

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 1 of 63

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Secretary Schneider's October Column](#)
- [5- Pharis, Hill win middle school races at Groton meet](#)
- [6- Tietz scores winning goal as Tigers beat Garretson](#)
- [6- 2027 State Park Entrance Licenses Available](#)
- [7- Names Released in Mellette County Fatal Crash](#)
- [7- Today on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [8- SD SearchLight: Appeals court grants new hearing in lawsuit over petitioning time for South Dakota ballot questions](#)
- [9- SD SearchLight: South Dakota Supreme Court says father doesn't have a right to police records about son's death](#)
- [9- SD SearchLight: Outraged over 'illegal' wetlands rule, a GOP senator blocks dozens of Trump nominees](#)
- [11- SD SearchLight: US Senate leaves nation's capital in advance of midterms with much still undone](#)
- [12- SD SearchLight: Trump launches campaign tour in GOP-friendly states ahead of midterms](#)
- [14- SD SearchLight: Feds provide guidance on new K-12 scholarship tax credit program](#)
- [16- Weather Pages](#)
- [20- Daily Devotional](#)
- [21- Subscription Form](#)
- [22- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [23- News from the Associated Press](#)

Community Calendar

Friday, Oct. 2

Senior Menu: Oven baked chicken, mashed potatoes with gravy, peas, fruit, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Omelets.
School Lunch: French bread pizza, green beans.
Football at Deuel, 7 p.m., Cardinal Field
Winter Gear Drive at Dacotah Bank, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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

© 2026 Groton Daily Independent



Saturday, Oct. 3

Volleyball at Redfield Tournament, 9 a.m.

Sunday, Oct. 4

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Third Grade Girls Basketball, 4 p.m., GHS Old Gym
Sixth Grade Girls Basketball Practice, 4 p.m., Arena
Dance Team Practice, 5:30 p.m., Arena

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 2 of 63

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.

Tennessee Execution Failure

A Tennessee woman convicted of a 1995 murder is hospitalized in critical condition after apparently surviving two doses of lethal injection Wednesday night. Gov. Bill Lee (R) paused executions as the state reviews its protocols.

Christa Pike, 50, would have been the first woman executed in Tennessee in over 200 years. She spent 30 years on death row after being convicted of murdering a classmate at age 18. Her lawyers spent decades appealing her sentence, citing a history of sexual trauma, bipolar disorder, and concerns about injection delivery into her small veins. Tennessee delayed another execution in May after medical staff could not find a vein. Pike is believed to be the first person to survive two doses of the drug pentobarbital. The state does not have a protocol for administering a third dose.

Lethal injections have become the most common execution method in the US, but also have the highest failure rate, at 7.2%.

School Voucher Rules

The Treasury Department yesterday unveiled proposed rules for the nation's first federal tax-credit scholarship program, set to launch Jan. 1 and help cover private- and public-school expenses.

Created under last year's tax and spending law, the program offers taxpayers a nonrefundable, dollar-for-dollar federal tax credit of up to \$1,700 annually—or \$3,400 for married couples filing jointly—for donations to approved scholarship-granting organizations, which distribute funds to eligible families. Scholarships can cover private school tuition, tutoring, disability services, books, computers, and other education expenses. Families earning up to three times their area's median income qualify, covering roughly 96% of students in participating states. The rules let states select which qualifying SGOs participate, but limit additional restrictions on how they distribute funds and require annual independent audits. At least 31 states have said they will participate.

By 2030, officials estimate the program could generate nearly \$26B annually, funding about 2.2 million scholarships.

How Old Do I Sound?

Scientists have developed a new AI-powered tool that uses speech to estimate age and indicate signs of cognitive issues like dementia. The so-called "speech clock" could make aging assessments more accessible in rural communities because it does not require advanced medical technologies or blood samples.

Researchers recorded 2,928 Spanish-speaking participants, using audio samples from healthy adults to participants with dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. Scientists then used machine-learning algorithms to extract over 700 speech characteristics that can evolve with age, including pitch, vocabulary range, and talking speed. The data informed the speech clock's assessments of participants' ages and resulted in the tool identifying when a voice sounded older than the speaker. Larger gaps between the ages correlated with higher levels of a blood-based biomarker that can detect Alzheimer's with roughly 90% accuracy.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 3 of 63

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Pop star Sia sells 50% stake in her catalog to Swedish music investment firm Pophouse for \$180M.

Rapper Rick Ross has been arrested on charges related to an alleged domestic violence incident in August, including one felony count of battery by strangulation.

San Diego State's football team is reportedly facing a mumps outbreak, including 14 confirmed cases; Aztecs are slated to host Texas State tomorrow.

Science & Technology

Google launches experimental satellite as part of a long-term plan to deploy AI data centers in space.

... the project comes as 60% of Americans say they would not be comfortable with a new data center in their neighborhood.

Four astronauts participate in SpaceX's quickest flight to the International Space Station yet, at about eight hours.

Commander Jessica Watkins becomes the first Black woman to lead a crew to orbit.

Roughly one in eight cancer cases globally is attributable to infections, including HPV, hepatitis C, and HIV.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +0.2%, Dow +0.0%, Nasdaq +0.0%) as 10-year Treasury yield hits 5.3%, its highest intraday level in 24 years.

Thirty-year mortgage rate surges to 7.3%, marking the largest weekly increase in four years and the rate's highest peak since November 2023.

Accenture shares climb 15.8% after the firm's fiscal fourth-quarter report highlighted \$18.7B in total revenue, a roughly 6% year-over-year increase that eased investors' concerns AI would threaten the consulting industry.

Politics & World Affairs

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul (D) moves oversight of Cornell University sexual assault investigation to state AG Letitia James (D); the district attorney says a recently filed civil lawsuit includes new allegations missing from the alleged victim's 2024 statement.

Renee Good's family sues US government officials over her killing by an ICE agent in January.

Supreme Court agrees to consider whether Trump administration can detain noncitizens indefinitely without bond.

Ethiopia and Eritrea cut diplomatic ties, after Ethiopian officials accuse Eritrea of supporting unrest in northern Tigray region.

Pakistan launches airstrikes in Afghanistan, killing at least 10 civilians, in strikes it said targeted militants.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 4 of 63

Secretary Schneider's October Column

October in South Dakota brings a familiar kind of transition. Summer's green fades into red, orange, and gold. Harvest is underway, mornings carry a sharper chill, and the prairie wind reminds us that winter is never far away. South Dakota weather gives us another reason to stay prepared: bring the jacket, even if the day begins at 75 degrees.

For veterans, change is nothing new. We have changed duty stations, adapted to new missions, and learned to adjust when plans shift.

Military service teaches us that no mission succeeds because of one person alone. Someone is always standing watch, checking equipment, preparing meals, treating the injured, maintaining the vehicle, or making sure the person beside them is not carrying the load alone, and that responsibility does not end when the uniform comes off.

This month, consider checking in on a veteran you haven't heard from in a while. Invite someone for coffee. Offer a ride to an appointment. Help a surviving spouse navigate benefits. Connect a veteran with employment, healthcare, or local resources. Sometimes the most meaningful act of service is simply saying, "I'm here. You are not alone."

October brings another regional Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication for four fallen heroes from Northeastern South Dakota. These bridge dedications matter because they ensure the names and sacrifices of South Dakota's fallen heroes remain visible. Families will cross those bridges. Children will see the names and ask who they were. Their stories will be told again. That is how we honor service. That is how we keep faith with those who gave everything.

October event schedule also includes the following highlights:

- October 2-3: DAV Fall Conference – Sioux Falls
- October 12: Indigenous Peoples Day – State Offices Closed
- October 13: Navy Birthday
- October 14: Regional Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedication - Sisseton
- October 15-18: VA Resource and Enrollment Fair - Pierre
- October 26: National Day of the Deployed

Enjoy the season, support your neighbors, and take time to remember those who came before us. The mission may change, and the uniform may change, but our commitment to one another never should.

Jeremiah J. Schneider, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



**Jeremiah
Schneider,
Secretary
South Dakota
Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 5 of 63

Pharis, Hill win middle school races at Groton meet

GROTON — Groton Area runners Henry Pharis and Hazel Hill captured individual championships in the middle school races to highlight the Tigers' performance at the Steve Grode Memorial Invitational cross country meet.

Pharis, a sixth-grader, won the boys 3,000-meter middle school race with a personal-best time of 11 minutes, 42.7 seconds. He finished more than seven seconds ahead of Aberdeen Roncalli's Lincoln Lunzman, who was second in 11:50.0.

Groton Area's Calvin Locken placed sixth in 13:09.9, while Titan Johnson finished 22nd with a personal-best time of 17:00.7.

Hill gave Groton another victory in the girls middle school 3,000-meter race. The sixth-grader crossed the finish line in 13:17.8, edging Aberdeen Roncalli's Taylen Waage, who finished just two-tenths of a second behind in 13:18.0.

