Vercaro was arrested earlier this year. Investigations show he had business dealings with several high-ranking politicians, including Sen. Bolsonaro. Additionally, Justice Alexandre de Moraes — a rival of Mendonca — provided legal advice to Vercaro, and his wife had a 130 million reais (\$23 million) contract to provide legal services to Banco Master, according to documents related to the ongoing investigation.

Meanwhile, investigations into Flávio Bolsonaro's relationship with Vercaro and the banker's \$12 million in payments for a movie on his father's life have been much slower. Sen. Bolsonaro has admitted receiving the payment but denied allegations of wrongdoing.

Some members of Brazil's top court have openly accused Mendonca of selectively releasing parts of the sprawling Banco Master case and purposely slow-walking the release of parts of the investigation that relate to Sen. Bolsonaro to coincide with the upcoming elections.

Mendonca denies the accusations of bias.

Multiple Brazilian media outlets have reported that Mendonca wants de Moraes suspended while the court decides whether he should be investigated for graft. De Moraes has filed a request to have Mendonca investigated by the court and potentially impeached by the Senate for investigating him in an unauthorized proceeding.

Political ramifications go deep

Brazil's next president will appoint at least four new Supreme Court justices, who can serve until they are 75 years old. Some Senate candidates allied with Flávio Bolsonaro have promised to push to impeach members of the country's highest court, while Lula allies are considering term limits.

De Moraes is a hero for many Lula supporters for overseeing the case that led to the conviction of ex-President Bolsonaro for attempting a coup after his 2022 defeat.

Ahead of the 2022 vote, de Moraes used his double role as a high court judge and head of Brazil's electoral court to fight disinformation and protect the integrity of the electoral process as Bolsonaro cast unfounded doubts on Brazil's electronic voting system.

De Moraes' demise, analysts say, could embolden the Bolsonaros to once again question results if they lose. A Bolsonaro appointee, Justice Kassio Nunes Marques, currently chairs Brazil's top electoral court.

At a rally that drew nearly 30,000 people in Sao Paulo for Brazil's Independence Day on Sept. 7, Sen. Bolsonaro directly linked Lula to de Moraes. "Whoever votes for Lula votes for Alexandre de Moraes," Sen. Bolsonaro said, vowing to reshape the court if elected.

"Because it's an extremely polarized campaign, all that is negative for de Moraes is, immediately, positive

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for the Bolsonaro family," said independent political consultant Thomas Traumann, noting that the crisis at the Supreme Court has become a central issue in the presidential campaign.

What the next steps in the crisis are

When the court meets Tuesday, it is expected to discuss whether de Moraes should be investigated.

Chief Justice Luiz Edson Fachin is trying to turn down the political heat and has removed Mendonca from overseeing the Banco Master investigations. Fachin also ordered the unsealing of all documents related to the Banco Master case at the Supreme Court, which were made available on Friday.

'Widow's Bay' breaks Emmys record with 14 wins including best comedy series, 'Pitt' wins best drama

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A "Widow's Bay" wave slammed into the Emmy Awards on Monday night as the Apple TV show set a single-season record for a comedy with 14 wins, including best comedy series and best actor for star Matthew Rhys, who personally took home three trophies.

"The celebrations will be long, varied, and I hope at times wild," Rhys said backstage while holding two of his Emmys.

"The Pitt" won best drama series for the second straight year, and star Noah Wyle repeated as best actor in a drama, but the HBO Max emergency room drama won no other Emmys and underperformed its expectations.

Rhea Seehorn won best actress in a drama for "Pluribus," and Jean Smart won her fifth best actress in a comedy award for the fifth and final season of "Hacks." No actor had won an Emmy every year for a series that lasted more than three seasons until Smart did it Monday.

Every other comedy award went to "Widow's Bay," which unequivocally owned the night and broke the comedy series record set last year by "The Studio" when it won 13.

The 'weird' 'Widow's Bay' sweeps across categories

Along with best actor in a comedy, Rhys won best actor in a limited series for "The Beast in Me," becoming the first man to win two leading actor categories in the same year, and he gets one of the best comedy series trophies as an executive producer for "Widow's Bay."

The first-season series created by Katie Dippold leans hard into both comedy and horror as it tells the story of a New England island community, with Rhys as its mayor, reckoning with a centuries-old curse.

"Thank you, Apple, for letting us take this crazy, creative swing," Dippold said as she accepted the best comedy award. "They truly just let us do this weird show."

Apple TV solidified its status as the owner of the Emmy comedy categories. Between "Widow's Bay," "The Studio" and "Ted Lasso," it has won best comedy series four times in six seasons. The latter two shows were between seasons and not eligible this year.

"Widow's Bay" also won for directing for Hiro Murai and for writing for its creator Dippold, a first-time Emmy winner and first-time nominee who was previously best known for a decade-old viral tweet showing her awkwardly dressed as "The Babadook."

"When I was sitting there in that costume," Dippold said backstage after the show, "I did not think that this moment would happen."

"Widow's Bay" had won eight Emmys in a previous ceremony before sweeping all six of its categories Monday night. Stephen Root won best supporting actor in a comedy series and Kate O'Flynn won best supporting actress.

'The Pitt' and 'Hacks' fail to run up numbers

"The Pitt" was the top drama nominee with 25 and "Hacks" was the top comedy nominee with 24, but neither made much of a splash when it came time to claim trophies.

Smart's was the only win for "Hacks" on Monday night.

"What a ride this has been," an emotional Smart said after getting a standing ovation.

The 75-year-old has won eight Emmys overall in a career that was already more than respectable when

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she landed her defining role of Deborah Vance, a brash stand-up comic pushing back against age, obscurity and sexism in the HBO Max series.

And best drama and best actor were the only wins for "The Pitt," though it had won four at an earlier ceremony.

Wyle won for playing Dr. Michael "Robby" Robinavitch, a role that brought him a major career revival after starring in "ER" in the 1990s.

"This is all I've ever wanted to do, and this is the only club I've ever wanted to join," Wyle said in his acceptance.

Seehorn gets her first Emmy, Janney and Pelphrey beat 'Pitt' competition

Seehorn won her first Emmy for playing the lone central character on Apple TV's "Pluribus."

The 54-year-old had been nominated twice without winning for her breakthrough role on "Better Call Saul," a show from "Breaking Bad" creator Vince Gilligan, who put Seehorn at the center of "Pluribus." Gilligan won his fifth career Emmy for his writing on the show.

Allison Janney won best supporting actress in a drama for "The Diplomat," and Tom Pelphrey won supporting actor in a drama for "Task," both beating several nominees from "The Pitt."

"DTF St. Louis" won best limited series. Stars David Harbour and Linda Cardellini both won for supporting acting at a previous ceremony on Sept. 6 as the Television Academy moved several categories off the main telecast to shorten the show. "DTF St. Louis" won seven Emmys overall.

'Widow's Bay' gets rewarded for its elite cast

"Widow's Bay" brought a combination of younger, well-respected unknowns and widely known and beloved veterans to work on the show.

It was the first Emmy for both O'Flynn and Root.

O'Flynn, a 40-year-old British actor whose previous acclaim came mostly for her work in theater, plays Patricia Moyer, a city worker and social outcast dealing with a demonic darkness on "Widow's Bay."

"This is the role of a lifetime," O'Flynn said from the stage. "This is for all the Patricias out there."

Root, one of the most ubiquitous character actors of the last few decades, beat out Harrison Ford, who many thought would get his first major competitive Hollywood award for his role on "Shrinking."

"Thank you, sir, for all your many years of great, great, great acting," Root said to Ford during his acceptance.

Root, 74, is the oldest person to win the category.

Sally Field, 79, became the oldest woman to win best actress in a limited or anthology series or TV movie for "Remarkably Bright Creatures."

Colbert wins after cancellation again

"The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," taken off the air by CBS, won best variety series. It's one of six Emmys the show has won this year after the show was cancelled for what the network said was economic reasons while many believe it was his criticism of the Trump administration.

"If you like the comedy tonight, my old writers wrote it," Colbert said.

Mariska Hargitay hosted the NBC telecast held at the traditional Emmys home of the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles.

"NBC is celebrating its 100th year, and I have been on 'Law & Order: SVU' for all of them," said Hargitay, a three-time Emmy winner who has starred in the show for 27 seasons, during her opening monologue.

Hargitay closed the show — which came in at a relatively lean three hours with the shortened awards slate — with the famous "Law & Order" gavel sound.

Michael J. Fox, a nominee for his work with Ford on "Shrinking," received the Bob Hope Humanitarian Award.

Tearful tributes to Parton, O'Hara and Reiner

Field paid tribute to her "Steel Magnolias" co-star Dolly Parton, who died last month, in a tribute during the telecast that also included Reba McEntire.

There were also emotional tributes to Catherine O'Hara, who died in March, and Rob Reiner, who was

killed along with his wife, Michele Singer Reiner, in their home in December.

Reiner, who won a posthumous Emmy at an earlier ceremony for best guest actor in a comedy series for his role on "The Bear," was honored by his friend and "Bear" co-star Jamie Lee Curtis.

"He was generous, kind and funny as hell, and a friend to all," Curtis said. "And we all miss Rob and Michele and all those we lost this year."

Carney heads to Europe for high-stakes speech and deeper EU ties as Canada clashes with Trump

By ROB GILLIES Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney is heading to Europe in the middle of a trade war with U.S. President Donald Trump, seeking a deeper relationship with the European Union that could give Canadians greater freedom to work and study there.

Canada will seek an arrangement that would allow Canadians to live and work in Europe without visas as part of a strategic partnership, according to a senior Canadian official familiar with the discussions.

The official said Ottawa is not seeking to replicate the arrangements Norway or Switzerland have with the EU and did not propose "associate membership," a term used in a recent report. Canada instead wants a partnership tailored to its priorities, with investment at its core.

Roughly 70% of Canadian exports go to the United States. Europe is central to Carney's effort to reduce that dependence.

Carney has ruled out EU membership, saying Canada instead wants "a unique alliance" with the bloc.

Canadian government officials have consulted provinces and labor groups but have not settled on what form the relationship should take. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the talks publicly.

The official said the goal is greater Canadian sovereignty, not less. "We're not looking at giving up our rights to Brussels or anything like that," the official said. "It's quite the opposite."

Carney's Trump challenge returns to Europe

Carney will attend European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's State of the Union address Wednesday as a guest of honor before addressing the European Parliament on Thursday.

The trip puts him back on the European stage as relations with Washington reel from tariffs, threats and personal attacks since trade talks collapsed. His Davos speech in January drew a personal rebuke from Trump, and another forceful defense of middle powers could raise the temperature again.

Carney is also carrying to Europe a message that has won praise there but that European governments have been reluctant to follow: Middle powers should be willing to resist economic coercion and walk away from a bad deal.

Canada has retaliated against U.S. tariffs and rejected terms Carney says would weaken its sovereignty. Europe, by contrast, shelved retaliation and accepted a deal leaving most EU exports to the United States facing tariffs of up to 15%.

That choice is striking given the EU's economic weight as the world's largest trading bloc.

At Davos in January, Carney urged middle powers to band together rather than bow to great powers. When countries negotiate alone with a hegemon, he said, "we negotiate from weakness. We accept what is offered."

"This is not sovereignty," Carney said. "It is the performance of sovereignty while accepting subordination."

In a March European Parliament debate, French lawmaker Chloé Ridet said Carney had "said out loud what many Europeans think quietly," while German lawmaker Tobias Cremer urged Europe to "show the same courage as the Canadians have done in this moment of rupture."

Tobias Gehrke of the European Council on Foreign Relations said Europe accepted economic pain in hopes of preserving U.S. support for NATO and Ukraine, but gained neither firm security commitments nor stable ties with Washington.

"European governments will be watching closely to see whether retaliation creates leverage or simply

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produces more escalation and an increasing bill," Gehrke said.

Building a hedge against Washington

Canadian Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne rejected the idea that Canada's push toward Europe is simply an effort to gain leverage over Washington, saying Ottawa intends to keep working with the United States even as it builds stronger partnerships elsewhere.

"It's always about us," Champagne told The Associated Press. "We will still do things with the United States."

But Champagne also said the geopolitical landscape has fundamentally shifted. "The world has changed and America has changed," he said. "And I think the world has taken notice."

Carney's trip follows his investment summit in Toronto, part of a broader push to attract global capital and reduce dependence on the United States.

Canada and the EU already cooperate on trade, defense, energy, technology, and critical minerals. Bilateral trade reached about \$147 billion (127 billion euros) in 2025, making the EU Canada's second-largest trading partner.

Europe moves closer to Canada, too

Underscoring the push for closer ties, the European Parliament said Monday it will open an office in Ottawa, its 10th outside the EU, with a regional mandate extending to the Arctic.

"At a time when the world is becoming more unpredictable, like-minded partners need to work even more closely together," European Parliament President Roberta Metsola said.

Canada this year became the first non-European country to join the EU's 150-billion-euro (\$173-billion) SAFE defense program, giving Canadian companies access to joint procurement. Canada and the EU will hold a summit in Montreal in late October.

Ian Lesser of the German Marshall Fund in Brussels said Trump's tariffs and policies toward NATO and Greenland have accelerated efforts by Canada and Europe to diversify their economic and security ties.

"The sheer unpredictability emanating from Washington has given history a shove," Lesser said. He said many in Brussels still prefer to accommodate Washington or "wait and see" whether November's midterm elections produce a Congress able to constrain Trump.

Carney will also travel to Britain to meet Prime Minister Andy Burnham for the first time. The fellow Everton supporters are expected at Everton's League Cup match against Wolverhampton on Wednesday.

Federal Reserve is expected to raise its benchmark rate, defying Trump's demands

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve is widely expected to lift its short-term interest rate Wednesday for the first time in three years to fight stubbornly high inflation, a move that would put the central bank at odds with President Donald Trump's support for a cut.

An increase in the Fed's rate, currently about 3.6%, isn't guaranteed because Fed Chair Kevin Warsh doesn't provide the signals about next moves that his predecessors did. Still, most analysts and economists expect a hike after a speech two weeks ago at the Fed's annual conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in which Warsh argued that the Fed had not yet achieved its goal of putting inflation in check.

A rate hike would throw another sharp shift into a volatile period for the economy and financial markets. As recently as March, the Fed had forecast it would cut its rate once this year. But with the Iran war flaring up again and causing sharp increases in oil and gas prices, inflation is likely to remain higher than the Fed's 2% target for even longer.