Anna Oswald placed ninth for Groton Area with a personal-best 14:23.6. Haley Erickson was 15th in 15:32.7, Railey Mulder finished 18th in 16:50.8 and Presley Olson placed 20th in 17:38.1.

Ryelle Gilbert led Groton Area in the varsity girls 5,000-meter race with a fourth-place finish. Gilbert turned in a season-best time of 20:52.0. Ipswich swept the first three places, led by Isabella Galbraith, who won the race in 19:33.4. Jayla Stiles was second in 20:20.7 and Kalynn Oban placed third in 20:25.9.

Groton Area senior Ashlynn Warrington placed 16th in the girls race with a time of 23:32.3.

Riley Shellenberger paced the Groton Area boys in the varsity 5,000-meter race, placing sixth in 19:03.0. Jace Bender won the race in 17:33.7, followed by Eli Wagner in 18:18.3 and Thomas Holzer in 18:23.3.

Tate Johnson was Groton Area's next varsity finisher, placing 22nd in 21:59.7. Logan Clocksene finished 33rd with a personal-best time of 30:39.1.



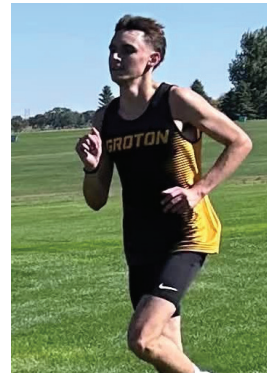
Riley Shellenberger

(Courtesy Photo)



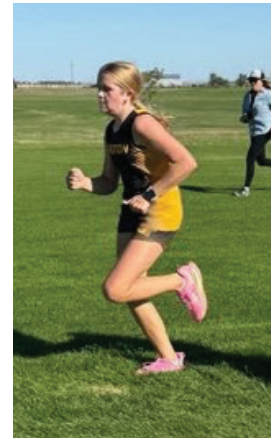
Henry Pharis

(Courtesy Photo)



Tate Johnson

(Courtesy Photo)



Hazel Hill

(Courtesy Photo)



Presley Olson, Anna Oswald, Hazel Hill, Jozie Lord, Railey Mulder, Haley Erickson. (Courtesy Photo)

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 6 of 63

Tietz scores winning goal as Tigers beat Garretson

Final

Groton area 3

Garretson 2

1st half

Groton area 2

Garretson 2

2nd half

Groton area 1

Garretson 0

by Coach Matt Baumgartner

We started a touch slower than wanted to, but credit goes to the girls for sticking with their talents and crawling back from down a goal twice in the first half. I was happy to play lots of rotations with the approaching playoffs starting Tuesday. Girls are eager to get another chance against St Thomas More, the only decision looming in the balance for Tuesdays quarterfinal is whether the game is played out in Rapid City or Groton. One game remains for STM hosting Belle Fourche, a loss by STM keeps us at home while any other result sends us West river on Tuesday.

We traded goals in the first half and grabbed the winner after some halftime adjustments.

Goals:

Garretson - Leighton Kindopp - 10th min

Groton - Sydney Locke assisted by Ryelle Gilbert - 14th min

Garretson - Malena Qualm - 18th min

Groton - McKenna Tietz - 30th min

Groton - McKenna Tietz assisted by Addison Steffes - 49th min

Tori Schuster - 4 saves

2027 State Park Entrance Licenses Available

PIERRE, S.D. – Start planning your next South Dakota outdoor adventure. The 2027 annual park entrance license for South Dakota's state parks and recreation areas goes on sale Oct. 1, 2026, and gives visitors access to more than 60 parks and recreation areas across the state through May 21, 2028.

The resident annual park entrance license is \$40 for one or \$60 for two. The license provides entrance to South Dakota's state parks and recreation areas but does not cover camping or lodging costs.

"South Dakota State Parks give people countless opportunities to get outside, explore new places, and make memories with family and friends," said State Parks Director Jeff VanMeeteren. "With more than 60 parks and recreation areas to choose from, there's always another place to discover and another adventure waiting."

Visitors can make a day of it or stay awhile with overnight options ranging from traditional campsites and group camping to camping cabins and modern lodging. Reservations can be made online through campsd.com.

Whether it's a weekend camping trip, a day on the water, or a chance to explore a new park, an annual park entrance license makes it easy to enjoy South Dakota's outdoors throughout the year.

Entrance licenses can be purchased at campsd.com, at local state park offices, or by calling 1.800.710.2267.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 7 of 63

Names Released in Mellette County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle vs. pedestrian fatal crash
Where: U.S. 83 at mile marker 43, White River city limits, South Dakota
When: 8:53 p.m., Wednesday, September 23, 2026

Driver 1: Julio Ernesto Alonso Torres, 37-year-old male from Grand Island, Nebraska, no injuries
Vehicle 1: 2016 Dodge Ram 3500
Seat Belt Used: No

Pedestrian: Nikki Thin Elk, 23-year-old female from Rapid City, South Dakota, fatal injuries

Mellette County, S.D.- A Rapid City woman has died from injuries sustained in a vehicle-versus-pedestrian crash that occurred September 23 in White River, South Dakota.

Preliminary crash information indicates Nikki Thin Elk was walking south on U.S. 83 in the middle of the road. At the same time, Julio Ernesto Alonso Torres, the driver of a 2016 Dodge Ram 3500, was traveling southbound on U.S. 83 hauling a flatbed trailer. Alonso Torres attempted to brake and swerved when he saw Thin Elk. The Dodge struck Thin Elk. She was taken to a Rosebud hospital where she succumbed to her injuries on Thursday, September 24.

The investigation is ongoing. All information released is preliminary.
The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.



Football

Groton Area
at Deuel
Fri., Oct. 2, 2026, 7 p.m.



Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

GDILIVE

 YouTube
A production of the
Groton Daily Independent

For more info: GDILIVE.COM

with the Voice of Tigers - Justin Olson
Along with Savannah Bible

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





SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Appeals court grants new hearing in lawsuit over petitioning time for South Dakota ballot questions

BY MEGHAN O'BRIEN

A South Dakota group suffered a setback Thursday in its effort to protect adequate time for petitioning questions onto statewide ballots, as a federal appeals court vacated an earlier ruling in the group's favor and set a new hearing for next year.

In August, a three-judge panel of the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that state lawmakers violated the First Amendment last year when they moved up the deadline for submitting petition signatures by three months.

South Dakota's Republican Attorney General Marty Jackley responded to that ruling by seeking a new hearing with all 11 members of the appeals court. The court granted that request Thursday and set a new hearing for January in St. Louis.

Petitioners need 17,508 signatures from registered voters to put a proposed law on the ballot in South Dakota, and 35,017 signatures for a proposed state constitutional amendment. South Dakota lawmakers approved legislation last year that moved the deadline for filing signed petitions in a general election year from the first Tuesday in May to the first Tuesday in February.

A group that's been involved in numerous ballot questions, Dakotans for Health, challenged the law in federal court. A district court judge ruled the law violates the First Amendment, writing that moving the deadline three months earlier "arguably goes beyond merely inconvenient and enters the realm of severe." The state appealed that ruling.

During arguments heard by the three-judge appeals panel in June, the state argued a shorter deadline gives more time for potential litigation over ballot questions to play out.

Judge Raymond Gruender wrote in an August opinion that the state didn't provide "sufficient factual or legal support" for its argument that pre-election litigation on petitions would bolster the confidence of voters in the initiative and referendum process. Judge Jane Kelly joined Gruender in the decision.

In a dissenting opinion, Judge James Loken wrote "the Constitution does not authorize this federal court micromanagement of state elections." The state law furthers South Dakota's "interest in election integrity by extending the time for pre-election petition litigation," Loken added.

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

South Dakota Supreme Court says father doesn't have a right to police records about son's death

BY JOSHUA HAIAR

The South Dakota Supreme Court ruled this week that a father doesn't have a right to obtain investigation records he wanted about his son's death.

Ryan Pyle, age 37, went missing in August 2020, and his remains were found in November of that year near the Snake Creek Recreation Area in South Dakota, near the city of Platte. Law enforcement believed he died of hypothermia. His father, Brian Pyle, believed the death may have involved foul play.

Brian Pyle asked a lower court to force the release of reports and records from the investigation into his son's death. The lower court said no. The South Dakota Supreme Court affirmed that decision.

"The State had no duty to disclose criminal investigative information, nor did Pyle have a clear right to access such information," wrote the court.

Pyle's argument for access included pointing to Marsy's Law, the South Dakota constitutional amendment passed by voters in 2016 that establishes a formal bill of rights for crime victims. But the court said the record had not proven that a crime occurred, and that Brian "is not a 'victim,' as the term is defined under Marsy's Law, and therefore Marsy's Law is not applicable."

Even if Marsy's Law applied, wrote the court, "none of the nineteen enumerated rights in Marsy's Law direct or compel the State to disclose investigative reports or records."

South Dakota law also specifically exempts law-enforcement investigation records from public disclosure requirements.