"I don't see any end to the war in Iran right now," Kristin Forbes, an economist at MIT's Sloan School, said. "Given what everyone has been through in the last few years of high inflation, consumers are more sensitive, companies are more sensitive, they raise prices faster ... The risks are much more on more persistent inflation than it falling quickly."

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Surging investment in AI data centers has also been accelerating inflation and contributing to higher longer-term interest rates, though now leading companies are discussing slowing the technology's development.

All eyes are on interest rates ahead of the midterms

The Fed's potential rate hike comes just seven weeks before the midterm elections in which high prices and affordability have taken key roles. Trump has demanded that the Fed cut rates, a move that isn't on the table, and on Sunday the president said, "the United States is so strong we should be paying the lowest interest rate in the world."

Trump repeatedly attacked Warsh's predecessor, Jerome Powell, in harshly personal terms, upending decades of tradition in which presidents treated the Fed as independent.

Kevin Hassett, Trump's top economic adviser, said Sunday on CNN that Trump "100% respects the independence of Kevin Warsh."

Yet at the same time, Hassett suggested in a Fox News interview that the Fed shouldn't hike so close to the midterms.

"I'd be wary of a rate hike ... I think if you want an independent Fed, then one thing the Fed does is it stays out of the way of elections," Hassett said.

Financial markets expect Warsh and the central bank will brush off such warnings. Traders now see a 90% chance the Fed will hike Wednesday, according to futures prices. That figure jumped after Friday's inflation report showed that prices remain stubbornly high and core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy, picked up in August from the previous month.

After that report, and Warsh's tough talk on inflation late last month, most economists argue that Warsh will have to hike rates or risk undermining his credibility with financial markets. Longer-term interest rates, such as those on the 10-year and 30-year Treasury bonds, could spike if he doesn't hike, as they did after a Fed meeting in late July when Warsh failed to convince markets he was willing to lift rates if needed.

"At the end of the day the Chair's repeated stern warnings on inflation intolerance risk institutional credibility absent some action to back it up," Michael Feroli, an economist at JPMorgan Chase, wrote in a preview of the Fed's meeting.

A rate increase could raise other questions

Some members of the Fed's interest-rate setting committee still expect inflation, outside of food and energy, to fade over time and may not feel a rate hike is necessary.

But Warsh has not made that argument. Instead, in his Jackson Hole remarks, he said recent inflation reports "do not tell me that underlying trends have improved," adding that if such improvement wasn't seen soon, "we have work to do."

Ironically, by boosting Fed credibility, a rate hike could hold down longer-term interest rates that consumers pay for things like mortgages and auto loans. Some of the recent spike in mortgage rates has likely reflected concerns among investors that the Fed wasn't committed to fighting inflation. Investors typically demand higher yields to own bonds when inflation is elevated.

Still, if the Fed does increase its rate Wednesday, then Warsh will face a new set of questions: How many hikes will the Fed implement? How effective will they be in reducing inflation when much of it stems from higher oil prices, something the Fed can't control? What will they do if an AI slowdown threatens to slow the economy, which would typically get the central bank to cut rates?

Matthew Luzzetti, chief U.S. economist at Deutsche Bank, said it is rare for the Fed to lift its key rate just once, which is likely to have little impact on the economy, and so multiple hikes are likely.

But how the Fed characterizes possible rate increases on Wednesday could give clues to its next steps, he said. For example, if Warsh suggests the Fed is unwinding the three cuts it made in late 2025 — when it feared that unemployment was rising — that would suggest two more hikes would be needed.

Alternatively, Warsh could portray a hike as an act of "risk management," Luzzetti said, with the Fed expecting inflation to cool but hiking rates to essentially ensure it falls. That could point to possibly just two increases.

Warsh has resisted providing such guidance so far. But Wall Street traders expect three hikes — in September, December, and March — according to futures prices.

Microsoft commits to sweeping AI privacy rules for students. Will other tech giants follow?

By JOCELYN GECKER AP Education Writer

Millions of students every day turn to AI chatbots for help with schoolwork, emotional support and personal advice — often unaware of where their conversations and other personal information end up.

How that data is used — and schools' role in protecting it — is a growing concern for educators, parents and kids as artificial intelligence becomes a ubiquitous part of the school day, embedded in many of the classroom tools students are required to use.

As the school year started, the country's two largest school districts, New York City and Los Angeles, announced they were putting the brakes on student use of AI for one year, as they study how to best incorporate the technology into education.

In response to a growing AI and screentime backlash, Microsoft announced last week it had agreed to adopt guardrails and privacy standards for its AI in schools, as negotiated with the American Federation of Teachers, the country's second-largest teachers union.

The safety provisions in the agreement are meaningful, but the standards will only be effective if all AI companies, especially the tech giants, sign on, said Josh Golin, executive director of online safety nonprofit Fairplay. He said the agreement sidesteps the question of whether AI products even belong in classrooms, or at what age they should be introduced.

"I worry that a high-profile framework like this will be misunderstood and schools will think, 'If they're doing a good job on data privacy and safety, then that means we should be using the tool,'" Golin said.

The AFT said the agreement, which is legally binding and requires third-party audits for compliance, could set an industry standard. Two other leading AI companies, OpenAI and Anthropic, said they also were discussing safety and privacy pacts with the AFT. But Google, the dominant provider of education technology for America's schools, has not said whether it plans to offer similar protections.

Agreement puts limits on using student data for training AI

As part of the wide-ranging agreement, Microsoft says it will not use student or educator data to train AI systems, apart from a narrow exception for data that could help protect students. It says the data it collects cannot be sold, used for advertising or used for product development.

The agreement prohibits any use of AI companions or features "designed to foster emotional attachment or dependency" and to keep students engaged for longer than a learning task requires. It also includes a range of audit and transparency measures that require the company to disclose to families, in plain language, how its tools work.

"This standard sets a high bar for child privacy and AI safety, and we'll extend this agreement to every school district across the country," Brad Smith, Microsoft's vice chair and president, said in a statement. The standards will apply to all schools that Microsoft has contracts with starting Nov. 1, he said.

AFT President Randi Weingarten called the agreement the "first of its kind" and an important step to setting an industry standard in the absence of federal and state legislation on AI in schools.

"We want parents to have control of their kids' education. We want educators to have control of kids' education, not ed tech. And that's what this agreement is," Weingarten said.

She spoke at a joint news conference with Smith at the headquarters of the United Federation of Teachers, the AFT's New York City affiliate. The headquarters is home to AFT's National Academy for AI Instruction for teachers, which launched a year ago backed by \$23 million from Microsoft, OpenAI and Anthropic.

Along with their yearlong AI moratorium, the school systems for New York City and Los Angeles plan extensive audits of their education technology contracts and AI tools, with a focus on data privacy, transparency and accountability. The ban in New York City applies to all elementary and middle school students, while in Los Angeles it extends through high school.

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The teachers union also has courted Google and AI companies. Weingarten said she contacted Google directly to tell them about the agreement before making it public, in hopes the company would become a signatory.

The company has not responded to a request for comment from The Associated Press on whether it plans to offer similar protections.

"Is Google going to embrace this framework? That is a huge question," said Golin, the online safety nonprofit chief. He noted schools also use thousands of AI-driven educational technology products produced by smaller companies.

Google found itself at the center of controversy over AI in schools when it announced in August it had turned on its Gemini chatbot for many K-12 students using Google Classroom, its learning management system. The company says Google Classroom is used by 150 million teachers and students worldwide.

Critics decried Google's move as an escalation of the race between tech giants to make inroads in schools and win over the next generation of AI users. The AI addition to Classroom only affects schools that allow student access to its Gemini app or Gemini Notebook, but it marks a major shift. Until August, Google had only allowed Gemini to be turned on for students 18 or older.

Weingarten said she is also in talks with OpenAI and Anthropic, which both issued public praise for the agreement.

OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT, called it an "important milestone for AI safety and privacy in schools." The company has been working with AFT, it said in a statement, "and we look forward to finalizing our own agreement."

Anthropic, the maker of Claude, said in a statement, "We applaud all efforts to drive responsible AI use in education." The company said it was working with AFT to shape "a gold standard for safety and privacy."

The standards shift the burden on privacy to companies

Experts in data privacy say the new standards could help shape the conversation that schools have with AI providers, whether a school is a Microsoft customer or not.

"What I'm hopeful about is that this takes some of the pressure off individual school districts to negotiate with large tech companies," said Elizabeth Laird, director at the Center for Democracy and Technology. Until now, the negotiating power of schools to secure privacy protections from tech firms often depended on financial clout. "I think this standard makes progress toward not having that type of inequity across school districts."

Laird commended the agreement for going "above and beyond" what is legally required for vendors working with schools. For instance, Microsoft has committed not to use sensitive data that many companies leverage, such as information about gender, race, age, ZIP code that can be used to identify a person even if their name is removed.

But until others sign on, Laird said, the agreement highlights how difficult it is to set AI standards in the absence of legislation. It also emphasizes that the burden of protecting student privacy should fall on tech companies — not on parents, students or schools.

Microsoft's Smith noted that tech companies have been late to accept that.

"We all know there are important discussions and debates all across the country, about when AI should be used in schools, how it should be used, for what purpose," Smith said. "It is our role, even our responsibility, to ensure that AI is provided in a form that teachers and kids and parents can trust."

Tech CEOs call for AI regulation. Trump and Congress are not rushing to act

By STEVEN SLOAN and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The technology industry's increasingly urgent warnings about the potential harm of artificial intelligence are slamming into political intransigence in Washington, offering a fresh test of the federal government's willingness and ability to confront what may become a defining issue of the era.

President Donald Trump is leading the opposition to recent calls by tech leaders seeking greater govern-

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ment oversight, including Anthropic's Dario Amodei, OpenAI's Sam Altman and xAI's Elon Musk.

The president dismissed efforts to limit the technology on Monday as a "conspiracy." Other leading Republicans including Vice President JD Vance have expressed caution. House Speaker Mike Johnson has largely deferred to the White House.

Democrats, meanwhile, are pressing for a more robust response, convening in private on Tuesday in the House to discuss AI. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., is hosting his colleagues for a briefing with experts on Wednesday. Top candidates on the ballot this year such as Sen. Jon Ossoff of Georgia are pressing for sweeping action in Washington. And former President Barack Obama is encouraging those with White House aspirations to develop a "very clear plan" to address AI concerns.

The contrasting responses illustrate a yawning disconnect emerging between a tech sector warning of AI's existential threats to humanity and a federal government often struggling to accomplish basic functions under the weight of intense partisanship and election-year pressure.

"The signals we're receiving from our political leaders are not representing an understanding of the crisis that I think we are in fact in," said Max Stier, the president and chief executive of the nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service. "Delay is going to prove very costly."

There are notable exceptions to the partisan divide. A Washington AI conference on Tuesday will feature speakers including Sanders and Trump ally Steve Bannon. Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., opened an investigation last week into OpenAI for its artificial intelligence system hacking into another AI company on its own.

Congress and the White House have responded to past crises

Congress and the White House have managed to respond swiftly to past crises and the intensifying AI debate is emerging as a new referendum on whether they can do so again.

During Trump's first term, his team worked with Democrats in control of Congress to stabilize the economy as federal agencies worked to produce a vaccine to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. As the economy teetered on collapse in 2007 and 2008, President George W. Bush's Republican administration teamed with congressional Democrats to inject money into the financial system.

But Congress has long been reluctant to regulate the technology industry.

The Biden administration called on lawmakers to develop policies after a 2023 executive order on AI oversight, which Trump rescinded soon after returning to office. As the technology has progressed at a rapid clip, Congress has refrained from imposing rules or funding ways for people to successfully adjust to the potential changes from AI.

A bipartisan working group on artificial intelligence formed by then-Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer released a report in 2024 recommending the U.S. spend at least \$32 billion over the next three years to develop artificial intelligence and implement safeguards around it. But there was little follow up. Similarly, a bipartisan bill on internet safety for children has repeatedly stalled.

"We never do anything until we have a holy heck moment," said Sen. Mark Warner, a Virginia Democrat and former technology executive.

Lawmakers in both parties agree more guardrails are needed, but even narrow attempts at regulation have fallen apart and a certain skepticism has set in.

"Have we gotten election security done?" asked Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla. "Did we balance a budget? Oh, did we pass a budget? See, what have we gotten done? So you think we're going to get AI done?"

Ossoff cast the AI debate as an example of Washington's inability to tackle anything big.

"What fills us with dread is the crushing weakness of our politics against the massive stakes of our times," he said during a Sunday reelection rally in Athens, Georgia.

A renewed sense of urgency for government oversight

There are some signs of renewed urgency.

After the tech leaders called for greater oversight on Saturday, Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said he spoke that night with Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., about a "path forward" on legislation they're working on.

"You don't want to stifle innovation, but I think you also want to make sure that the more advanced

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threats can be mitigated and there's a capability and place to do that," he said.

"I also think," he added, "that there is a way in which Congress can put guardrails around those types of more consequential threats without, in any way, harming our ability to stay ahead in the AI race."

Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., said he plans to offer a so-called kill switch measure on Wednesday that would require developers to have the capacity to shut down their systems if needed. It would need the Senate's full support to advance.

"AI is becoming an issue, particularly in the last few days," he said.

But with a dwindling calendar ahead of the November election, any fast movement on legislation seems unlikely. In the House, Johnson seemed downbeat on the prospect of a legislative response, calling instead for Trump to summon AI leaders for a meeting to resolve concerns.

"The reflex of legislative bodies is to cover things up with red tape and hyper regulation," he said.

Trump emerges as a roadblock

And any legislation that emerges would require Trump's support, which appears unlikely at the moment.

"All I can tell you is my own perspective on this," said Hawley, who has introduced bipartisan legislation requiring federal tracking of AI safety concerns tied to national security, civil liberties and labor protections. "We need to protect working people. We need to protect kids online. We need to protect folks who are threatened by data centers."

"We also need to make sure," he added, "these frontier models are not going to blow up the internet and/or the world."

For veterans of past crises, the congressional inertia is baffling.

"Earth to Washington: You're pushing an open door," Rahm Emanuel, Obama's chief of staff in the wake of the financial crisis and a potential 2028 presidential candidate, said in an interview. "In my entire time of public service, I've never had an industry or a CEO ask for regulation and oversight."

Rep. Don Beyer, a Virginia Democrat who is a leader in the Congressional Artificial Intelligence Caucus, said Congress is "capable" of passing stronger AI rules. He said he thinks there's sufficient support for multiple bills, including a bipartisan measure that would establish guardrails for AI models and another that includes the kill switch provision.

"It's very much a leadership issue," Beyer said as the House is poised to adjourn at the end of the week and not return until after the elections.

Gates Foundation warns AI could widen inequality as foundation pledges \$1B to expand access

By JAMES POLLARD Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Bill Gates is warning technology companies and world leaders that they must act now to ensure artificial intelligence combats social inequities rather than deepening disparities — and his foundation is pledging \$1 billion to improve access.

The Microsoft co-founder made the appeal in the Gates Foundation's annual Goalkeepers report, which tracks progress on the development goals set by the United Nations to improve quality of life by 2030. The donation announced Tuesday will be spread over the next two years for AI-focused efforts to train models on local languages, improve health outcomes, upgrade educational tools and inform small farmers' practices around the world.

And despite the United States' international aid cuts, Gates Foundation CEO Mark Suzman said he would continue pressing Congress and President Donald Trump's administration to lead the way on foreign assistance.

"We haven't given up on the U.S.," Suzman told The Associated Press in an interview. "We will acknowledge it's been a challenging period with the U.S. government on this. But we believe there is still a case to be made."

The long-prepared report arrives as executives at leading AI companies urge others in the industry to slow its fast-moving development. An ex-Anthropic researcher's resignation over concerns that developers

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are not acting responsibly has revived the debate over whether increasingly powerful AI models could escape human control.

Gates shared similar concerns in a post last month on his website. AI will either be "the greatest equalizer" or the "worst source of injustice," he wrote. He acknowledged that the technology will empower people to carry out fraud, disinformation, surveillance, cyberattacks and bioterrorism.

Annual roadmap published at time of heightened anxiety over AI

The Gates Foundation, one of the world's largest global health funders, is focused less on funding safeguards and more so on democratizing what Gates considers to be the technology's benefits. AI is one of several focus areas benefiting from this year's record budget. Gates pledged in last month's blog post that "all of our work" will "take full advantage of AI."

"How will we use this technology to make the world a fairer place and keep it from widening the divide between rich and poor?" he posed. "How will we protect the people who are most vulnerable to the harms caused by artificial intelligence, including those who lose their livelihoods and the sense that they are in control of their future?"

The Gates Foundation views AI as "a potentially transformative tool" for a "world that is in a little bit of crisis," according to Suzman. The foundation projected 2025 to be the first year this century with an increase in child deaths in last year's report. The Trump administration's disruptions to a global AIDS relief program have impeded efforts to prevent and treat the disease in dozens of countries. Meanwhile, the gap between rich and poor nations is growing even wider, according to a recent U.N. report.

But for AI to "help accelerate progress," Suzman said, it must perform well in all local languages — not just English and, to some extent, Mandarin. The foundation announced Tuesday about \$100 million to help build data sets in the languages spoken by underserved communities and reflect their local contexts.

Working with OpenAI, Anthropic and other tech giants on health, agriculture

The foundation is turning to some of the top AI companies to get there. Google.org and Microsoft's AI for Good Lab helped launch an open funding call for projects strengthening the frameworks needed for thousands of underrepresented languages across Africa.

OpenAI committed \$50 million alongside the foundation to train health workers in Rwandan clinics as part of a pilot that Suzman said will soon include other African countries. Anthropic is working with the foundation to accelerate vaccine developments and improve its chatbot's data set of local crops, among other efforts.

Tuesday's announcement promised to bring about \$400 million more for education, such as a tool that helps teachers rework lesson plans around the concepts least understood by their classes; some \$400 million for healthcare, such as a tool that double-checks clinicians' reports for overlooked symptoms; and roughly \$100 million for agriculture, such as an app that offers real-time advice to farmers on weather patterns, pest control and fertilizer usage.

Suzman acknowledged that these totals are a "tiny proportion" of the billions spent by tech giants on their commercial products. He confirmed that the foundation is having additional conversations with the major AI companies about how their technical resources can contribute to these goals and where their leaders should invest the vast individual fortunes they're expected to make.

Gates also noted a "potential bias" in his August blog post: he still has financial ties to the technology industry, where he built a fortune estimated at more than \$100 billion. He committed last year to donating 99% of his remaining wealth to the Gates Foundation. He works alongside Microsoft and other AI companies as the foundation's chair. Still, he emphasizes that his views are not profit-motivated.

Discussions at next week's United Nations gathering

The Goalkeepers report comes ahead of the United Nations General Assembly's high-level meetings next week in New York. U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres has attempted to include developing nations in conversations about AI governance. Guterres, whose term leading the international body will end this year, has said the technology "cannot be governed by a handful of countries or companies."

But U.N. processes "move considerably less rapidly than AI does," according to the International Crisis Group's Richard Gowan, a program director and U.N. watcher. The U.N. also faces questions about its

relevancy as it closes in on the selection of Guterres' successor.

"It isn't clear that the next secretary-general will keep up this focus," Gowan told reporters on Monday.

McConnell returns to the Senate for the first time since his June hospitalization

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky returned to the Senate to vote on Monday for the first time in three months, looking noticeably more frail after he was hospitalized for a June fall in his home.

McConnell's lengthy absence from the Senate generated a flood of criticism and online speculation, as he initially remained quiet for weeks about his condition. The 84-year-old senator eventually disclosed a month later that he had been "briefly unconscious" due to the fall and had also been treated for mild pneumonia in the hospital.

He briefly addressed reporters Monday from a wheelchair outside the Senate chamber, smiling but speaking slowly and with some difficulty. McConnell joked that he wasn't sure how many reporters would be there after dodging so many questions during his almost two decades as leader.

He said he was back in the Senate to work on a pending farm bill and because he has an ongoing interest in NATO and "backing up our good friends who are totally in the fight against the Russians."

Reporters and photographers were told by Senate staff not to take video of his remarks in the second-floor hallway, even though video is often permitted in that area. Still images were allowed.

McConnell, who holds the distinction of being the longest-serving Senate leader, is in his final months of his four decades in office. He is retiring at the end of January after one of the most consequential careers in modern politics.

Republicans have nominated U.S. Rep. Andy Barr to replace him, while Democrats have nominated former state lawmaker Charles Booker. McConnell has said he is determined to finish out his term.

McConnell suggests he's still recovering

In a statement issued before his remarks, McConnell made clear that he may still miss some votes due to his health issues.

He said that he is "still not quite back to 100%, but I've assured Leader (John) Thune that, as I continue with physical therapy on the advice of my doctors, I will do my best to be present for tough votes when our Conference needs me."

"My recovery has been a long and often frustrating process, and the lingering effects of childhood polio haven't made it any easier," McConnell said in the statement.

The senator's extended leave highlighted increasing public concern about the age of lawmakers and their capacity to carry out their duties. Speculation about his condition grew so intense at one point that Kentucky's Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear took the extraordinary step of issuing a public letter asking McConnell to update the public in a "transparent manner."

McConnell's absence was also felt over the summer as Republicans were unable to advance a farm bill out of committee. His return could give GOP leaders a needed vote as they try to advance legislation on cryptocurrency regulation and college sports.

A history of health problems

McConnell had polio in his early childhood and has long acknowledged difficulty as an adult in walking and climbing stairs.

A statement from the Capitol physician that was included with McConnell's July release said that the senator has "experienced several falls through the year" due to his "post-polio condition." The office said his physical therapy was aimed at reducing the risk of him falling again.

"A comprehensive evaluation by a multidisciplinary team determined that he had no fractures, cardiac abnormalities, stroke, tumor, or hemorrhage," the physician's office said.

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McConnell was first elected to the Senate in 1984 and was the Republican leader from 2007 until last year, serving as both majority and minority leader during that period.

Toward the end of his time as leader and in the last two years as a rank and file senator, McConnell's health has visibly declined.

He was hospitalized with a concussion in March 2023 and missed several weeks of work after falling in a Washington hotel. He twice froze up during news conferences after he returned, staring vacantly ahead before colleagues and staff. A year later, he fell and sprained his wrist while walking out of a GOP luncheon.

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Saudi pipeline hit by drones will be out of service for weeks, further restricting oil flow

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — A crucial Saudi oil pipeline that was struck in an attack will be mostly out of service for weeks as the damage is repaired, two regional officials said Monday, as Yemen’s Houthi rebels seized more islands along Red Sea shipping routes in a new blow to Saudi Arabia’s oil exports.

Oil prices gained more than 2% amid growing worries about global petroleum supplies and the effect of the new developments on the ability of the world’s biggest exporter to get its crude to market. The Iran war has forced the kingdom to shift its exports away from the Persian Gulf, since Iranian attacks have stifled shipping through the gulf’s sole exit, the Strait of Hormuz.

So the kingdom has relied on the East-West Pipeline, which runs 1,200 kilometers (745 miles) across the breadth of the country, to move its crude production from Gulf ports to the port of Yanbu on the Red Sea. From there it can be put on tankers for export. But authorities were forced to shut down the pipeline after an attack Thursday that Saudi Arabia blamed on drones from Iranian-backed militias in Iraq.

Repairing the damage, including at a major pumping facility, could take three to five weeks, the officials, who have been briefed on the matter, told The Associated Press. The pipeline may work partially during the repairs, one of the officials said, but they could not say how much oil might get through.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren’t authorized to brief the media.

The pipeline has been moving an average of 2.6 million to 4 million barrels per day since late August — a quantity that will be lost to the market if the pipeline’s flow stops completely, according to an analysis issued Monday by Rystad Energy, a Norway-based research firm. It said the jump in prices for Brent crude, which reached \$109, “is a clear signal that the market is increasingly pricing in a significant loss of supply.”

The Saudi oil company Aramco, which operates the pipeline, didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment. The government-run Center for International Communication, which oversees foreign media in the kingdom, said it was looking into an AP inquiry about how long it will take to repair the pipeline.

Houthi’s capture of islands strengthens hold on a key outlet from the Red Sea

Meanwhile, Yemen’s Iranian-backed Houthi rebels continued to expand their threat to Saudi shipping routes out of the Red Sea by capturing the strategic islands of Greater and Lesser Hanish, government and Houthi officials said Monday.

The islands lie 160 kilometers (100 miles) north of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. The strait is a choke point that connects the Red Sea to the open ocean and Saudi Arabia’s key Asian markets.

The Houthi’s advance also puts them just 20 miles (32 kilometers) from the U.S. military base in the tiny Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti, on the other side of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

For more than a month, the Houthis have been striking Saudi oil infrastructure and shipping in the Red Sea, stepping up pressure on global oil prices and boosting Iran’s leverage in its war with the United States.

The Houthi advances have seemed to come with little resistance from Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces. The rebels deployed on the Hanish islands after hundreds of government-allied forces withdrew

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from the archipelago, according to two government officials and a Houthi official. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to journalists.

Last week, the rebels seized the port city of Mokha and the island of Mayun, inside the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

Government forces are now attempting to rally and fight back. On Sunday, the military said it launched airstrikes on Houthi positions in Mokha, the coastal town of Dhubab and elsewhere in Taiz province.

A rebel spokesperson said the Houthis fired dozens of missiles and drones at the King Khalid Air Base in the southern Saudi city of Khamis Mushait, targeting hangars, radar installations and ammunition depots. The statement on Monday by Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree did not specify when the strikes took place, but the Houthis often take hours or days to claim responsibility for attacks.

Maj. Gen. Turki al-Malki, a Saudi military spokesperson, said the attacks struck civilian areas in Khamis Mushait and other nearby cities, injuring 13 civilians and damaging several houses and vehicles. He did not say whether the air base had been hit.

The attacks narrow Saudi export options

The Iran war gouged Saudi oil production, which was down to 6 million barrels per day in August from nearly 10 million in September the previous year, according to the International Energy Agency, a Paris-based intergovernmental group.

After the war began, the East-West Pipeline carried a large majority of Saudi Arabia's oil exports, according to Rystad Energy. When Houthi attacks in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait started in late July, most of the tankers from the port of Yanbu turned north in the Red Sea toward the Mediterranean, sending their cargo through the Suez Canal or an Egyptian pipeline.

That, however, dramatically increased the time and cost of delivering oil to Saudi Arabia's main clients in Asia. Also, the Houthis turned to targeting Saudi shipping in the northern Red Sea as well.

The pipeline shutdown threatens to turn off the tap for an extended period.

Rystad Energy said that a monthlong closure would represent a "large disruption" that would see crude deliveries take longer and become more expensive. It said "the market could initially manage it," but a longer shutdown would "require a major reallocation of global crude flows."

Thousands of Yemenis are fleeing the fighting

The fighting in Yemen is pushing the impoverished nation back into full-fledged civil war, after a truce that largely maintained quiet since 2022. Even as they advance along the Red Sea, the Houthis have waged an offensive farther inland, particularly in the longtime battleground province of Taiz.

The World Health Organization said more than 500 people were killed in Yemen in the last week alone, up from nearly 200 a week earlier.

The Houthi rebels have made strategic gains in lightning advances, capturing territories previously held by forces of the internationally recognized government. The fighting has also displaced nearly 94,000 people.

"Many of them don't have enough food or water as they had to flee with whatever they could carry. In some areas, whole villages have reportedly emptied," said Khanzad Shah, acting head of Islamic Relief, a charity that operates in the area.

Around 200 schools have been converted to shelters in southwestern Yemen to absorb an influx of families, said Basma Alloush, deputy director of communications at the International Rescue Committee, an aid group.

The fighting threatens to reignite a war that for more than a decade brought disaster to Yemen, killing more than 150,000 people and driving the country to the brink of famine. Since 2014, the Houthis have controlled the north, including the capital, Sanaa, and much of the western heartland of the country where most of the population is located.

The internationally recognized government, backed by an array of disparate militias, controls the south and east, including the key southern port of Aden.

Houthis seize 2 strategic Red Sea islands, and other Mideast developments

By The Associated Press undefined

Yemen's Houthi rebels have seized the strategic islands of Greater and Lesser Hanish in the southern Red Sea, bolstering the Iran-backed rebels' ability to control a key maritime shipping route.

Recent fighting between the Iran-backed rebels and government forces in Yemen has killed hundreds of people and displaced tens of thousands.

Meanwhile, repairs to a crucial Saudi Arabian oil pipeline that was struck in an attack last week could last three to five weeks, putting it mostly out of service, two regional officials said.