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

Outraged over 'illegal' wetlands rule, a GOP senator blocks dozens of Trump nominees

Dispute centers on regulations affecting Prairie Pothole Region, which includes South Dakota

BY SHAUNEEN MIRANDA

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate voted to confirm Keith Sonderling as secretary of Labor on Wednesday, marking one of the few Trump administration picks to get through the upper chamber recently after a North Dakota senator put a hold on "any and all" nominees.

But the Senate left town late Wednesday for its weeks-long campaign break and is not scheduled to return until after the midterms in November.

Dozens of President Donald Trump's nominees remain held up amid Sen. Kevin Cramer's outrage over a Biden-era rule dealing with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wetland easements that Cramer says harm his state's property owners.

Those nominees on hold include Kari Lake, the 2024 Republican nominee for a U.S. Senate seat in Arizona, as ambassador to Jamaica and Sean Kaufman to serve as assistant secretary for preparedness and response for the Department of Health and Human Services, among others.

Senators also have a slew of unfinished business to address once they return from their recess for the lame-duck session, and the consideration of nominees would compete with other matters for floor time, potentially dragging out the timeline even longer.

Sonderling — confirmed as Labor secretary, 47-41, along party lines — took on the acting agency head role in April after former Oregon U.S. Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer resigned amid misconduct allegations.

Aside from Sonderling, Cramer — generally a stalwart Trump ally — has only allowed Chris Klomp's nomination to serve as deputy secretary of HHS to move forward.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 10 of 63

Klomp's bid, which advanced out of the Senate Finance Committee in late September, has yet to reach a vote on the Senate floor.

"No other holds have been lifted, because my landowners need results, not commitments," Cramer said in a statement shared with States Newsroom.

The GOP senator's hold only covers Trump's nominations and does not include military promotions. Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., conducted one of the most highly publicized blanket holds in recent years on hundreds of military promotions for most of 2023 in protest of a Pentagon abortion policy.

A "hold" on a nomination in the Senate is an informal practice, used by members of both parties, where a senator signals their intent to object to confirming a nominee via unanimous consent.

Those unanimous consent agreements allow the Senate to fast-track consideration and take up nominees without the need to hold a roll-call vote.

Wetlands rule

Cramer's hold began in August over a 2024 federal wetlands rule enacted under then-President Joe Biden's administration, which Cramer blasted as "illegal" and "an affront to private property rights," per the statement to States Newsroom.

Cramer said the rule stands in violation of those rights by creating enormous setbacks for drain tile from wetland easements, North Dakota Monitor reported.

The regulation affects the Prairie Pothole Region, a wetlands area in the northern Great Plains that encompasses a large portion of North Dakota and is a key habitat for wildlife, including ducks and geese.

Parts of Iowa, Montana, Minnesota and South Dakota are also included in the region.

Cramer said the rule "needs to be thrown out and farmers need clear guidelines to end the threat of harassment from the federal government."

He added that "the White House knows all of this, but the ball is in their court to act, not mine."

Some movement

However, Cramer has been willing to incrementally lift the holds as he sees progress from the Trump administration, with Sonderling and Klomp as examples.

Part of that progress includes a September announcement from the Department of the Interior that the Fish and Wildlife Service, or FWS, would "incorporate feedback from North Dakota farmers, ranchers and conservation partners as it updates and expands an innovative Prairie Pothole Wetland pilot project addressing landowner concerns — particularly with wetland easements purchased prior to 1976."

Cramer said that "from the beginning, I told the White House I would be as flexible as they would be."

He added that "since then, we've had two meaningful meetings where North Dakota's farmers educated the administration on the land grab the FWS has perpetuated in the Prairie Pothole region."

In response to a request for comment on Cramer's holds, White House spokesperson Taylor Rogers doubled down on Trump's nominees, saying the president is "nominating talented patriots to successfully carry out his America First agenda."

Rogers added that "under President Trump's leadership, these nominees will continue to deliver major wins for the American people."

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.

US Senate leaves nation's capital in advance of midterms with much still undone

BY JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — U.S. senators departed Capitol Hill on Wednesday night for their campaign break, leaving numerous policy disputes unresolved.

The chamber won't return until Nov. 9 for the five-week lame-duck session, when party leaders will have to decide which bills they want to negotiate during what could be the final days of unified Republican control.

Democrats have become increasingly optimistic they will be able to flip the House and possibly the Senate from red to blue amid rising frustration with the cost of living, the war in Iran and unrestrained development of artificial intelligence.

The bills that hang in the balance aren't small by any measure:

Congress has yet to reach final agreement on the dozen annual government funding bills that total about \$1.8 trillion.

Lawmakers haven't brokered a compromise on the massive annual defense policy bill known as the National Defense Authorization Act.

The years-delayed farm bill has yet to see enough momentum to make it to the president's desk.

Agriculture Committee Chairman John Boozman, R-Ark., said this week during a brief interview he hopes a final bipartisan version of that farm aid and nutrition assistance bill will be worked out later this year.

The Arkansas Republican also criticized Democrats for not cooperating more with Republicans on major initiatives ahead of the elections.

"I think a lot of these things will be easier once the election's over and they don't feel like they're giving the president a win on legislation," he said.

Boozman, who isn't up for reelection this cycle and won't need to campaign during the break, said he doesn't have plans to begin serious negotiations with the House Agriculture chairman or the top Democrats on the committee during the October recess, though he said they may text each other.

Spending bills

In addition to working out a compromise on the farm bill, Boozman is one of the relatively few lawmakers tasked with shepherding a government funding bill through Congress.

Lawmakers were supposed to enact all 12 of those measures before the start of the fiscal year on Oct. 1, but instead leaned on a short-term stopgap measure to avoid a shutdown until mid-December.

When senators and their House counterparts, who left for their campaign break earlier this month, return after the election they'll have to decide whether to come to an agreement or pass on another temporary funding bill to keep federal departments up and running.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, of New York, declined to directly answer a question in mid-September about whether Democrats would negotiate those appropriations bills with Republicans during the lame duck, if Democrats win the majority and would take over come January.

"Look, the bottom line is first I think we have a damn good chance of winning the Senate," he said. "And we will have to sit down with our Republican colleagues and work out the best bill possible in terms of approps. That's one area where Dems and Republicans have worked pretty well together."

Holding over final decisions on major legislation until next year would still require Congress to garner President Donald Trump's support.

While funding levels and policy might not change substantially if those bills are negotiated during the lame duck or next year, leadership on the powerful Appropriations Committee could.

Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Susan Collins is in an especially close reelection bid in her home state of Maine.

Regardless of whether Collins secures reelection or loses, she will still be in charge of negotiating those government funding bills with Democrats this year. But if voters do elect her Democratic opponent instead, Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski would likely become the top Republican on the committee next year.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 12 of 63

Lawmakers will also likely want to make some progress on defense policy this year, having approved the annual National Defense Authorization Act every year for more than six decades.

The massive package gives Congress its best opportunity, other than the Defense appropriations bill, to place guardrails on the Pentagon and shape the military's future.

Permitting reform

One bill that will very likely be on the Senate floor during the lame-duck session is a long-sought overhaul of how the federal government conducts environmental reviews and permits infrastructure projects.

The bipartisan agreement was announced shortly before the Senate left for the break by West Virginia Republican Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, chairwoman of the Environment and Public Works Committee; Rhode Island Democratic Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, ranking member on that committee; Utah Republican Sen. Mike Lee, chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee; and New Mexico Democratic Sen. Martin Heinrich, ranking member on that committee.

Capito said during a press conference the "historic" agreement would make it "faster and more efficient and easier to build infrastructure projects" without eroding "strong protections for our environment."

"In my state, whether it's too long to build roads or energy infrastructure and other investment, it costs us jobs, it costs us the strengthening of our local economies," she said. "So when these projects are not built, what happens? Those costs are shifted onto our families, who pay more for energy, housing and other items."

The goal, Capito said, is for the package to be the first vote when the Senate returns in mid-November, to start the sometimes long and complicated floor process.

Whitehouse said negotiators had to go down several "dead-end avenues" before they were able to reach the final agreement they unveiled Wednesday, though that's not the end of the process.

"This is a hugely important milestone but there are two big pieces of work in front of us," he said, noting that their Senate colleagues now get to review the bill and offer amendments.

The second hurdle, Whitehouse said, will be "returning to regular order for wind and solar projects in the Trump administration," which remains unresolved.

"But we have had what I consider to be a very reasonable opening proposal from the Trump administration. We need more clarity on that," he said. "And when we have more clarity on that they'll be back-and-forth to try to resolve those issues. That will happen in parallel with the amendment work."

Whitehouse said if the legislation becomes law it should "lower electricity costs measurably for Americans," increase "clean" power, add construction jobs throughout the country and raise the overall economy.

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 launches campaign tour in GOP-friendly states ahead of midterms

BY JACOB FISCHLER

President Donald Trump is scheduled to kick off a month-long blitz of campaign stops with a Thursday rally in deep-red Oklahoma before heading to other states with strong Republican leanings.