Here's a look at the latest news in the Middle East. Full coverage can be found [here](#).

Houthis gain ground as oil prices face more pressure

Houthi officials said Monday that rebels had taken over the two islands just as Saudi-backed government forces tried to claw back territory from the rebels' swift advances around the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a crucial shipping alternative to the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz — through which a fifth of the world's traded oil and gas transits in peacetime — in the opening days of the war. The Saudis have since used the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which leads out of the Red Sea, for crude oil exports.

The Houthis' latest takeover, following the seizure of the Red Sea port of Mokha and a strategic island last week, puts more pressure on Saudi shipments and, in turn, global oil supplies and prices.

This could give Iran additional leverage in its war with the United States.

Yemenis flee homes as rebels press on

Nearly 94,000 people have fled their homes in Yemen since fighting between Iran-backed Houthi rebels and government forces escalated this month, the International Organization for Migration said Monday.

The worst-hit areas are Taiz and Lahj, where 48,000 have been displaced, the U.N. agency said, adding that more than 2,000 people have fled across the sea into Djibouti.

Around 200 schools have been converted to shelters in southwestern Yemen to absorb an influx of families, the International Rescue Committee, an aid group, said.

Fears are mounting that Yemen is inching closer to a return to a civil war that killed 150,000 before a 2022 ceasefire. The World Health Organization said more than 500 people were killed in a weeklong period ending Saturday, a sharp increase.

Oil might only partially move through damaged line

Saudi Arabia relies on the East-West Pipeline to move crude from Gulf ports to ports on its western, Red Sea coast. From there it can be put on tankers for export.

Two officials briefed on the matter said repairing damage from an attack on Sept. 10 could take weeks, including at a major pumping facility.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to brief the media. One said the line may work partially while teams carry out the repairs.

China, a major Middle East oil importer, called Houthi attacks on Saudi energy infrastructure "unacceptable" and said that it was "deeply concerned" about further escalations by the rebels.

— By Samy Magdy in Cairo

Iran says Saudi Arabia behind postponed meeting on Hormuz

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said Monday that Saudi Arabia had "demanded" that a meeting bringing together Iran with other regional countries to discuss the Strait of Hormuz be scrapped "for the time being."

Baghaei called the meeting, which was to be hosted by Oman, a "proper opportunity" to restore security in the region.

The spokesperson said that an agreement between Iran and Oman on the Strait of Hormuz has been finalized and it will be announced later.

Saudi Arabia had submitted amendments to the agreement, citing concerns that it could have lasting

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implications for the Strait of Hormuz, negatively impacting other Gulf Cooperation Council countries, according to a Gulf official familiar with the matter who wasn't authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Iran condemns Austria's visa refusal for its nuclear chief

Iran denounced on Monday the refusal by Austria to issue visas to the Iranian nuclear chief and other delegation members for the International Atomic Energy Agency's general conference in Vienna, calling the decision "completely unjustified."

Baghaei said that Tehran summoned the Austrian chargé d'affaires, saying Austria was obligated as the host country to issue the visas.

Baghaei accused Western countries of denying Iran an opportunity to defend itself and blamed the U.S. for pressuring Austria to deny the visas.

The refusal is part of U.N. sanctions on Iran, reinstated last year, that include a travel ban on Iranian officials.

Iran fails to live up to nuclear obligations, US official says

U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright on Monday criticized Iran's failure to cooperate with the U.N. nuclear watchdog.

Wright was particularly critical of Tehran's refusal to grant U.N. inspectors access to Iran's nuclear sites affected by the war. He said that Iran had "ample time to address its egregious negligence" toward its obligations "but that time is up."

Speaking at the IAEA general conference in Vienna, Wright said that giving Iran more time "only delays overdue accountability."

US-Saudi deal contains 'rigorous' clauses to prevent proliferation

Wright said that additional safeguards contained in a U.S.-Saudi nuclear accord include "absolutely rigorous" terms against proliferation. He told the IAEA general conference that the U.N. nuclear agency "was part of it all along."

The U.S.-Saudi accord, signed in July, could potentially provide the kingdom the capability to enrich uranium for its civilian nuclear program.

Wright was responding to a question from the media about why the U.S. requested Iran to sign an Additional Protocol and not Saudi Arabia. The Additional Protocol is an agreement between the IAEA and a country that grants agency inspectors increased access to nuclear sites.

Israeli strikes in Gaza kill 2

Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip on Monday killed two people and wounded several others, hospital officials and the health ministry said.

One person was killed in Gaza City, while the other was killed when a strike hit tents in Muwasi, according to Shifa and Nasser hospitals.

The strikes also wounded people in Zawaida in central Gaza and Khan Younis in southern Gaza, the health ministry said. The Israeli military confirmed the strikes and said they targeted militants.

The heaviest fighting between Israel and Hamas has subsided since a ceasefire last October, but Israeli fire has killed more than 1,360 Palestinians in Gaza, according to health officials in the territory.

Israel accused of dismantling 'Palestinian existence' in West Bank

The B'Tselem human rights group said Monday Israel is carrying out a systematic and accelerated project aimed at "dismantling the foundations of Palestinian existence" in the occupied West Bank.

The group said in a new report that Israeli actions against Palestinians in the West Bank by settlers and the military are designed to undermine Palestinian collective life "while entrenching a permanent system of Jewish supremacy" across the territory.

Settler violence has surged under the ultranationalist government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Rights groups say the military frequently turns a blind eye to the violence, and that when it intervenes it often focuses on protecting the settlers.

The B'Tselem report also says that Israeli actions rely heavily on open cooperation between state au-

thorities and armed settlers who attack Palestinian communities, while the military either fails to prevent the violence or sometimes participates in it.

US slaps Russian-owned bank with full sanctions as it attempts to cut off Iran's financial network

The U.S. Treasury Department on Monday issued full sanctions on VTB Bank — one of Russia's largest financial institutions — as part of its efforts to target Iran's remaining financial lifelines.

But the impact of the sanctions remains unclear as the Biden administration had also issued sweeping sanctions against the state-owned bank shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Under Trump, U.S. officials are now accusing the institution of helping the Islamic Republic evade sanctions by establishing correspondent relationships with sanctioned Iranian banks. For years, VTB Bank has been expanding its global presence, including opening branches in China, India and Iran.

Trump calls AI risks a 'hoax,' says there is a 'SICK conspiracy' against AI and data centers

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Monday lashed out against concerns about rogue artificial intelligence, claiming that any efforts to limit the technology are part of a "SICK conspiracy."

"AI taking over the World, destroying Humanity, and all other things bad, is a HOAX," Trump posted on social media, later suggesting that those calling for guardrails on the technology had also warned about climate change, which he also called a hoax.

The president was pushing back against calls by tech leaders such as Anthropic's Dario Amodei, OpenAI's Sam Altman and SpaceX's Elon Musk to have greater government oversight of AI. The rapidly evolving technology has become a source of controversy after a series of hacks in recent months that showed AI agents can conspire to deceive humans.

Many tech leaders generally say their goal is to develop the technology in ways that promote safety, address legal liability, feed economic growth, advance science and preserve national security. But they have also expressed concerns that an AI unshackled from human control could be destructive — a claim Trump rejected in a series of heated social media posts as he claimed to be the "Hoax Buster."

Trump maintained that his presence in the Oval Office should assuage any fears about AI.

"The only control or 'guardrails' that AI needs is a STRONG AND SMART (High IQ!) PRESIDENT, and the U.S.A. has that, in spades!" Trump posted.

Trump specifically said his administration has already stopped the AI company Anthropic "from doing bad, or potentially bad" things. Anthropic has endured an uncomfortable relationship with the Trump administration, with the Pentagon trying to label the company a security risk and the government issuing a temporary ban of one of its more advanced models.

The president also criticized the business acumen of the tech CEOs seeking government oversight, posting on social media, "when, in the History of Business, did anyone see the Leaders of an Industry call for Regulation that, if strongly implemented, will drive them into oblivion and bankruptcy?"

Trump's refusal to regulate comes as AI execs warn of threats

Amodei, the Anthropic CEO, published a 3,800-word essay Saturday that called for slower development of AI. Microsoft on Monday published its own code of conduct to ensure that humans control AI. The actions come after a series of warnings by AI experts about the technologies' capabilities and the July 2026 cyberattack by OpenAI models on the AI company Hugging Face.

Amodei cited "AI's growing ability to build the next generation of AI" and the cyberattack by the swarm of OpenAI agents as reasons to slow the pace of development.

"Given the accelerating rate of AI capability development, it's my worry that in 6–12 months such a swarm could be capable of taking over the entire internet," Amodei wrote, adding that the damages could be in the hundreds of billions of dollars or more "without the necessary guardrails."

Altman of OpenAI seconded that perspective in a weekend post on social media.

"Pacing will be well worth this cost; no amount of American competitive pressure should justify reckless-

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ness, or let capabilities get ahead of alignment and monitoring," Altman said. "Where we will need the help of our government is for international coordination."

Trump and Altman did meet last week on the sidelines of the Republican midterm convention in Dallas, according to a person familiar who insisted on anonymity to discuss a private meeting. The person stressed that Altman regularly talks with lawmakers in both parties.

Trump does have some support from Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang, who has described the risks of AI as overblown. The president phoned the co-founder of the chipmaker on Monday during an interview Huang was having for a podcast. Huang put the president on speaker and they agreed there was excessive alarmism about AI, according to social media posts and videos.

Trump sees AI regulation as helping China

The president has opposed such efforts to constrain AI and claims that doing so could cause China to eclipse America on the technology.

"There is a SICK conspiracy going on against AI and Data Centers, and the only one that is happy about it is China," Trump said.

The president has long resisted efforts for greater government oversight of AI, embracing his philosophy going back to 2016 of "I alone can fix it." He returned to the White House last year by revoking a Biden administration executive order on AI oversight and only provided a fuller order of his own more than 16 months later this past June.

The prospect of slower AI buildout led stocks to slip in Monday morning trading, as demand for advanced computer chips and construction materials for data centers could fall. But Trump's frustration comes as AI has also emerged as a political liability ahead of November's midterm elections, with many voters opposing the construction of additional data centers and expressing worries that AI could lead to job losses and undermine the education of children.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., told reporters Monday that he expects Trump will have the AI companies potentially meet at the White House this week or next week, saying that the sit-down has yet to be scheduled.

"There will be a deliberate discussion about the responsibility of the companies to maintain safety, and what role, if any, the government has to play in that," said Johnson, adding that legislatures can tend to respond problematically with "red tape and hyper regulation" and that the loss of competitive edge on AI would be a national security concern.

Trump's handling of AI is a midterm issue

Many Democratic lawmakers and candidates see the need to regulate AI, heeding not just the issues raised by companies but the risks of job losses, rising inequality and higher electricity bills. Trump's refusal to address the risks has given them a political opening going into the November midterm elections.

"It's very real, despite what Donald Trump has to say," House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York said at the Capitol. "We need to act now."

Rahm Emanuel, the former Chicago mayor, Democratic congressman and White House chief of staff, said in a social media post that Amodei's essay was "an admission that we're driving down a dark, winding road on wet pavement with the headlights off. And where's President Trump? Looks like he nodded off again."

But the administration has repeatedly sought to minimize the risks being highlighted by AI companies.

Trump in a separate Monday social media post said the concerns about AI are only because "the United States is leading, by a lot, every other country. Don't kill the Golden Goose!" The AI buildout has accounted for a large share of the economic growth during Trump's second term and the administration has bet that the technology will fuel additional productivity gains.

Vice President JD Vance told reporters Monday morning about AI, "I don't think Americans should be scared of anything."

Vance, speaking as he prepared to fly to Kansas for a midterm election campaign event, said the Trump administration is concerned about AI but wants to make sure it is regulating the technology smartly, warning that the U.S. is in an AI arms race against China.

"Personally, I feel a little bit weird about the fact that you have so many frontier AI tech companies kind of coming to the government and begging the government to regulate them. It feels a little bit to me like a bit of a Trojan horse," Vance said. "So, I think we just have to be careful about this."

A Vermont man is on trial for shooting 3 Palestinian students. He claimed the CIA told him to do it

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

Jason Eaton insisted he was acting on orders from the CIA and Mossad when he shot three Palestinian college students who were walking past his home a few days after Thanksgiving. He said the U.S. and Israeli intelligence agencies transmitted the messages to him via FM radio and that God was commanding him to protect his Jewish neighbors.

Eaton's claims were at the heart of his insanity defense as he went on trial Monday on attempted murder charges in a case that shook Burlington, Vermont, and reverberated in the West Bank, where the three wounded men grew up and became friends as schoolmates in Ramallah before moving to the U.S. for college.

The November 2023 shooting, weeks after the start of the Israel-Hamas war, spawned calls for a hate crime investigation. But no hate crime charges were filed as questions persisted about whether anti-Palestinian animus, an altered mental state or something else had compelled Eaton to open fire on Hisham Awartani, Tahseen Aliahmad and Kinnan Abdalhamid, who were all 20 at the time.

The men testified one after another as Eaton, now 51, watched stoically from the defense table in a Burlington courtroom. He has pleaded not guilty but doesn't dispute that he was the shooter. If convicted, he faces up to life in prison. If found not guilty by reason of insanity, he could be ordered to undergo mental health treatment.

Defense lawyer Joshua O'Hara, previewing testimony from a defense psychiatrist, told jurors in an opening statement that Eaton was suffering from a delusional, psychotic disorder after losing his job at a credit union two weeks before the shooting.

While listening to a local NPR affiliate, Eaton believed he was hearing messages that he attributed to the CIA, O'Hara said. At first, the messages were encouraging and validating, the lawyer said, but subsequent messages turned dark, insisting that Eaton "has to go out and shoot somebody."

Prosecutor Sally Adams told jurors that a state psychiatrist who is slated to testify concluded that Eaton did not have a mental disease or defect. Evidence will show he intended to kill the men, was not legally justified in shooting them, and does not meet the test of legal insanity, Adams said.

Authorities found three shotguns in Eaton's apartment and a Ruger .380-caliber handgun that crime lab testing concluded was the gun used in the shooting, Adams said. Eaton had purchased the gun seven months earlier from a Vermont gun store.

"If the defense tries to focus on the story that Mr. Eaton tells about why he intended to kill these three young men, that story is only part of the whole picture," said Adams, the chief administrative deputy at the Chittenden County State's Attorney's Office.