The first events in the closing stretch of the midterm election campaign suggest his strength with swing voters is limited, as even some Republican candidates seek distance, political analysts said.

Trump's low approval ratings amid growing consumer costs, spiraling gas prices and an unpopular war in Iran have put U.S. Senate races in typically GOP-leaning states like Alaska and Iowa in play.

After the Oklahoma rally, the president will travel to Alabama and Ohio through the weekend. On Monday, he will be in Nebraska.

He has vowed he would make another stop in Texas soon as part of 32 days of travel before the Nov. 3 elections that will determine control of Congress.

Vice President JD Vance also rallied voters in Texas on Wednesday before a planned event in Florida on Thursday.

The red-state itinerary makes it appear Trump will be used to rally the base, rather than attempt to win

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 13 of 63

over voters who switch preferences from one election to another, said Chandler James, a political science professor at the University of Oregon.

"These are places where Trump has the most support that he's retained, and probably has the most influence," he said. "Trump still has a lot of sway within the Republican Party, and he has a pretty sizable political base, many of whom don't traditionally show up for elections besides when Trump is on the ballot."

In more traditionally contested states, such as North Carolina, Michigan or New Hampshire, the median voter may be further to the left and have a lower opinion of Trump, James said.

"He can still help, but he has to do so in different ways," Christopher Stout, a political science professor at Oregon State University, said. "Going to places where you might be able to recruit supporters rather than places where it'd be easy for Democrats to say, 'Look how closely this candidate is tied to a president whose popularity is pretty low.'"

Trump's approval rating was hovering Wednesday near 37%, with 60% disapproving, according to The New York Times polling average.

'They all want me'

Trump told reporters Tuesday he was strongly in demand for campaign appearances.

"I'm one person. They all want me to go campaign," he said. "In about two days, I'm starting a literally 32-day tour. ... I'm going to Texas. I'm going to Ohio. I'm going to all different places."

Candidates from a president's party typically face strong headwinds in midterm elections, a phenomenon that is likely to be especially true this year as Trump faces historically low approval ratings, James said.

Republicans could minimize that disadvantage, while still appealing to Trump's supporters, by keeping him focused on redder states and districts.

The base-focused strategy could also help recruit volunteers who can work across state lines or raise money, Stout said.

Texting and other technology allows volunteers to be active remotely, meaning that volunteers fired up in Oklahoma or Alabama could be helping mobilize Republican voters in Georgia or Iowa.

No longer a change agent

But there are indications Trump's support is cracking even in red areas.

U.S. Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar, a Republican from Florida, released a campaign ad in September in which she said Trump's immigration policy had "gone too far."

Iowa U.S. Rep. Ashley Hinson, a Republican nominee for U.S. Senate, criticized the Iran war in a social media post last week.

The Cook Political Report with Amy Walter in late September moved Salazar's race to "lean Republican," a shift signaling a more competitive race. The open Senate seat in Iowa is rated as a tossup, although the state's entire congressional delegation is currently Republican.

Even Ken Paxton, the far-right Texas attorney general who is running for U.S. Senate, privately groused that Trump's two-night midterm convention in his state hurt his polling in the close race against Democrat James Talarico, according to leaked audio obtained by The New York Times.

Paxton, a polarizing figure who defeated the more moderate incumbent Sen. John Cornyn in the GOP primary this year, also faces a tossup race against Talarico, even though the last Democrat to win a Senate seat in the reliably Republican state resigned to run for vice president in 1988.

Part of the challenge for Republicans is that swing voters in recent elections are looking for change, Stout said. That has helped Trump in the elections he ran while not in office, but that advantage has evaporated.

"A lot of those swing voters, many of them just want change," Stout said. "They want things to be different. So in 2016 and in 2024, he represented that change. In 2026, he represents the status quo. And so if people want change, he's not the person you want there."

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.

Feds provide guidance on new K-12 scholarship tax credit program 30 states, including South Dakota, have opted in so far

BY ROBBIE SEQUEIRA

The U.S. Department of the Treasury released new guidance Thursday for participating states, scholarship-granting organizations and taxpayers as the federal scholarship tax credit program prepares to take effect in January.

Created through President Donald Trump's massive tax and spending law in 2025, the Education Freedom Tax Credit program allows individuals to claim a dollar-for-dollar federal tax credit of up to \$1,700 for donations to certain scholarship-granting organizations (known as SGOs) and taxpayers can contribute to an eligible organization regardless of where that taxpayer lives.

The \$1,700 limit applies to the donor credit, not the scholarship amount, and married couples filing jointly can claim a combined \$3,400 credit.

These contributions are meant to fund K-12 scholarships, primarily at private schools, though the scholarships can cover tutoring, books, supplies, extended-day programs and disability services for students who remain in public schools, and tutoring can take place during or after school.

So far, 30 states have agreed to join the program, according to the Internal Revenue Service. Officials also confirmed a deadline for states to opt in by Jan. 1 and to submit their SGO lists by Feb. 15. On a press call with reporters Wednesday, a Treasury official said that if an organization meets the federal statutory requirements, the state must include it on the list submitted to the IRS; states cannot pick and choose the SGOs they like.

States opting in so far include: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming.

New York Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul, has said that she plans to have her state participate, but wants to first review the federal rules before making a final decision.

Several Democratic governors, including those in Hawaii, Minnesota, New Mexico and Oregon, have said their states won't participate.

In some states, Republican lawmakers and Democratic governors have had some disputes over the decision to opt in. Democratic governors in North Carolina and Kansas vetoed legislation requiring their states to opt in, but GOP-controlled legislatures overrode both vetoes.

The Democratic governors of Arizona and Wisconsin successfully vetoed GOP legislation that would have opted their states into the program.

Under the program, scholarships may be given to students whose household income is up to 300% of an area's median income. During the press call, Treasury officials said approximately 95% of American children live in households meeting that threshold, while Department of Education officials said about 28 million children in the 30 participating states would be eligible.

States have limited authority on the rules they can impose on scholarship-granting organizations within their borders; federal rules don't allow them to supersede limits by the federal government.

Under the federal rules, the organizations would be required to undergo annual financial and program audits and provide those reports to participating states. States could use the audits to identify problem organizations and remove groups that fail to meet federal requirements or to prevent fraud, including duplicate scholarship payments for the same student expense.

SGOs are required to be 501(c)(3) nonprofits that are not private foundations, and they must keep qualified contributions in separate accounts.

Under the law, SGOs must spend no less than 90% of their income on scholarships. Additionally, each scholarship-granting organization must serve at least 10 students who do not all attend the same school. They cannot earmark donations for a particular student and must verify household income and family size.

Federal statute also requires SGOs to prioritize students who received a scholarship the previous school

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 15 of 63

year, then siblings of the recipients. Students who would otherwise be public school students could qualify for these scholarships.

The rules stipulate that homeschools will be treated as they are defined and categorized according to each state's law.

According to new estimates provided by the Treasury, by 2030, there could be somewhere between 600 and 700 SGOs with contributions from more than 11 million taxpayers, nearly \$26 billion in qualified contributions annually and as many as 2.2 million scholarships annually.

Stateline reporter Robbie Sequeira can be reached at rsequeira@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.