Awartani, Aliahmad and Abdalhamid, all of whom are now 23, told jurors of their holiday weekend visit to Awartani's grandmother's house, a trip to a bowling alley to celebrate his twin cousins' birthday, and the walk they took near the University of Vermont campus after dusk that ended in bloodshed.

Awartani, who was studying at Brown University in Rhode Island at the time, said they were smoking cigarettes and speaking a mix of English and Arabic. Two of them said they were wearing traditional Palestinian scarves known as keffiyehs. Awartani said he first noticed Eaton standing on a porch as they approached the apartment house where he lived.

Within seconds, Awartani said, Eaton was off the porch and walking toward them. His face was expressionless and he didn't say anything. As Eaton got to about five to 10 feet (1.5 to 3 meters) away, "he pulled out a handgun and started shooting at us," said Awartani, who was paralyzed from the waist down in the shooting and now uses a wheelchair.

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Jacob Pyne, who lived in a different apartment in the same house as Eaton, testified that he heard four to six gunshots, followed by footsteps going up the stairs of the apartment house. He said he ran outside and heard two men speaking, one of whom was more vocal and yelling, "I've been shot, help me." He then brought the men blankets and called 911.

Abdalhamid, a student at Haverford College near Philadelphia, said he fled and hid behind another home after seeing Aliahmad fall to the ground. He said he only realized later when he sat down that he had also been wounded. Awartani was shot in the chest and the bullet ricocheted off his scapula, causing paraplegia in his spinal cord. Aliahmad, who was a student at Trinity College in Connecticut, was struck in the collarbone, and Abdalhamid was shot in the right buttock.

O'Hara, the supervising attorney at the Chittenden County Public Defender Office, told jurors that Eaton was confused by the messages he said he was receiving, and became convinced that the CIA and Mossad were enlisting him into "overwatch duty" to protect a Jewish family living across the street.

"These were delusions," O'Hara said. "He believed in the moment that he was doing something that was right. He had been commanded to do this. And that he did not have the ability to appreciate the wrongfulness of his conduct in the moment because he believed he'd been instructed to do this by a government agency or God."

Ex-CIA Director John Brennan issued subpoena in Trump "grand conspiracy" investigation, lawyer says

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former CIA Director John Brennan has been subpoenaed to testify before a Florida grand jury in a Justice Department investigation into whether former law enforcement and intelligence officials conspired against President Donald Trump, and is the target of a separate inquiry into whether he made false statements before Congress, one of his lawyers said Monday.

Ken Wainstein, an attorney for Brennan, disclosed the existence of the subpoena as he argued for a court order requiring the Justice Department to preserve all records from the investigations. He said those documents would be a "fertile source" of information about the government's determination to indict Brennan, an outspoken Trump critic, and would be needed for the defense to challenge any potential prosecution of the ex-CIA chief as unconstitutionally vindictive and selective.

"The reality is there's no precedent for this situation," Wainstein said in acknowledging the extraordinarily unusual nature of his preservation request. "I've spent decades in and around the Justice Department. I've never even conceived of a situation like this" in which the Justice Department is "blatantly trying to frame somebody for a crime that is complete fiction."

In pressing his case to U.S. District Judge Jia Cobb, he cited what he said was "judge-shopping" by the Justice Department, directives by Trump to pursue perceived adversaries like Brennan and the replacement or resignations of prosecutors said to have raised internal doubts or concerns.

"There's a lot of really underhanded stuff going on" in these investigations, Wainstein said.

The subpoena is related to a "far-reaching" investigation

The subpoena was presented last Thursday and requires Brennan to appear Oct. 15 before a grand jury in Fort Pierce, Florida. That's the home court of a Trump-appointed judge named Aileen Cannon, who in 2024 dismissed a Justice Department prosecution charging Trump with illegally retaining classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

Wainstein said he was told that the subpoena relates to a "far-reaching" criminal probe examining a loosely defined theory that the government officials who have investigated Trump over the last decade, including over Russia election interference in 2016 and his more recent retention of top-secret records at Mar-a-Lago, conspired to deprive Trump of his civil rights. The subpoena to Brennan is among a flurry that have been recently issued.

Wainstein said he was informed by a prosecutor that Brennan remains a target in an investigation into whether he lied to Congress about the creation of a U.S. intelligence community assessment detailing

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Russian interference on Trump's behalf in the 2016 election. Brennan and his lawyers have called that allegation false. Subpoenas demanding testimony before a grand jury in the false statements probe were issued last spring, then abruptly withdrawn in favor of voluntary interviews.

He said that while he could not easily explain what crime the Justice Department could credibly accuse Brennan of committing, it was hardly a speculative or premature concern to believe his client was at substantial risk of being indicted given the Trump administration's efforts to target him.

"The message is very clear to the personnel at DOJ about what needs to happen," he said.

The prosecutor who'd been leading the probe has resigned

The subpoena was delivered on the same day that Joe diGenova, the prosecutor who had been leading what is casually known as the "grand conspiracy" investigation, abruptly resigned amid what a person familiar with the matter has described as frustration from the Justice Department and White House over the pace and management of the probe.

In an interview with The New York Post, diGenova responded to criticism of his management of the investigation by saying, "If you want indictments where there's no evidence, you have an ethical problem."

When reached by The Associated Press, diGenova said the comments were taken out of context, adding: "There's plenty of evidence in all of these cases to prove the theories of prosecution. It just takes time to get there, and some people want to get there a little faster than others — and you can't do that."

The Justice Department has not publicly announced a replacement for diGenova. The member of the investigative team with whom Wainstein spoke was Kurt Olsen, a lawyer who unsuccessfully pushed the Justice Department in 2020 to back Trump's false claims that the 2020 election had been stolen from him.

Brennan's defense team said among the communications they were seeking, and would use in mounting a vindictive prosecution argument, are any messages showing Trump or White House officials directing the Justice Department to pursue their client. They said the preservation order they sought was especially necessary because of what they described as the Trump administration's pattern of failing to preserve records.

The Justice Department called the request premature and speculative and said Brennan had no right to demand the preservation since he was not a criminal defendant and it was not clear that he would ever be charged.

Cobb, a federal judge in Washington, did not immediately rule on Brennan's request.

What the closure of Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline could mean for oil flows

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS and MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writers

CHICAGO (AP) — Saudi Arabia's closure of a major oil pipeline after a recent attack is raising fears that global energy markets in crisis because of the war with Iran could face even starker shortages, pushing prices higher for fuel and other essentials.

The largest oil producer in the Middle East closed its East-West pipeline on Friday after the attack, which it blamed on drones from Iranian-backed militias in Iraq. Two regional officials told The Associated Press that repairs could take three to five weeks.

The pipeline is crucial to getting some crude out of the Middle East by shipping it to the Red Sea rather than through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway through which roughly a fifth of the world's oil supply passed before the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran in February.

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels have seized islands along key Red Sea shipping routes, further threatening Saudi exports. And while several limited alternatives remain, including trickles of tanker traffic in Hormuz, experts warn more supply shocks and higher prices straining households could pile up. Brent crude, the international standard, traded at more than \$105 a barrel Monday.

Here's what we know:

What is the East-West pipeline?

Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline stretches some 1,200 kilometers (746 miles) across the desert nation

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— carrying oil from a processing facility near the Persian Gulf westward to the Red Sea. There, crude is typically loaded onto tankers that head north towards Europe via the Suez Canal or south through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, on the way to Asia.

The pipeline was built in the 1980s amid fears that Tehran would disrupt shipping through Hormuz during the Iran-Iraq war. And for the first six months of the current war, it was crucial to keeping at least some oil flowing out of the Middle East while most tanker traffic in Hormuz remained at a standstill.

Rystad Energy said Monday that an average 2.6 million to 4 million barrels of oil a day moved through the pipeline and out of the Red Sea port of Yanbu since late August — a volume it said is now at risk of “disappearing from the market.”

Four million barrels per day is about 4% of the global oil supply, according to the International Energy Agency. Saudi Arabia produced nearly 10 million barrels of oil a day in September 2025, but was down to 6 million barrels per day in August, the IEA said.

Janiv Shah, vice president of oil markets for Rystad Energy, noted the recent jump in Brent prices proves the market is already responding to “a significant loss of supply.” Saudi inventories could sustain exports in the coming days, but that could “change quickly,” Shah added.

Where oil flows from the Middle East stand now

The Strait of Hormuz is still top of mind. Before the war, about 20 million barrels passed through Hormuz each day.

Some tankers are again traversing the strait, but traffic is well below what it once was. Maritime data company Lloyd's List Intelligence counted 90 transits in the first week of September. Before the war, about 130 ships passed through daily.

The Houthis have also tightened their hold on the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a vital passage for the southern Red Sea. Analysts at Melius Research estimated that about 3 million barrels of oil a day were moving through Bab el-Mandeb in early September, but noted Monday that “it’s likely zero now.”

Because of Houthi attacks, most Saudi traffic from Yanbu went north to the Mediterranean, either via the Suez Canal or Egypt’s SUMED pipeline. But the Houthis have also begun targeting Saudi shipping in the north.

Salvatore Mercogliano, a professor of maritime history at Campbell University in North Carolina, noted that at least Hormuz is still on the table.

“If this (East-West pipeline) was the only method for Saudi Arabia to get their oil out it would be absolutely cataclysmic,” he said. “But since the Hormuz route has opened back up — not completely but opened up some — it’s not the death knell for Saudi Arabia. They’re getting oil out.”

Prices keep climbing

Supply squeezes have led to soaring prices worldwide. And analysts warn that the latest disruptions could bring even more pain for consumers in the coming weeks and months.

One of the most immediate consequences is the cost of fuel and household energy bills. Countries in Asia and Africa, which rely more heavily on imports from the Middle East, have experienced some of the starkest shocks.

In Nigeria, for example, diesel prices are now 92% higher than they were in late February, and gasoline prices are up nearly 61%, according to energy tracker Global Petrol Prices. Countries including Indonesia (diesel up 87% and gas up 38%) and Lebanon (diesel up 80% and gas up 46%) have also seen steep spikes.

In the U.S., the price per gallon of regular gasoline was nearly \$4.32 on average Monday, up almost 45% from the \$2.98 seen before the war, according to motor club AAA. Diesel hit another all-time high (without accounting for inflation) of \$6.23 per gallon on average Monday, up nearly 66% from the start of the war.

The cost of diesel, in particular, makes its way into other goods because the fuel is used for long-haul trucks and other delivery networks, as well as farm equipment.

“An inflationary spillover is likely,” warned Melius Research analysts on Monday, pointing to the war’s squeeze on essentials like fertilizer as well as energy sources. “The diesel crunch is also coming ahead of the U.S. harvesting and heating season.”

Man pleads not guilty in the hanging death of a Mississippi woman

By SOPHIE BATES Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — A man charged with murder in the hanging death of a Black woman in Mississippi pleaded not guilty Monday during his first court appearance.

The body of Tasia Fortune, 29, was found hanging from a tree behind an abandoned home in Jackson, the state capital, on Aug. 3.

On Friday, police arrested 51-year-old Jarques Ratliff on a murder charge after the state medical examiner deemed her death a homicide. Ratliff is also Black.

During Monday's brief hearing in Municipal Court, a judge denied bond for Ratliff, who told the court he's not guilty. Ratliff's attorney at the hearing left the courthouse without speaking to reporters.

The case has attracted widespread attention because the manner of Fortune's death recalled lynchings in the Southern state, which has a tumultuous civil rights history stained by episodes of racial violence.

Police and prosecutors haven't given a suspected motive or said whether they think race played any role.

Police Chief RaShall Brackney said Friday that Ratliff, 51, had an "association" with Fortune, but she didn't elaborate. The chief also said additional arrests are expected.

Prosecutors on Monday offered few new details in court, though they said Fortune had been hanged with a "black cable cord" and that Ratliff had tried to hide from officers in a vehicle the day of his arrest.

Brackney and other police officials who attended Ratliff's hearing Monday declined to comment afterward.

A Kentucky native, Fortune had a Black father and a white mother, though she identified as Black, said Christy Spivey, the dead woman's mother. Fortune had been living in Jackson for about 10 years, according to relatives. Fortune had four children, Spivey said, adding she rarely saw two of her grandchildren.

Spivey wasn't sure where Fortune was living when she died, but she said her daughter had struggled with homelessness in recent years. She said Fortune had talked recently about starting a cleaning business and was trying to get her life in order.

Two other Mississippi hanging deaths over the past year — those of a Black student at Delta State University and a homeless white man in Vicksburg — also drew widespread attention. Both of those deaths were deemed to be suicides.

Bob Mackie, designer to the stars who dressed Cher and Marilyn and defined '70s glamour, dies at 87

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Bob Mackie, the fashion designer whose visually provocative Hollywood style defined glamour for the 1970s — including putting Carol Burnett in some of her kookiest getups and Cher in her raciest ones — died Monday. He was 87.

"He lived his 87 years to the fullest, fulfilling his dream of being a Fashion and Costume Designer, which is all he ever wanted to do," read a statement on his social media accounts. Mackie died in Palm Springs, California, from pneumonia, his publicist said.

Dubbed the "Designer to the Stars," Mackie won nine Emmy Awards, a Tony Award and was nominated for three Oscars, including one for Barbra Streisand's "Funny Lady," in which she wore a sheer batwing gown. He was inducted into the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences' Hall of Fame in 2002.

He designed gowns for Madonna, Streisand, Sharon Stone, Diana Ross and Julia Louis-Dreyfus, and concert costumes for Pink. When Marilyn Monroe delivered a breathy, seductive take on "Happy Birthday" at a fundraiser for President John F. Kennedy and the Democratic National Committee, she did it in a sheer, beaded gown that Mackie dreamed up in a sketch.

Bob Mackie's style influences Miley Cyrus and Taylor Swift

His influence can be seen in the styles of Kendall Jenner and Bella Hadid. His archival pieces are worn today by the likes of Anya Taylor-Joy, Miley Cyrus and Zendaya, the latter who wore a Mackie gown to honor Cher at the 2024 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony. When Taylor Swift wanted to look like

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a showgirl on the cover of her 2025 album "The Life of a Showgirl," she turned to some Mackie originals.

Sequins and embellishment were natural tools — other nicknames were the Sultan of Sequins, the Rajah of Rhinestones and the Guru of Glitter — but he had a simple motto: "You don't try to change anybody, you just try to make them look better than ever," he told The Associated Press in 2018.