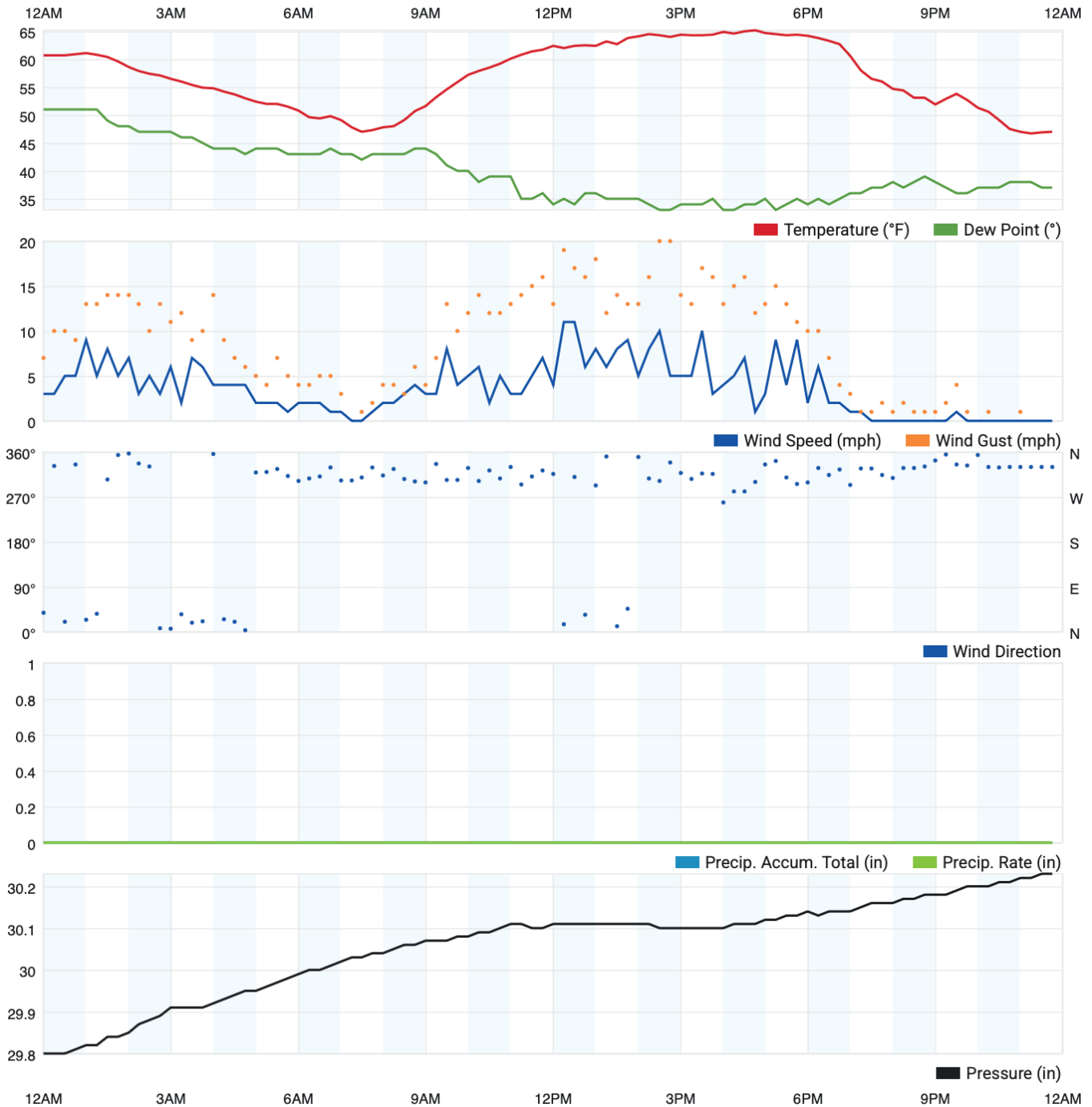
Robbie Sequeira is a staff writer covering housing and social services for Stateline.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 16 of 63

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

October 1, 2026



Broton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 17 of 63

Today



High: 61 °F

Chance
Sprinkles

Tonight



Low: 48 °F

Mostly Clear

Saturday



High: 72 °F

Chance
Showers

Saturday Night



Low: 44 °F

Mostly Clear

Sunday



High: 66 °F

Sunny



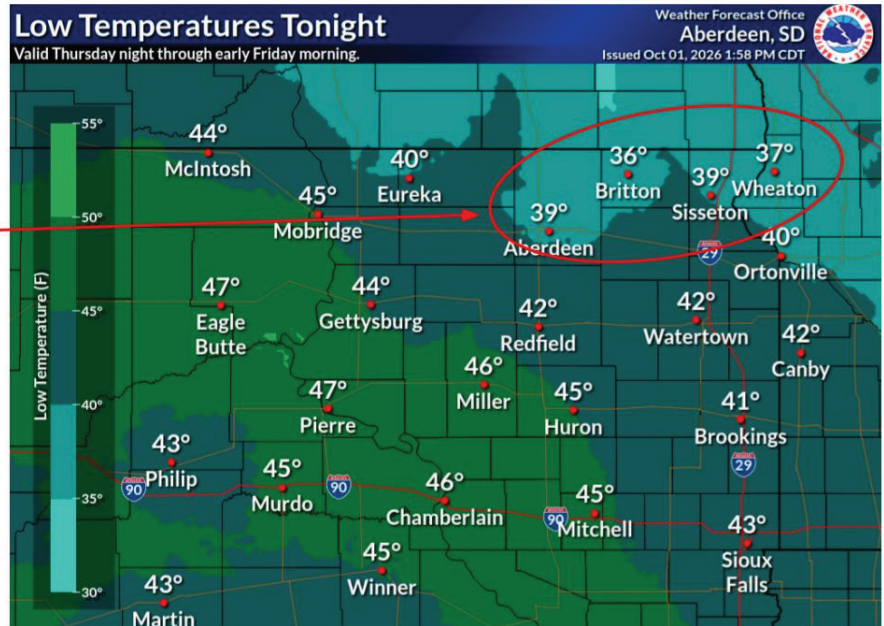
Cooler Temperatures Tonight

October 1, 2026
2:31 PM CDT

Temperatures drop into the 30s over parts of northeastern SD and western MN.

Key Messages:

- Temperatures will cool down a bit this morning. Widespread temperatures below 50° are expected.
- Over parts of northeastern South Dakota and western Minnesota, temperatures may drop as low as 36°.
 - At these temperatures, frost may begin to form. However, confidence is not high in frost development at this point.
 - Frost that does form may harm sensitive outdoor vegetation.



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Temperatures drop a bit overnight tonight, and widespread below 50° lows are expected. Some parts of northeastern South Dakota and western Minnesota may see lows as low as 36°, the point at which frost begins to form. However, confidence in frost is low at this time.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 18 of 63

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 65 °F at 4:49 PM

Low Temp: 46 °F at 11:20 PM

Wind: 21 mph at 1:18 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 91 in 1897

Record Low: 17 in 1974

Average High: 67

Average Low: 40

Average Precip in Oct.: 0.16

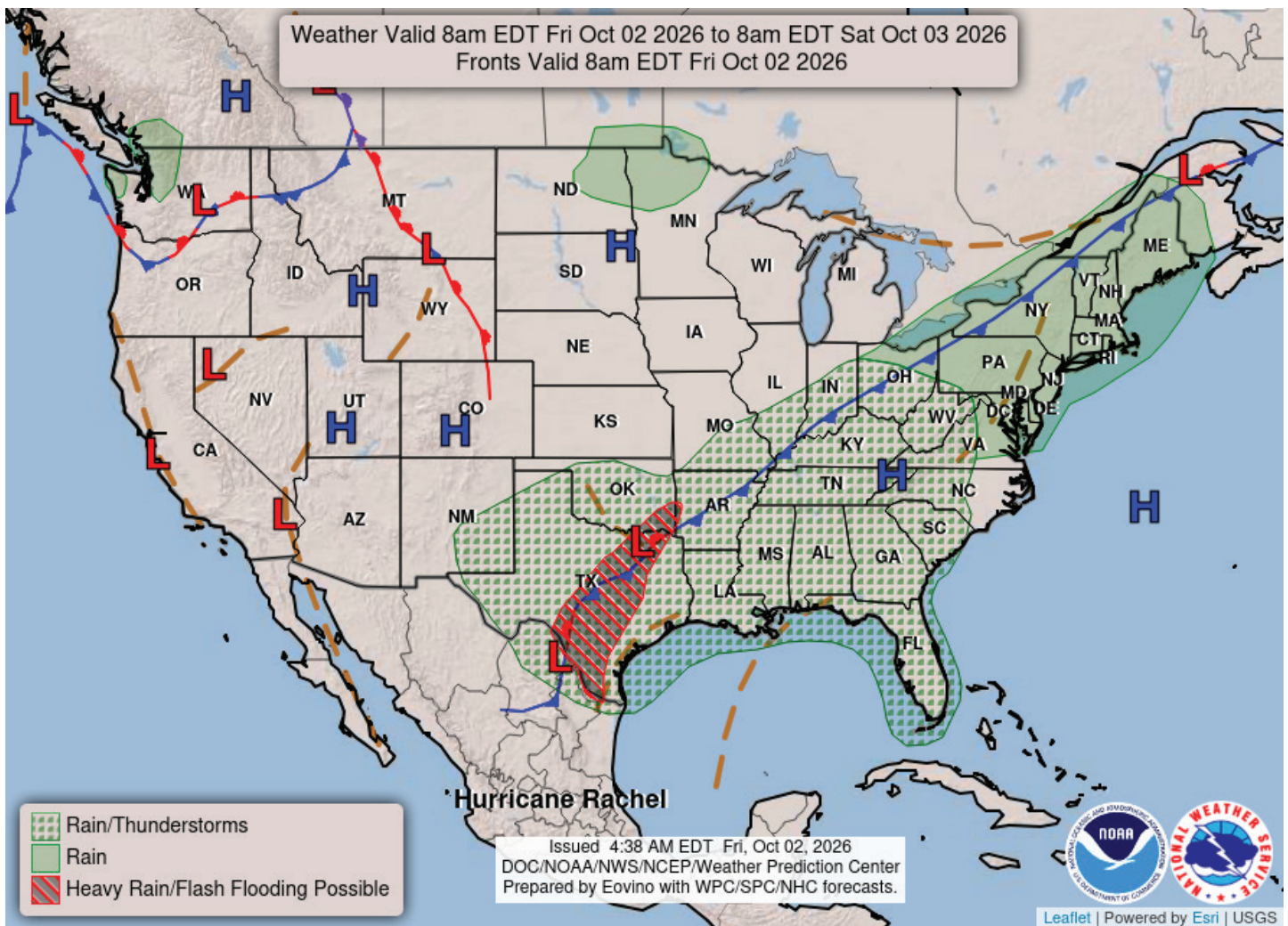
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 18.49

Precip Year to Date: 22.08

Sunset Tonight: 7:11 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:32 am



Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 19 of 63

Today in Weather History

October 2, 1971: Heavy wet snow of over a foot fell in the northern Black Hills. The heavy snow was accompanied by high winds which caused extensive damage to trees and utility lines. The power company said it was one of the worst storms they had experienced.