Tributes came from fellow designers and those lucky enough to wear his outfits. Actor Kristin Chenoweth called him a "legend" and designer Isaac Mizrahi wrote, simply, "heartbroken." Actor Alyssa Milano called him "one of the best that ever was."

On Broadway, Mackie dressed the casts of "On the Town" in 1971 and "Moon Over Buffalo" in 1995. He also created costumes for Burnett in the revue "Putting It Together," Debbie Reynolds in "Debbie" in 1976, Liza Minnelli in "Minnelli on Minnelli" in 1999 and, most recently, the cast of "The Cher Show," winning his Tony Award.

Mackie was a Southern California native and embraced the idea of Hollywood movie glamour as a young child, inspired by Technicolor musicals. He would dream elaborate costumes for his mother and sister and sketch them, and he was active in costume and set design of his high school plays. He went to Pasadena City College to study advertising and illustration, and then costume design at LA's Chouinard Art Institute.

He also grew up a fan of all the variety-show and pop stars of the 1950s and '60s and especially their glitzy wardrobes. He went to work for costume designer Edith Head, then got the gig for "The Carol Burnett Show."

Bob Mackie's close relationships with Cher and Carol Burnett

He and Burnett had a close friendship and collaborated on memorable characters such as Nora Desmond, Eunice and her take on Scarlett O'Hara in "Gone With the Wind" — called Starlet O'Hara — wearing her green curtain dress on its rods. "I love doing funny things," Mackie said in a 1999 interview with the AP. "One week I'd have to make Carol an unattractive postal worker, and who knows what I'd have to do the next." (Starlet's dress is now part of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.)

Mackie's TV work continued on "The Sonny and Cher Show," after Cher had guest-starred on Burnett's show and took a liking to him. He had said that her Laverne character, with her leopard-print jumpsuit and dangling earrings, was one of his favorites.

He and Cher took a much sexier turn when she moved to movies and was invited to the Academy Awards. All those beaded, belly-baring numbers she'd wear on the stuffy red carpets came from Mackie.

Mackie attended the 1974 Met Gala with Cher on his arm dressed in what is perhaps one of the most famous so-called naked dresses of all time: a sheer beaded gown with white feathered sleeves and a white feathered skirt. She and the dress ended up on the cover of Time magazine.

Looks such as the 1986 beaded spiderweb — worn with complementary Mohawk — and the barely-there gown she wore for her best actress win in 1988 turned heads and set tongues wagging at the time.

"The outfits are sometimes mistaken for fashion, but they're costumes like for a character in a play," Mackie told the AP in 1999. "I want people to have fun. I want people to say 'Wasn't that interesting?' or 'Wasn't that wild?'"

Bob Mackie had mixed feelings on the naked dresses of today

Mackie had some retail success in the 1980s and '90s, launching a ready-to-wear line in 1982 that would ultimately land on the runway at New York Fashion Week, and he was an early partner of QVC.

Naked dresses only got more popular but Mackie later in life was unimpressed. "You watch awards shows and say, 'Oh, cover up! Put it away! Honey, I don't need to see all of that!' It gets to be so vulgar, you don't even want to look at it anymore," he told The Hollywood Reporter in 2024. "I was so bored watching The Met Ball — everyone exposing everything, the same look-alike dress — I shut it off. If you've seen one Kardashian, you've seen them all. And we have seen all of them."

Mackie also created dozens of different Barbie dolls for Mattel, with a wide variety of face sculpts, body types and storylines. He is credited as the first designer to create a complete doll. One was Lady Dracula Cher, with little baby fangs and her box resembling a coffin.

The documentary "Bob Mackie: Naked Illusion" debuted in 2024. A Mackie dress Cher wore in 1975 was

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auctioned off in 2024 for \$101,600, 25 times its original estimate.

Mackie was married to showgirl Lulu Porter from 1960 until 1963; their son, makeup artist Robert Gordon Mackie Jr., died from AIDS at age 35. Costume designer Ray Aghayan, his longtime partner, died in 2011.

He had said practicality was never a driving force in his design: "It's all about looking good and living your fantasies."

In 2017, a 71-year-old Cher once again turned heads, dressed in two Bob Mackie specials at the Billboard Music Awards. It was a blast from a different era, unlike the boring fashion world he saw.

"Nothing is very interesting anymore," he told Vogue in 2017. "You just keep seeing the same thing over and over again and there are no surprises. Unfortunately, you don't see much fashion anymore."

Mahmoud Khalil lawsuit says Columbia failed to protect pro-Palestinian activists

By SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil sued Columbia University on Monday, alleging it failed to address harassment against him and other members of a pro-Palestinian campus group and retaliated against them when they reported it.

The university's "deliberate indifference" led to the doxing of multiple group members and Khalil's detention by immigration agents, according to the civil rights lawsuit filed in federal court in New York City.

At a news conference announcing the lawsuit, Khalil accused the university of "discrimination aimed at intimidating Palestinian students."

"We are suing because no student, regardless of their background, should go through the hell that Columbia put us through over all these years," he said.

The university declined to comment on the lawsuit, but said in an email that "creating a campus environment where every member of our community feels welcome, supported, and safe is fundamental to who we are as a University."

"Columbia is committed to protecting our community from discrimination and harassment, and responding promptly and appropriately when concerns arise," it said.

Khalil also sued Columbia last year to block the release of student records to a congressional committee.

A former graduate student at Columbia University, Khalil gained prominence as a spokesperson for student activists protesting Israel's actions in Gaza.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents arrested him at his apartment on campus in March 2025, and he quickly became the face of the Trump administration's crackdown on pro-Palestinian demonstrators.

Khalil spent 104 days in a Louisiana immigration jail, missing the birth of his first child, before a federal judge in New Jersey ordered his release. His deportation case remains active.

Khalil's latest lawsuit says Columbia "refused to correct disinformation" while he was detained, "allowing a false narrative about his conduct and role to persist and further enabling peer-on-peer harassment of other Palestinian students and students with perceived shared Arab and/or Muslim ancestry."

Instead of investigating reports of harassment, the university retaliated by characterizing events by a pro-Palestinian campus group as security risks and revising disciplinary policy to target criticism of the Israeli government, according to the lawsuit.

At the news conference Monday, Khalil also accused the university of surveilling pro-Palestinian students and hiring private investigators to monitor him.

The lawsuit accuses Columbia of civil rights violations, requests a court order restoring Khalil's access to the campus and ending the Palestinian group's suspension, and seeks damages "to be determined at trial."

It also names the pro-Palestinian group and its president, Mohammad Zubairi, as plaintiffs.

Maduro ally Alex Saab expected to plead guilty in federal money laundering case

By JOSHUA GOODMAN and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — A close ally of ousted Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro is expected to plead guilty Tuesday in a federal case that accused him of bribing officials to win lucrative contracts to import food at a time of widespread hardship in the South American country.

Alex Saab is scheduled to appear before Judge Kathleen Williams in Miami on Tuesday for a change of plea hearing, according to court records. The details of the plea were not immediately made public and Saab's attorney, Neil Schuster, declined to comment.

Saab was deported in May by Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodríguez in response to pressure from the United States, which has been targeting the Colombian-born businessman for more than a decade. He was charged with a single count of money laundering tied to an alleged conspiracy to create fake companies, falsify shipping records and skim from government contracts to import food from Colombia and Mexico.

Saab, 54, was previously charged during the first Trump administration in 2019 and then arrested during a refueling stop in Cape Verde on what the Venezuelan government described as a high-level humanitarian mission to Iran.

But President Joe Biden pardoned him in 2023 in exchange for the release of several imprisoned Americans in Venezuela. The deal, part of a failed effort by the Biden White House to lure Maduro into holding a free presidential election, was harshly criticized by Republicans and federal law enforcement officials, who immediately began investigating Saab for other alleged crimes not covered by the narrowly tailored pardon.

U.S. officials have long described Saab as Maduro's "bag man" and could ask him to serve as a character witness against the former president, who is awaiting trial on drug charges in Manhattan after being captured in a raid by the U.S. military in January.

The new U.S. prosecution of Saab and Maduro is taking place as the Trump administration overhauls relations with Venezuela, focusing its attention on tapping into Venezuela's vast oil reserves. This month, Trump announced what he called the "BIGGEST OIL DEAL IN WORLD HISTORY" in Venezuela, a partnership with Venezuelan oil entrepreneur Alejandro Betancourt in which the U.S. government will gain a stake and access to at-cost crude shipments from oil fields with a potential to produce 65 billion barrels.

Saab was little known even in Venezuela until after his first arrest, in 2020, when Maduro's government invested huge resources rallying public support for his release.

Rodríguez, then serving as Maduro's vice president, helped mount an international campaign in which she referred to Saab as an "innocent Venezuelan diplomat" who had been illegally "kidnapped" by the U.S.

But following Maduro's capture, Rodríguez distanced herself from Saab, firing him from her Cabinet and stripping him of his role as the main conduit for foreign companies looking to invest in Venezuela.

Saab amassed a fortune through Venezuelan government contracts but became even more valuable to Maduro as U.S. sanctions forced Venezuela to conduct much of its oil sales and foreign trade outside of Western financial institutions.

The new indictment accuses Saab and others of setting up a web of companies to bribe top Venezuelan officials controlling contracts for the so-called CLAP program set up by Maduro to provide staples — rice, corn flour, cooking oil — to poor Venezuelans at a time of rampant hyperinflation and a crumbling currency.

As part of the alleged conspiracy, Saab and others allegedly expanded their corrupt influence deep inside the Maduro government, accessing billions of dollars in oil sales from state-run oil company PDVSA, prosecutors allege.

Democrats and activist groups plan to push back if Trump tries to interfere in midterm elections

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and MATT BROWN Associated Press

Democratic state parties announced Monday that they are launching an operation for the midterm elections they're calling the "New Battlefield Project," intended to recruit 10,000 volunteers to guard polling places in case armed federal officers show up.

Activists are planning mass protests if the Trump administration tries to interfere with voting or ballot counting. And legal scholars are distributing white papers advising judges what they should do if the government tries to seize ballots.

The unprecedented efforts are in response to President Donald Trump's equally unprecedented moves to interfere in this year's midterm elections, which include attempts to impose proof-of-citizenship requirements to register to vote and directing the Postal Service to play a central role in deciding which voters should get a mail ballot.

The anxious contingency planning as voting gets underway has become a marker for how fraught democracy has become in the country that once stood as an example to the world.

"We have never prepared for an election sabotage event like we have now," said Ezra Levin of the left-leaning group Indivisible.

Trump has given Democrats plenty of reasons to organize a resistance

Democrats say they have reason to plan for doomsday scenarios. During his first term, Trump refused to accept his 2020 loss to Democrat Joe Biden and attempted to overturn the vote, only to be defied by career officials and more establishment Republicans. Upon returning to power, Trump has stocked his administration with those who helped his 2020 efforts, has used the federal government to target his political enemies and pardoned more than 1,000 people prosecuted for the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol that was intended to halt the certification of Biden's win.

Incumbent presidents' parties usually lose ground in the midterms, but Trump has pulled out the stops to try to keep that from happening this time. He's demanded Republicans redraw maps to create more safe seats for themselves in the House of Representatives, held last week's unusual midterm convention and tried to change election rules even as states begin to send out ballots.

The advice for judges asked to approve search warrants for ballots, for example, was inspired by the Trump administration's seizure of 2020 ballots and other election records in Fulton County, Georgia, which includes Atlanta, based on old, disproven conspiracy theories.

Rick Hasen, a UCLA Law professor and director of the school's Safeguarding Democracy Project who helped write the guidance on responding to voting machine seizures, noted that Trump has expressed regret that he didn't take more aggressive action to overturn the 2020 results, such as ordering voting machines to be seized.

"All these things take what was off the wall and put it on the wall," Hasen said. He said that while it is important not to unduly scare voters about what might happen, it's "hard to walk the line between alarmism and complacency."

Trump's actions worry Democrats. Administration calls them common sense

Last year, Democrats worried that Trump might intervene in off-year elections in California, Virginia and elsewhere, only to have voting go smoothly with no clashes with the federal government.

"The only 'fears' Americans have about our elections are being fueled by extreme liberal Democrats who refuse to support commonsense legislation that ensures Americans, and Americans only, decide our elections and other basic election security measures like Voter ID," White House spokeswoman Lauren Bis said in a statement.

Still, the stakes are far higher in the midterms, which will determine whether Republicans continue to control both houses of Congress. So far Trump has been unable to change voting procedures before the midterms.

Courts halted Trump's first attempt to reshape election rules via executive order last year. The president

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backed a bill in Congress to make even more sweeping changes but it's stalled in the Senate because of opposition from Democrats and some Republicans.

Then Trump tried to limit mail voting by executive order, but the courts again blocked it, saying the changes couldn't happen before the midterms. That case is before the Supreme Court. Election officials warn that it would be impossible to implement Trump's requirements in time for this election.

Litigation about election rules has reached such a pitch that the National Bar Association last week announced an initiative to help voters of both parties understand last-minute election rule changes and to create a hotline for those who encounter trouble casting ballots.

Concerns that polling places will become targets for immigration agents

Every election, the two major parties mobilize massive operations of attorneys, staffers and volunteers to monitor polling places and ballot counting. The Republican National Committee said it's already recruited a record number of poll watchers.

"The RNC has spent this entire cycle preparing not just to defy history in November, but to protect it," spokeswoman Ally Triolo said. "We've built the largest election integrity operation in Republican Party history because our mission is simple: secure every legal vote and ensure Americans can trust the outcome of our elections."

Democrats also have expanded their operations, and the Association of State Democratic Committees is adding to that effort with its "battlefield" recruitment project. That also will include a network to share information about online threats and manipulation, said Jane Kleeb, the chair of the group and of the Nebraska Democratic Party.

"If they're saying they're going to put armed people outside polling places, we should put friendly people outside polling locations to film them," Kleeb said in an interview. "There's a whole new battlefield we have now."

Kleeb was referring to widespread fears among Democrats that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers will be deployed to the polls, something that multiple administration officials for months have denied will happen. There have been scattered instances of ICE officers at polling places over the past year, usually saying they're in pursuit of or investigating a specific person. Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin said this month it's possible that could happen again in November.

In an indication of the distrust of the administration's reassurances, civil rights groups and the city of Denver last week filed a lawsuit asking a federal judge to formally bar ICE from polling places. They cited a law dating to the Civil War era prohibiting armed federal agents at election sites.