1858: The only hurricane to impact California struck San Diego on this day. Two researchers with NOAA Michael Chenoweth and Christopher Landsea reconstructed the path of the storm using accounts from newspapers of the high winds. They estimated that if a similar storm were to have hit in 2004, it would have caused around \$500 million in damage.

1882 — An early season windstorm over Oregon and northern California blew down thousands of trees and caused great crop damage in the Sacramento Valley. (David Ludlum)

1898: A Category 4 hurricane made landfall in Georgia on this day. This is the most recent major (Cat 3 or stronger) hurricane to make landfall in Georgia.

1894: A tornado passed over the Little Rock, Arkansas Weather Bureau office on this day.

1959 — A tornado struck the town of Ivy, VA (located near Charlottesville). Eleven persons were killed, including ten from one family. (The Weather Channel)

1980 — The temperature at Blue Canyon, CA, soared to 88 degrees, an October record for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1981 — Severe thunderstorms raked Phoenix, AZ, with heavy rain, high winds, and hail up to an inch and a half in diameter, for the second day in a row. Thunderstorms on the 1st deluged Phoenix with .68 inch of rain in five minutes, equalling their all-time record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — A fast moving cold front produced snow flurries from Minnesota to the Appalachian Mountains, and gale force winds behind the front ushered cold air into the Great Lakes Region. Valentine NE reported a record low of 25 degrees. Temperatures recovered rapidly in the Northern High Plains Region, reaching the lower 80s by afternoon. Jackson, WY, warmed from a morning low of 21 degrees to an afternoon high of 76 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Early morning thunderstorms in Georgia produced three inches of rain at Canton and Woodstock. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Flooding due to thunderstorm rains in the southeastern U.S. on the last day of September and the first day of October caused the Etowah River to rise seven feet above flood stage at Canton GA. Thunderstorms produced up to ten inches of rain in northeastern Georgia, with six inches reported at Athens GA in 24 hours. One man was killed, and another man was injured, when sucked by floodwaters into drainage lines. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



Avoiding Compromise

**God's Word is our safeguard against the temptation to compromise,
and it leads us on the path of His will.**

Proverbs 2:1-9: 1 My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you,
2 Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding;
3 For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding;
4 If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures;
5 Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God.
6 For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.
7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity,
8 Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones.
9 Then you will discern righteousness and justice And equity and every good course.

Yesterday we looked at the sin of compromise. We all will face this temptation at one point or another in our life, so how can we remain vigilant and stand firm?

The first step is to understand why compromise is so tempting. When others pressure us to take part in what we know God has forbidden, giving in can feel easier than facing rejection. And anyone committed to living a godly life will sometimes stand alone—even facing ridicule or persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). At other times, we may consent to things that violate our conscience simply to avoid conflict, trading obedience for a fragile peace. Taking a stand isn't easy, but God never asks us to go it alone. He's with us every moment.

The temptation to compromise, however, doesn't always come from others. We can be carried away by our own desires, letting feelings override what we know to be true. The answer isn't to distrust every emotion but to measure our choices against scriptural truth rather than impulse alone.

The best safeguard against compromise is to stay rooted in God's Word. When we begin each day seeking His wisdom, He faithfully guides our steps (Psalm 119:105). Scripture doesn't just tell us what to avoid—it lights the path worth walking.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 21 of 63

The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.2% Sales Tax

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

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

E-mail _____

Password _____

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

paypal.me/paperpaul

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



WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.01.26

12 16 32 33 56 2

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 59 Mins 12
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.29.26

10 15 16 27 64 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$321,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 44 Mins 12
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.30.26

16 23 38 39 48 2

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$6,050,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 59
Mins 12 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.30.26

8 11 19 21 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$74,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 14
Mins 12 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.30.26

10 16 27 42 57 14

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 43
Mins 12 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
09.30.26

4 6 23 33 44 13

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$440,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 43
Mins 12 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 23 of 63

News from the Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Aberdeen Central def. Tea, 25-14, 25-13, 25-8
Aberdeen Christian def. Faulkton, 25-20, 25-20, 20-25, 25-18
Bridgewater-Emery def. Wessington Springs, 25-15, 25-9, 25-19
Britton-Hecla def. Milbank, 25-18, 19-25, 23-25, 25-20, 15-12
Burke def. Boyd County, Neb., 26-24, 25-20, 25-16
Canistota def. Howard, 25-23, 25-16, 25-22
Centerville def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-13, 25-17, 25-23
Chester def. Beresford, 25-3, 25-6, 25-9
Clark-Willow Lake def. Aberdeen Roncalli, 25-15, 25-21, 14-25, 25-15
Colman-Egan def. Castlewood, 25-10, 22-25, 25-20, 25-22
Corsica/Stickney def. Tripp-Delmont-Armour, 25-19, 25-18, 25-27, 25-17
Dell Rapids St Mary's def. Iroquois-Lake Preston, 25-15, 25-14, 25-16
Dell Rapids def. Lennox, 25-23, 25-11, 25-18
Deubrook def. Oldham-Ramona-Rutland, 25-7, 25-11, 25-11
Edgemont def. Lead-Deadwood, 26-24, 25-21, 25-15
Estelline-Hendricks def. DeSmet, 25-9, 25-11, 25-9
Florence-Henry def. Tri-State, N.D., 25-14, 21-25, 25-13, 25-15
Freeman def. Ethan, 25-14, 25-22, 25-18
Gayville-Volin High School def. Canton, 25-15, 25-22, 22-25, 25-17
Great Plains Lutheran def. Deuel, 27-25, 18-25, 25-17, 25-14
Hamlin def. Redfield, 25-7, 25-14, 25-10
Hanson def. Kimball-White Lake, 25-19, 25-18, 25-27, 25-19
Harrisburg def. Huron, 25-9, 25-10, 25-4
Ipswich def. Gettysburg, 26-24, 25-15, 25-23
Langford def. Waubay/Summit, 23-25, 25-14, 25-21, 25-17
Mitchell def. Riggs, 25-13, 25-11, 25-16
Mobridge-Pollock def. Stanley County, 25-15, 24-26, 25-16, 25-12
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Winner, 17-25, 25-23, 25-18, 25-22
Northwestern def. Webster, 25-12, 25-15, 25-18
Parker/Marion def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-15, 25-9, 25-18
Parkston def. Miller, 25-23, 17-25, 25-20, 25-22
Philip def. Sully Buttes, 25-11, 25-12, 25-14
Platte-Geddes def. Lyman, 25-12, 17-25, 19-25, 25-20, 15-10
Rapid City Christian def. Hill City, 25-16, 25-23, 21-25, 25-16
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket def. James Valley Christian School, 25-17, 25-15, 25-20
Sioux Falls Christian def. Yankton, 25-17, 25-14, 25-15
Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Brookings, 25-12, 23-25, 25-17, 23-25, 15-9
Sioux Falls Lutheran def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-11, 25-19, 25-15
Sioux Falls Washington def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 22-25, 25-14, 24-26, 25-19, 15-10
Sioux Valley def. Flandreau, 25-19, 25-7, 25-17
Sturgis Brown def. Douglas, 25-15, 25-21, 21-25, 27-25
Tri-Valley def. McCook Central-Montrose, 22-25, 25-16, 21-25, 25-13, 15-5
Wagner def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 25-20, 25-16, 25-13
Wall def. Newell, 25-17, 25-19, 25-16
Warner def. Herried-Selby, 25-13, 25-14, 25-11

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 24 of 63

Waverly-South Shore def. Wilmot, 25-19, 24-26, 25-15, 25-15

Ponca Triangular=

Dakota Valley def. Ponca, Neb., 14-25, 25-20, 25-14, 25-9

Pierce, Neb. def. Dakota Valley, 25-16, 26-24, 25-12

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

PREP FOOTBALL

Mahpiya Luta 34, Marty 32

Todd County 54, Tiospa Zina 0

Walthill, Neb. 54, Flandreau Indian 6

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

Households will pay more for energy because of Trump's policy changes, think tank says

By JENNIFER McDERMOTT Associated Press

Households in the contiguous United States will pay thousands of dollars more for energy through 2040 because of federal policy changes since President Donald Trump returned to office, according to modeling released Friday by a nonpartisan think tank.

The Energy Innovation analysis found that households will pay an average of \$6,500 more for energy, cumulatively through 2040. In five states, households will pay roughly \$9,000 more: Oregon, Mississippi, South Dakota, Virginia and Wyoming.

The California-based think tank said there will be more demand for natural gas for electricity because the administration is canceling new clean energy projects and there will be more demand for gasoline for transportation because Trump and Congress are revoking policies that encouraged or created incentives for more efficient and lower-emissions vehicles. Higher demand drives prices up.

Electricity bills are already rising faster than inflation in much of the U.S., which is being blamed in some areas on demand from data centers. The Iran war has sent oil and gasoline prices sharply higher, too.

Contrarily, Trump has said his administration's energy policies will make bills more affordable for families and businesses. White House spokeswoman Taylor Rogers said Wednesday that lowering electricity prices remains a top priority and Trump is unleashing reliable energy like coal and natural gas to reverse the "catastrophic damage" Democrats did to the power grid by ramping up clean energy. A 2025 Department of Energy report, mandated by Trump, warned of increasing blackouts if the U.S. continued closing coal and natural gas plants.

"Joe Biden created a grid crisis; President Trump is fixing it," Rogers wrote in an email. "If the Democrats had their way, these costly and unreliable renewable energy projects would still be failing our grid and our communities."

The Republican president prioritizes fossil fuels to produce electricity, unlike Biden, who saw clean energy as a climate solution.

Analysis examined impact on states solely from federal policy changes

It focused on the sweeping package of tax breaks that slashed funding for clean energy tax credits, known as the One Big Beautiful Bill, Trump signed; environmental rollbacks, including clean air and power plant rules and the revocation of a scientific finding that underpinned the U.S. fight against climate change; the loosening of fuel economy standards and blocking of California's novel rule banning the sale of new gas-powered cars by 2035; and federal actions to stop wind, solar and hydrogen projects.

These changes will result in annual household energy costs rising in every state in the contiguous U.S., plus job losses in 47 of 48 states and losses to the gross domestic product in 46 states, Energy Innova-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 25 of 63

tion said. It's projecting 37,000 additional premature deaths from air pollution, \$72 billion in additional healthcare costs and more than 9 billion tons of additional carbon pollution because of the environmental rollbacks. The analysis did not include Alaska or Hawaii because key federal data is not available for those two states, said Robbie Orvis, senior director for modeling and analysis.

Looking at the metrics, Orvis was hard-pressed to find a silver lining.

"Across pretty much every state, things are worse. The outlook now is worse for states and the affordability crisis will be worse because of the combined set of policies," he said.

Climate Justice Alliance legislative director Mar Zepeda said her Washington, D.C., electric bill increased \$200 in the past month. Zepeda said electricity demands from data centers are increasing energy rates, and federal "affordability" policies only exacerbate this.

"They may call it affordability, but affordable for whom and at what cost? Not for regular people," Zepeda said in an email.

White House says the think tank is partisan

Rogers said it is "irresponsible" to classify Energy Innovation as nonpartisan because its employees have donated to Democrats and worked with Democrats on climate policy.

Spokesman Silvio Marcacci said they work with policymakers who want to cut emissions and lower bills, regardless of party. He said multiple states led by Republicans have used their tool designed to model policies affecting energy use and emissions. Much of their data comes from government sources, including the Energy Information Administration.

Rogers also said states led by Democrats that have embraced aggressive renewable mandates see higher energy costs, notably California and New York. She said this proves Republican policies are working. The conservative think tank, Institute for Energy Research, said in December that blue states have high rates.

However, in the Energy Innovation analysis, three of the five states facing the highest costs have Republican governors, and states that voted for Trump in 2024 will pay an average of \$7,000 more in energy spending cumulatively per household, versus \$5,800 on average per household in states that voted for Kamala Harris. Its research has found that states with high levels of wind and solar generation, including Republican-led Iowa and Oklahoma, have experienced the lowest rate increases.

The average price residential customers pay for electricity increased over the course of Biden's term and has continued to rise since Trump returned to office, according to EIA data. Customers paid an average of about 12.6 cents per kilowatt-hour in January 2021 when Biden took office. In January 2025, when Trump returned to office, that price stood at nearly 16 cents per kilowatt-hour. It was 17.45 cents in January 2026 and 18.31 cents in July.

Oregon households' annual energy spending slated to increase the most

The modeling projects federal policy changes will increase annual energy spending in Oregon by \$840 per household in 2035 and \$1,200 per household in 2040, with a cumulative \$9,300 increase from 2026 to 2040 — the highest of any state.

The Oregon Citizens' Utility Board advocates for residential utility customers. Executive Director Bob Jenks called those numbers "frightening" because Oregon already has an energy affordability problem. He cited steep rate increases as utilities make upgrades and data centers use more power.

As costs rise, Jenks expects utilities to disconnect more households because people won't be able to afford their bills.

Jenks said wind and solar are essential for affordable electricity in Oregon, and he wants the federal government to partner with states to develop the energy they need.

"We're trying to optimize among the resource options we have, and they're trying to take things away and raise the costs," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 26 of 63

World shares mixed after global bond sell-off deepens and ahead of US jobs data

By CHAN HO-HIM AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — Global stocks were mixed and European shares edged higher on Friday after a global bond sell-off deepened and ahead of a U.S. monthly jobs report due later in the day.

Oil prices declined even as the U.S. sent another aircraft carrier and more troops to the Middle East, and as President Donald Trump threatened more possible escalations against Iran.

In early European trading, Britain's FTSE 100 climbed 0.5% to 10,485.00. France's CAC 40 rose 0.6% to 7,883.49, while Germany's DAX was up 0.8% to 25,129.78. That came a day after Europe's benchmark stock indexes fell sharply as government bond yields shot up.

In Asia, Japan's Nikkei 225 fell 0.9% to 68,309.46. South Korea's Kospi added 0.5% to 7,003.74. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 2.6% to 23,972.29, hitting the lowest level since July. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 gained 0.8% to 8,682.10. Taiwan's Taiex advanced 0.3%.

Markets in mainland China were closed for a holiday.

U.S. futures edged up after U.S. Treasury yields held steadier early Friday.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury was at around 5.24%, after it reached 5.34% on Thursday, the highest since 2002. It crossed the 5% mark last month, as inflationary pressure from the global energy shock driven by the Iran war and rising U.S. government debt pushed investors to demand higher returns.

The 5% level on the U.S. 10-year Treasury yield has been an "important psychological threshold" for investors, David Clewell, a portfolio manager at T. Rowe Price, said in a commentary this week.

Factoring in the U.S.'s resilient economic growth, there is a "credible" likelihood that the U.S. 10-year Treasury yield can rise toward 5.5% to 6%, Clewell suggested. Ballooning bond yields have been putting downward pressure on stock markets, as higher borrowing costs can undercut stock returns.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 added 0.2%, the Dow Jones Industrial Average edged up less than 0.1%, and the Nasdaq composite rose less than 0.1%.

Investors and traders are monitoring closely the U.S. monthly jobs report for September to be released on Friday, as the data could provide more insight into the likelihood of an October interest rate hike by the Federal Reserve, after the Fed raised rates in September for the first time in three years.

Oil prices declined early Friday as uncertainties surrounding the prospect of a de-escalation between the U.S. and Iran dragged on.

The U.S. military is deploying thousands of troops aboard a group of ships, including a third aircraft carrier, to the Middle East, according to a U.S. official on Thursday, after Trump on Wednesday threatened to "blow them up" or make a deal, referring to Iran, in an exchange with reporters.

Brent crude, the international standard, lost 2.3% to below \$100 a barrel, at \$99.95, after advancing on Thursday. That's still well above the approximately \$72 per barrel level in late February before the war.

The U.S. dollar fell to 157.63 Japanese yen from 158.09 yen. The euro was trading at \$1.1255, up from \$1.1244.

'I was fighting for my life': Indian pilot hailed as hero recalls FlyDubai cockpit attack

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — The Indian airline captain who helped thwart an apparent attempt to crash a FlyDubai flight described Friday how he fought for his life in the minutes after his co-pilot stabbed him and the plane began a steep descent.

Capt. Smit Machchhar, recovering in an Abu Dhabi hospital, told Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a televised video call that he knew he had to get back on his feet to save his passengers.

"I had so many wounds. I had fallen down," he said from the hospital, his head bandaged and tubes in

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 27 of 63

his nose, before breaking down as he recalled the attack.

"I was fighting for my life. At one point, I realized that if I didn't get up ... then passengers would lose their lives," he told Modi.

Machchhar, who is from Mumbai, was seriously injured in Wednesday's attack but managed to open the cockpit door, allowing passengers to enter and restrain the attacker as the Boeing 737 descended sharply, witnesses and Israeli authorities said. He has been hailed as a hero, with world leaders saying he helped avert a disaster.

The flight, carrying 182 people from Dubai to Tel Aviv, was diverted to Tabuk in northwestern Saudi Arabia for an emergency landing. FlyDubai said Wednesday that the jet was secured by on-duty crew members "who diverted and landed the aircraft safely." A regional official said the crew members were pilots in training.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the attacker, an Omani national, was arrested in Saudi Arabia and was undergoing interrogation there. The motive for the attack was not immediately clear.