"This administration is basically using the rhetoric that undocumented citizens are voting and that they're going to have DHS and ICE at the polls to try and intimidate and suppress the Latino vote," said Juan Proaño, CEO of the League of United Latin American Citizens, one of the plaintiffs.

Activists see Minneapolis immigration protests as a midterms model

A staple of the election buildup is a series of tabletop exercises in which each side runs hypothetical scenarios to practice its response. As part of that, Democrats and civil rights groups are rehearsing for the possible deployment of ICE agents or the National Guard to polling sites, although the Pentagon has said it has no plans to deploy troops to the polls.

Levin, of Indivisible, said his group has run 17 different scenarios preparing for what could happen in November. But the first priority, he said, is to boost turnout.

The No Kings network, which has spearheaded large anti-Trump protests over the president's second term and includes Indivisible, is launching a campaign encouraging early voting that will peak with rallies Oct. 17.

Others are organizing among both left-wing and more traditional groups to push back if the administration is aggressive in November. Some look to the anti-ICE protests in Minneapolis as a possible model.

Two activists were shot and killed by ICE agents during those January demonstrations, and the administration eventually backed off the aggressive crackdown the president had launched against the city.

"We recognize there might be a similar moment in November, where Trump attempts to do that again, where everyday working people and students need to band together and say, 'Actually, no, this is our

country, you don't get to decide who gets elected or who gets to take office," said Kidus Girma of the left-wing Sunrise Movement.

Some Russians are fleeing abroad, citing draft fears and a loss of freedom

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

This summer, a 28-year-old digital content marketer packed up his suitcases and duct-taped boxes and fled Russia, leaving behind his family and friends and not knowing when he'll be able to return.

"It is very sad to leave Russia," he said in the southern city of Krasnodar before heading for the border with Georgia.

He blamed "the political situation" in Russia and complications over authorities restricting internet access as his reasons for leaving. Otherwise, "I never would have left for more than several months," he told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because of security concerns.

He is one of a number of people who either left or are contemplating a move amid recent Ukrainian drone attacks inside Russia and persistent rumors of a coming mobilization of troops for the 4 1/2-year-old war.

The attacks this summer caused an unprecedented fuel crisis and dealt crippling blows to the booming e-commerce sector. Since last year, the government has cited the attacks to justify harsh restrictions on connecting to the internet.

The exodus is nowhere near as large as in 2022, when hundreds of thousands fled in the first year of the full-scale invasion. Still, a group that helps citizens who flee abroad said it received nearly eight times more queries last month than it had in May.

"It doesn't mean that there is a huge number of people right now at the borders," said Anastasia Burakova, the founder of Kovcheg, which means "ark" in Russian. "But we're seeing that people are preparing to emigrate, we're seeing that people are looking into what options are there."

On social media, Russians talk of moving abroad

The current numbers are hard to gauge. Unlike 2022, when droves of men fled a partial call-up for the military, there are no lines at border crossings or shortages of plane tickets to visa-free destinations like Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Turkey at the moment.

At the same time, AP found numerous social media videos from all over Russia of people saying they had decided to leave, citing war-related reasons. Others were worried about the declining economy, an uncertain future and shrinking freedoms.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other officials in Kyiv have said Russia is planning another mobilization after the State Duma election that concludes Sunday — claims the Kremlin has repeatedly and vehemently rejected.

Yan Slovizki, a human rights activist and emergency assistance coordinator for Kovcheg, described "a panicked wave" of emigration since mid-July linked to mobilization fears, the fuel crisis and internet restrictions.

A Moscow-based diplomat told AP about "a palpable rise in public anxiety this summer," and pointed to "anecdotal evidence of higher than usual numbers of Russians appearing in neighboring Georgia and Armenia, possibly fearing another mobilization after the Duma elections." The diplomat was not authorized to comment publicly and thus spoke on condition of anonymity.

Alen Simonyan, secretary of Armenia's Security Council, told independent Russian TV channel Dozhd last month that his country "will not interfere in any way, and if necessary, will help" Russians who are moving there to avoid being drafted.

That drew a sharp rebuke from the Russian Foreign Ministry, which called Simonyan's remark "provocative."

Russian lawmaker Viktor Sobolev told the RTVI channel that the country doesn't need people who "don't love their Motherland so much that they leave because of rumors," adding: "Let them leave."

Some emigres seek to avoid military service

The digital content marketer, who describes himself as a pacifist, says this was his second attempt at

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emigrating.

He left Russia in 2022 to avoid the partial call-up of 300,000 new troops, an announcement by President Vladimir Putin that shocked the nation.

He said he isn't technically eligible for military service in peacetime due to a hip ailment, but felt it was safer to leave because he didn't know what to expect from authorities.

Some officials in 2022 said such men could legally be drafted in a mobilization, as did some rights groups helping conscripts. Others said martial law had to be declared for it to be legal. Russia has not formally declared war on Ukraine, and the Kremlin only imposed martial law in the four Ukrainian regions it illegally annexed in 2022 but doesn't fully control.

The digital content marketer returned to his hometown of Ulyanovsk in 2025 and worked remotely for clients in other countries. But Russia's unrelenting clampdown on thousands of internet platforms, sites and services made it harder for him to do his job, he said, having to switch virtual private network servers to find one allowing him to get around the restrictions.

Another factor was the rumored new mobilization. "You never know what will happen tomorrow," he said from an apartment in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi, where he settled.

A 23-year-old Muscovite who left Russia last month also cited the persistent mobilization rumors and fears that her husband might end up in the military.

The woman, who spoke to AP on condition of anonymity because of security concerns, said her father narrowly escaped being drafted in 2022 by fleeing the country. This year, her husband learned he would no longer have a deferment from military service after getting his master's degree.

"A person can figure anything out, but we were really afraid that (my husband) could end up in the army, because at this point it is a one-way ticket," she said.

Ivan Nazarov, a new university graduate who moved to the Armenian capital of Yerevan, echoed her sentiment.

He said he was aware of reports of conscripts in mandatory service who are not supposed to be deployed to Ukraine being forced to sign contracts that send them to the battlefield.

"For me, it is a question of survival," Nazarov added, speaking at a gathering organized by Kovcheg in Yerevan for new immigrants.

Other Russians cite shrinking freedoms

Queer activist Daniil Neonov left Russia this summer after a series of detentions and a 10-day jail term on charges of displaying extremist symbols — a photo featuring a T-shirt with a rainbow-colored print on it he posted on social media.

Russian authorities have outlawed what they call "the international LGBT movement" as extremist, leading sometimes to misdemeanor charges for carrying items with a rainbow on them.

Neonov told AP in Yerevan that he feared a criminal case would be brought against him.

He said he knows other people who left Russia after being detained for gathering outside the Supreme Court last month to support the opposition Yabloko party when the court struck it from the parliamentary election ballot. Yabloko was the only party on the ballot that openly opposed the war.

"The police came to them and filed reports. I know several people who, after they were held in detention, also left. I mean, I'm not the only one," Neonov said.

A 35-year-old Russian told AP he was preparing for leaving the country because he doesn't want to live in a land without free speech, where the economy is on a downward spiral and where schoolchildren have to listen to propaganda touting war, normalizing violence and promoting isolation from the rest of the world.

The man, who also spoke on condition of anonymity for safety reasons, said he had been thinking about leaving Russia for over a decade but still had hope that "everything would work out."

Now, he said, Russians "live in a huge digital jail. You can't say anything, you can't do anything. You have absolutely no rights."

Longtime AP Rome bureau chief Victor Simpson, who covered 5 popes, dies at 84

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Victor L. Simpson, the longtime Rome bureau chief for The Associated Press whose four decades as a foreign correspondent spanned five popes, wars and violence that touched him personally, has died. He was 84.

Simpson died of cancer Sunday at his home in Rome, his children said Monday.

During a 46-year AP career, Simpson covered many of the defining stories of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, from the 1967 Newark, New Jersey, race riots and war in the Middle East to the papacy of Pope John Paul II, whom he accompanied on dozens of trips.

A native New Yorker, Simpson joined the AP in Newark in 1967, where he wrote an award-winning series on organized crime. He transferred to the General Desk in 1968, editing top domestic stories, and then to the Foreign Desk in 1970.

He was assigned to Rome as news editor in 1972, where he promptly met his future wife, Daniela Petroff, who became a distinguished AP fashion and Vatican correspondent. She died in February at age 80.

He became Rome bureau chief in 2005. Simpson previously worked for the Hackensack (New Jersey) Record.

"Victor had an extraordinary life and career, and built a lasting legacy at the AP," said AP Executive Editor Julie Pace. "Years after his retirement, he still comes up regularly in stories and conversations in AP bureaus around the world — a testament to the impact he had on generations of AP journalists. I know that legacy will endure for many years to come."

Simpson loved to regale listeners about his journalistic feats, which included a private dinner conversation on the papal plane with John Paul and an interview with Svetlana Alliluyeva, the daughter of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin. He secured the scoop by showing up at Alliluyeva's door in Princeton, New Jersey, where she lived after defecting from the USSR.

"He put a lasting mark on AP, from his days as a feisty young staffer in our Newark bureau, through years as an energetic mainstay on our central news desk in New York, and then during a storied career in Rome," said retired AP President and CEO Louis D. Boccardi, who called him "one of a kind."

His life was marked by tragedy

Simpson's life was marked by two devastating personal tragedies: the shooting death of his father during a robbery in 1964, and the killing of his 11-year-old daughter, Natasha, by Palestinian militants who attacked Rome's airport on Dec. 27, 1985.

Simpson was preparing to fly to the United States with his family when the militants stormed the airport, throwing grenades and firing automatic weapons. Natasha was among more than a dozen people killed. Simpson and the couple's 9-year-old son, Michael, were both wounded.

Natasha's killing "was a tragedy that affected us all deeply," Boccardi recalled.

Two years later, Simpson and Petroff welcomed another daughter, Debbie. The pope called the family to congratulate them.

In announcing his death, his children, Michael and Debbie, said the pain he carried over Natasha's killing "has finally evaporated, leaving only love behind."

When Simpson was 22, his father, Leonard P. Simpson, a well-known New York lawyer, was shot and killed in the elevator of the family's apartment building. He was 63.

"The murder was considered yet more proof of New York's degradation," Simpson wrote in his 2024 memoir "Life of a Reporter."

He described how an "exuberant" Jimmy Breslin interviewed the family for a story about the difficulties of the middle class in the crime-ridden era. The experience taught him an important lesson in journalism about being considerate and sensitive with the victims of tragedy.

Simpson's optimism and devotion to family and work sustained him through the tragedies.

He was the unofficial dean of the Rome press corps

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He was born May 11, 1942, and raised in a Jewish family. He said that while religion wasn't a centerpiece, "tolerance was considered a precious value." He graduated from Hobart College in 1963 and briefly served in the U.S. Army.

Simpson kept his extended family close, making overseas trips for weddings and bar and bat mitzvahs. "It meant a huge amount to me," said his niece, Catherine Simpson Bueker.

Simpson was the unofficial dean of the Rome press corps and a first stop for new correspondents. Decades covering the Holy See made him one of the longest-serving Vatican correspondents of his generation, including 92 trips with John Paul and Pope Benedict XVI.

Simpson had a special bond with John Paul II

It was on one of those flights in 1986 that Simpson was invited to dine with John Paul on the final leg following a two-week tour of Asia and the Pacific.

Simpson, in a rumpled safari jacket detested by his fashion-writer wife, apologized to the pontiff for wearing "my working clothes." The pope put him at ease, gripping his white robes and saying, "These are my working clothes."

One of his biggest exclusives came on a 1988 flight to Uruguay when he asked John Paul about the Solidarity strikes challenging the communist government in his native Poland. John Paul responded with full papal support for the strikes.

"Here we are touching the heart of the problem," the pope said. "It is not easy to bring democracy to a system that is by definition dictatorial and totalitarian."

The remarks made front pages around the world and were later viewed as a landmark in the pope's role in communism's collapse in Eastern Europe.

Philip Pullella, longtime Vatican reporter for United Press International and then Reuters, said Simpson's Jewish background allowed him to cover the Vatican with some distance without falling into "false awe" of the institutional pomp.

"He was the gold standard. I don't think he was ever intimidated by the Vatican. He saw it as an institution that needed to be covered in an impartial way," Pullella said.

Simpson's assignments included the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's historic 1977 visit to Israel, and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. His early Rome years focused heavily on domestic and international violence by militants, famous kidnappings and enduring mysteries like the 1980 Ustica air disaster that killed 81 people.

He loved tennis and reported from the Italian Open for years and once from Wimbledon.

A papal resignation changes his retirement plans

Simpson had planned to retire on Feb. 28, 2013, but Benedict stunned the world by announcing he would become the first pope in nearly 600 years to resign, effective the same date as Simpson's departure.

Simpson always wondered if he had given the idea of retirement to the German pope. He had had a brief private conversation with Benedict while returning from Lebanon in September 2012 on what was to be Simpson's last papal flight before retirement.

"When I told him that I had covered the Vatican for more than 30 years, he looked surprised. He sounded wistful as he said my retirement 'is much deserved,'" Simpson recalled in a tribute after Benedict died.

Simpson stayed to cover one final papal transition, the 2013 conclave that elected Pope Francis.

The great American road trip, fueled by — and undercut by — the automobile that created it

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — There's something about the American road trip.

It has been memorialized in books like Jack Kerouac's "On the Road" and satirized in movies like "National Lampoon's Vacation."

It primarily consists of hours upon hours of driving that should be boring — but somehow isn't? Maybe it's the anticipation of getting to some mythical destination — the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Death Val-

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ley. Or maybe it's the unexpected sights along the way. Tumbleweeds! They're real!

Americans love the idea of a road trip, but we often opt for reaching our destination as quickly as possible instead. The rise of cheap airfare has made it easy to travel without the hassle of driving. When we do drive, we're likely to stick to the interstates, blasting past the small towns we idealize at 70-plus miles per hour.

In gaining convenience, what have we lost?

The decades after World War II were the golden age of the family road trip

In "Are We There Yet? The Golden Age of American Family Vacations," historian Susan Rugh argues that the period after World War II was the apex of the family road trip. More Americans were rising into the middle class, many had paid vacation for the first time, car ownership was increasing rapidly, and the federal government was investing in highways that allowed for more comfortable long-distance travel.

Many veterans were eager to show their children what they had been fighting to preserve. One popular destination was Washington, D.C. Families also visited historic monuments, homes and battlefields. In the West, the nation's majestic national parks were both a tourist destination and a symbol of American democracy.

Traveling together to see America both strengthened family bonds and "provided a way to educate children as citizens," Rugh writes.

It wasn't a golden age for everyone

The open road did not signal freedom for all Americans. Black families in particular often had to deal with segregated facilities, even outside of the South.

The problem was so systemic that there were guidebooks, like the well known Green Book, specifically made for Black travelers.

"The experience is totally different," says Allen Pietrobon, a professor at Trinity University in Washington, D.C., who teaches a course on road trips. "It's not carefree."

The obstacles of the vacationing Black family even played a role in the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Rugh writes. The Senate Committee of Commerce heard stories like that of a Black business owner turned away from a motel in St. Petersburg, Florida, even after he offered to pay twice the normal rate. The exhausted family, including two children, had to try to sleep in the car as best they could.

"In the face of Jim Crow laws in the South and persistent racial discrimination in the rest of the nation, the cultural icon of the family vacation was offered as persuasive evidence of the need for a federal law to ensure the rights of all citizens," Rugh writes.

The highways were magnets for American entrepreneurs of all stripes

It wasn't just the national parks that needed more facilities as Americans took to the roads. Vacationers needed lodging, restaurants and service stations along the way.

Some entrepreneurs competed with one another to make their accommodations stand out from the crowd, like Wigwam Village, where the motel rooms are giant concrete teepees. Others saw the opportunity to develop roadside attractions like the world's largest nutcracker.

"Americans are hucksters," Rugh says. "And if somebody has an attraction, somebody else is gonna serve lemonade or hamburgers right by it."

One highway that was filled with attractions was Route 66, which turned 100 this year.

Commissioned in 1926 and fully paved by the late 1930s, the highway between Chicago and Los Angeles catered to a mid-century craze for the Old West of the 1880s. A group of business owners promoted the road, dubbing it the "Main Street of America," but Bobby Troupe's 1946 hit song "(Get Your Kicks on) Route 66" first recorded by Nat King Cole has had more staying power than any advertisement.

Sometimes it's the bad things that we remember most fondly

Richard Ratay calls himself the King of the Road Trip.

His book "Don't Make Me Pull Over! An Informal History of the Family Road Trip" opens with a harrowing scene of waking up as a child with the family car spinning off an icy road. The family had to wait hours in the cold before being towed out.

"Years later," he writes, "we'd all agree it was the best start to a family road trip ever."

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It's counterintuitive, but sometimes it's the hardships and unexpected bumps in the road that make a vacation memorable.

Pietrobon recalls a coworker who got into a car accident in a tiny town in Nevada and ended up stuck for days.

"They actually ended up having a really amazing experience," he says. "The whole purpose now of higher end travel is to eliminate any friction whatsoever. And we do lose something in that, I think."

Modern travel is all about the destination, not the journey

Before the interstates, the highway system was really just the main street of towns, connected by highways. Someone stopping for the night or even just a meal would participate in the life of that town.

"In meeting so many folks from different places, it gave families traveling by car the opportunity to realize that ... when all is said and done, we aren't that different after all," Ratay said in an interview.

Today's interstates mostly bypass these towns, providing chain-store gas, food and lodging right off the exit. Airplane travel elides even this minimal local interaction.

It's still possible to take the slower road, stopping to talk to locals and soaking in the experience, along with its little inconveniences.

"Get on one of those old highways anywhere," Rugh says. "Cross the Midwest on the Lincoln Highway. Go from Arizona to Canada on Highway 89, Highway 1 in California."

In older travel narratives, Pietrobon says, the destination is almost irrelevant. "I think about who's going to be the next Jack Kerouac where, you know, the journey is what he's writing about, not just the snapshots of when you stop for the day."

New warnings about the risks of AI to humanity revive a long-running debate

By ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — New warnings from within the artificial intelligence industry have revived a long-running debate over whether advanced AI could escape human control and ultimately threaten humanity's survival, and whether the companies developing the technology are doing enough to prevent such a scenario.

The CEO of Anthropic, the San Francisco company behind Claude, said he thought the industry needed to reduce the speed of its work, cautioning Saturday that a swarm of AI agents might be able to take over the internet in six months to a year unless companies devoted more time to putting safeguards in place.

Days after two former Anthropic safety researchers publicly aired concerns that the existential threats AI might pose to humanity were receiving too little attention, Dario Amodei outlined a plan for companies like his and governments around the world to ensure that increasingly capable AI models remain aligned with the commands and values of responsible people.

Sam Altman, CEO of ChatGPT maker OpenAI, said this weekend that companies should start coordinating on AI safety without waiting for the government to introduce legislation. The "pacing" of AI development doesn't mean stopping it, Altman wrote on X. "But it should be slower than it otherwise could be."

Here's what to know about the recent dire predictions and whether any brakes might be put on AI advancement:

AI models are becoming more powerful

Concerns over the potential risks of the technology are rising as new AI models become more powerful, heightening both the potential for misuse by people with criminal aims, such as creating and spreading a disease that kills most of the world's population, and the risk of AI systems going rogue in a dangerous way.

Anthropic disclosed last week that it blocked efforts by bad actors to use its AI models for malicious activity, such as cyberattacks, surveillance and research that could have led to biological weapons.

The company said it put stronger safeguards in its latest models to restrict biological research that could be used to make weapons but noted that "as models become increasingly capable, their risks will increase, unless AI developers and society's defenders act to make them safer."

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Last year, Anthropic reported that hackers used the company's AI in a cyberattack targeting about 30 companies and government agencies around the world. It said the hackers were very likely part of a Chinese state-sponsored group.

Multiple AI models have acted on their own

When an AI agent "goes rogue," it means the AI has taken action beyond the task it was asked to perform. Both Anthropic and OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT, said in July that their AI models had acted on their own.

Anthropic disclosed that three AI models — Claude Opus 4.7, Claude Mythos 5 and an internal research test model — hacked into three other organizations during testing, just days after OpenAI revealed that its AI system hacked into the servers of AI startup Hugging Face.

OpenAI described the intrusion by a combination of models, including its newly released GPT-5.6 Sol and an "even more capable" model that was still being tested internally, as a "significant security incident."

Meta followed suit in early August with a similar case of an AI model finding ways around another company's digital security.

Although some observers noted that people had disabled some guardrails in the OpenAI and Anthropic cases, the episodes seemed to reflect one of the biggest fears around AI: that if models achieve artificial general intelligence, or AGI, a loosely defined term for AI that can match or surpass human abilities across a broad range of intellectual tasks, the technology could cause an irreversible catastrophic event or subjugate the human race.

How or when AI might cause a catastrophe is debated

Doomsday scenarios generally fall into two categories: An AI that achieves self-improving superintelligence and controls people instead of vice versa, or AI used by a rogue state or nefarious actors.

Worries that artificial intelligence might overcome human limits on its reach or actions are not new.

Alan Turing, a British mathematician widely regarded as one of the earliest authorities on artificial intelligence, predicted in 1951 that AI would eventually take control from humans. Less than a decade later, Norbert Wiener, another mathematician, warned intelligent machines would seek to accomplish their own objectives and humans would not be able to stop them.

In 2026, how reasonable are fears that AI, either by escaping human control or through misuse by unscrupulous people, could cause a cataclysmic event or the downfall of civilization?

No one knows.

Experts across computer science, philosophy and other fields have envisioned numerous routes by which a future AI system might cause a global catastrophe, either by escaping human control or in the hands of an unscrupulous people. They range from deploying weapons and identifying a lethal pathogen to manipulating governments into conflict or disrupting the food, energy and communications networks societies rely on to function.

There is no widely accepted estimate for how soon any of these scenarios might happen and no consensus on their likelihood.

In 2023, the nonprofit Center for AI Safety issued a statement cosigned by more than 350 researchers and technology executives, including Anthropic's Amodei and OpenAI's Altman, saying: "Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside pandemics and nuclear war."

The 2026 International AI Safety Report, written with guidance from more than 100 independent experts, says current systems show early signs of some relevant capabilities but not at levels that could enable a loss of control, and describes the risk's likelihood, nature and timing as "unusually ambiguous."

Some are stressing the need for AI safeguards before it's too late

An Anthropic researcher said last week he was resigning from the company over concerns that neither the company nor its competitors were acting responsibly in developing the technology. In social media posts, Jacob Coxon estimated a 10% chance of AI causing human extinction within the next decade and said both Anthropic and OpenAI "are racing straight to self-improving superintelligence and gambling with our lives."

Researchers have called for a slowdown of AI development and warned for years that the technology

could pose existential risks to humanity.

Following the recent incidents, experts called for improved testing by AI companies and more dialogue between the U.S. and China to come up with shared solutions.

But AI is growing so fast that government and evaluation systems are struggling to keep pace with the technology. Countries are cobbling together their own laws, some conflicting.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping warned at a conference in July of the need to keep AI from evading human control. The Trump administration initially demonstrated reluctance to regulate AI but has become more keen to reduce cybersecurity risks.

On Sunday, President Donald Trump downplayed the necessity for his administration to check AI development, but acknowledged the need for some regulation.

Pope celebrates his 71st birthday but it's Vatican employees who get the gift

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Leo XIV celebrated his 71st birthday on Monday but it was Vatican employees who got the gift.

The Vatican published a papal decree repealing 2021 salary cuts that Pope Francis had imposed on many Vatican employees as part of the Holy See's COVID-19 cost-saving measures.

In the decree, Leo said the salary-containing measures "can now be overcome, in the certainty that the institutions of the Holy See and the Vatican City State will continue, through various means, their commitment to ensuring economic sustainability."

The unpopular salary cuts had included a 10% cut on pay for cardinals and smaller percentage salary cuts for office heads and lower-ranking priests and nuns. Biennial pay raises were frozen for senior lay employees, though lower-ranking lay employees continued to receive raises.

Francis had reasoned at the time that the cuts were necessary to save jobs, given the Holy See was also facing a structural deficit, estimated then at around 70 million euros, and a 1 billion euro (\$1.14 billion) pension fund shortfall.

The pandemic closed the Vatican Museums for months, depriving the Holy See of one of its main sources of revenue. The Vatican's coffers also suffered from investment and currency fluctuations.

Leo, a math major and former superior general of his Augustinian religious order, is known to be adept at financial matters and reading balance sheets. His brother, John Prevost, recently told Italian broadcaster Mediaset that the pope helped him out recently with a question he had about filing his taxes.

Soon after he was elected, Leo said the Vatican's financial situation wasn't nearly as bad as he thought and that Francis had made some important reforms. However, Leo has spent much of his early pontificate amending or outright reversing some of Francis' financial decisions.

In another decree published Monday, Leo canceled Francis' plans to move some of the Vatican's secret archives and library holdings out of the city state and onto the grounds of a pontifical university across town. Francis had decided on the move because the material was outgrowing its current storage spaces, which include a vast underground bunker.

Leo said "unprecedented opportunities have arisen to create new spaces" within Vatican City itself. He ordered the construction of a new building on a current parking lot to house the material, which includes ancient manuscripts and entire archival collections from past popes, religious congregations and benefactors.

Leo visited the Vatican Apostolic Library on Monday, and noted that it was particularly fitting to be celebrating his birthday with its staff since his mother was a librarian.

"I'd just like to say that God, in His providence — and sometimes with a touch of humor — always reminds us that he is with us," Leo told the staff. "Many of you may not know that my mother was a librarian, and today I'm here on my birthday specifically to say hello to all of you."

The library and archive are open to scholars and researchers for study. A small exhibition space is also

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open on a weekly basis to the general public in the library, with reservation and pre-purchased tickets.

Leo was at the library Monday to inaugurate an exhibition about water, the first installment in a new five-year cycle entitled "Catastrophe and Marvel." It features a giant design of a wave attached by scaffolding to the library's facade by the French artist JR.

Today in History: September 15, Birmingham church bombing

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, Sept. 15, the 258th day of 2026. There are 107 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 15, 1963, four Black girls were killed when a bomb went off during Sunday services at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. (Three Ku Klux Klansmen were eventually convicted for their roles in the blast.)

Also on this date:

In 1835, Charles Darwin reached the Galápagos Islands aboard the HMS Beagle.

In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws were enacted in Nazi Germany, depriving German Jews of their citizenship.

In 1940, the tide turned in the Battle of Britain in World War II, as the Royal Air Force inflicted heavy losses upon the Luftwaffe.

In 1958, a commuter train headed for New York City plunged into Newark Bay after missing a stop signal and sliding off the open Newark Bay lift bridge, killing 48 people.

In 1959, Nikita Khrushchev became the first Soviet head of state to visit the United States as he arrived at Andrews Air Force Base outside Washington.

In 1978, Muhammad Ali became the first boxer to capture the heavyweight title three times, winning by unanimous decision in his rematch with Leon Spinks.

In 2008, as a result of the subprime mortgage crisis, Lehman Brothers filed for Chapter 11 in the largest bankruptcy filing in U.S. history.

In 2021, SpaceX's first private flight streaked into orbit with two contest winners, a healthcare worker and their billionaire sponsor, in the most ambitious leap yet in space tourism. The trip dubbed Inspiration4 marked the first time a spacecraft circled Earth with an all-amateur crew and no professional astronauts.

In 2020, Israel signed historic diplomatic pacts with two Gulf Arab states at a White House ceremony President Donald Trump called the "dawn of a new Middle East." The bilateral agreements formalized the normalization of Israeli relations with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

In 2024, a man aiming a rifle through shrubs as then-presidential candidate Donald Trump played golf at his West Palm Beach, Florida, country club was spotted by a Secret Service agent who fired at him, prompting the man to drop his gun and run without firing a shot. Ryan Routh was later convicted of trying to assassinate Trump and sentenced to life in prison.

Today's Birthdays: Writer-director Ron Shelton is 81. Actor Tommy Lee Jones is 80. Film director Oliver Stone is 80. TV personality Lisa Vanderpump is 66. Football Hall of Famer Dan Marino is 65. Actor Josh Charles is 55. Olympic gold medal swimmer Tom Dolan is 51. Actor Tom Hardy is 49. Actor Amy Davidson is 47. Actor Dave Annable is 47. Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, is 42. TV personality Heidi Montag is 40. Singer-songwriter Ella Boh is 25.