Modi told Machchhar his "courage, patience, and presence of mind" saved many lives.

Machchhar said his flying experience allowed him to sense the plane's steep descent even after he was knocked down by the attacker.

"I have been flying planes for 17 years and serving as a captain for the last 11 years. I can sense exactly what is happening with the aircraft even with my eyes closed. When I was down, I could feel that the aircraft was plummeting," he said.

Machchhar said that during those difficult moments, he recited the Hanuman Chalisa, a Hindu devotional hymn dedicated to Lord Hanuman, the monkey god, and traditionally recited as a prayer for strength and courage.

"Lord Hanuman gave me courage," he told Modi.

Machchhar, who is married and has two children, has worked for FlyDubai for about four years, according to his LinkedIn profile. Before joining the airline, he spent 11 years with SpiceJet, an Indian low-cost carrier, where he served as a senior commander and line training captain. He logged more than 9,750 flying hours with SpiceJet.

Philip Kean, CEO of Mainland Air, the New Zealand flight school where Machchhar trained, said pilots are taught how to take over if a fellow crew member becomes incapacitated. But the training does not typically prepare them for a stabbing attack by a colleague, he told The Associated Press on Friday.

"I don't think there's much in the handbook for being stabbed," Kean said.

"You're friends and you're flying together," he said. "Nobody would expect ... a person to have a go at you like that."

Hurricane Rachel strengthens to a Category 3 storm off Mexico's Pacific coast

By FABIOLA SÁNCHEZ, JONATHAN CASTELLÓN and SARAH RAZA Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Hurricane Rachel has been upgraded to a Category 3 storm off Mexico's Pacific coast as northern Mexico and parts of the U.S. Southwest were reeling from flooding and damage from the remnants of Hurricane Polo earlier this week.

The storm, located about 235 miles (380 kilometers) south off the southern tip of Baja California, was continuing west-northwest at 3 mph (6 kph) and expected to strengthen Friday before weakening this weekend, according to the National Hurricane Center.

The maximum sustained winds were 120 miles per hour (193 kph) as of Thursday evening. Rachel's swells are expected to generate life-threatening surf and rip-current conditions off Mexico's coast, the NHC warned.

Mexican authorities said Thursday they remain on alert because of forecasts of very heavy rain in the states of Baja California Sur, Sinaloa, and Jalisco, and the possibility of landslides, rising river levels, over-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 28 of 63

flowing rivers and flooding in low-lying areas.

On Wednesday night, the U.S. Embassy in Mexico warned U.S. citizens in Cabos San Lucas, a popular vacation destination for Americans, of beach and port closures and deadly rip currents.

The Pacific has seen an unusually busy hurricane season, which experts have attributed to El Niño, which has fueled crippling droughts in Mexico and Central America and floods in other parts of the region. In the Pacific, it has resulted in warmer waters and wind patterns that act as fodder for hurricanes. Tropical Storm Nolo continued its northwest approach away from Hawaii on Thursday, though the National Weather Service said it could strengthen into a hurricane by the weekend.

Northern Mexico still reeling from Polo

Parts of northern Mexico were still reeling from floods and wider destruction left by Polo. Hundreds of people remained displaced or had their homes destroyed, and at least 13 municipalities remained flooded Thursday night, according to local authorities.

Lucía Vegas, who lives in the small town of Bacabachi in the border state of Sonora, said it was a miracle she survived severe flooding as it swept through her community. She, her husband and three children were left homeless.

Vegas said she and her family managed to survive thanks to their dog. In the middle of the night, as the floodwaters were rising, the dog woke her by shaking water off herself, giving the family enough time to climb a ladder onto the roof of their home just minutes before it was completely flooded.

"Right now, we have been left with nothing," the 39-year-old woman said through tears.

Storm remnants drench central U.S.

Areas in Texas, Nebraska, Missouri and Iowa were still under flood watch Thursday afternoon as storm remnants continued to batter the region, flooding streets and neighborhoods and setting off water rescues.

Wednesday was the wettest day on record for Lincoln, Nebraska, which received 6.1 inches of rainfall, according to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Climate Office.

In Omaha, which received 4.7 inches of rain Wednesday, the fire department said it responded to 80 water rescues over a three-hour period ending early Thursday. Some floodwaters reached depths of 8 feet. Schools remained open. But many buses never made it out of flooded parking lots, prompting officials to ask parents to transport their students to school.

San Antonio, Texas, was under a flash-flood warning through Thursday evening, and the city urged residents to avoid unnecessary travel. More than 19,000 residents across the state were without power Thursday afternoon, according to PowerOutage.us. Videos posted on social media showed floodwaters in Texas creating waves along Interstate 35 in Denton.

In Chicago, a wastewater treatment and stormwater management utility urged residents to conserve water use to prevent flooding and stormwater backup.

"We encourage everyone to conserve water when possible to create more capacity in our systems," utility President Kari K. Steele said in a statement Wednesday.

In Kansas, Gov. Laura Kelly issued an emergency proclamation on Wednesday ahead of the storms that allows state resources to assist first responders in hard-hit communities.

In-flight attack on FlyDubai pilot puts aviation security measures under fresh scrutiny

By SAM METZ, RIO YAMAT and PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel has some of the world's most stringent air travel security measures. The United Arab Emirates proudly adheres to international aviation safety standards. Yet those safeguards failed to prevent a flight between the countries from taking a dangerous plunge during an alleged attack in the cockpit.

The copilot allegedly stabbed the captain in the cockpit before passengers intervened aboard FlyDubai Flight FZ1073 after taking off from Dubai, UAE, with 182 people including eight crew members flying to Tel Aviv, Israel, on Wednesday.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 29 of 63

The airplane made a safe emergency landing in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday and the incident is under investigation by Saudi, Emirati and Israeli authorities, with the United States and Oman assisting efforts to determine a motive.

"Until this event, the possibility of a threat originating from a pilot or crew member was not considered a likely scenario. Security efforts have traditionally focused much more heavily on passengers and their luggage," said Eyal Hulata, Israel's former national security adviser. "That will probably change now and crew members will be subject to heavier screening."

Israel's security protocols focus heavily on Israeli airlines and departing flights from Ben-Gurion International Airport. A potential Achilles' heel lies overseas, where procedures for Israel-bound flights vary and are harder for Israeli authorities to oversee.

Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest airport for international passenger traffic, has built some of its appeal around a reputation for safety in a volatile region, said Philip Baum, a visiting professor of aviation security at Coventry University in England.

"They are very conscious of the fact, a little bit like Israel in many respects, that they cannot afford to have a terrorist attack happening on a flight out of there," he said.

Pilot vetting and preflight screening aren't uniform worldwide

Investigators have not publicly identified the object used to stab the flight's captain or said whether it was carried onto the plane or came from inside the aircraft.

Preflight screening of flight crews should generally "mirror very closely what a passenger goes through," although security procedures vary around the world, said Dave Komendat, a senior security adviser at risk management firm International SOS and former chief security officer for Boeing.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that Israel has long-standing agreements with foreign carriers to keep pilots from flying into the country if they are citizens of nations that don't maintain diplomatic relations with Israel.

Israeli authorities have described the FlyDubai copilot as Omani. Israel and Oman do not have formal diplomatic relations, raising questions about how the suspect ended up on the Tel Aviv-bound flight.

"Obviously, there was a loophole here. And we're taking care of that," Netanyahu said Thursday during an interview with Fox News Channel's "Fox and Friends."

Israel will increase security precautions on flights coming into the country whether or not they are operated by Israel. Pilots flying into Israel will be vetted and Israel will know their identities, prime minister's office spokesperson Doron Spielman told The Associated Press.

There were no Israeli air marshals on the FlyDubai flight and the people who helped were civilians, Spielman added.

The International Civil Aviation Organization sets baseline pilot-vetting and licensing standards, while national regulators and airlines can impose additional requirements.

Aviation security expert Menachem Bachrach said Israel relies largely on foreign governments and airlines to vet their own crew members, and Wednesday's incident may point to a compliance lapse rather than a flaw in the procedures.

"Before we're jumping to tighten security, I would just say it's likely that somebody didn't follow the protocols," Bachrach said.

Investigators to look for red flags and review distress call handling

Israeli flag carrier El Al periodically assesses its pilots' fitness to fly, while other airlines may do so less often, said Arik Arad, chairman of the aviation cybersecurity consultancy CYVIATION and El Al's former head of security at Ben Gurion Airport.

Investigators will want to know whether colleagues previously reported concerns about the copilot and, if so, how the airline responded, Komendat said.

Investigators in the UAE and Israel also are likely to review responses to the distress signals that came from the FlyDubai plane after a steep drop in altitude.

A person who heard the FlyDubai flight's air traffic control communications said a crew member reported

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 30 of 63

a hijacking and requested ambulances. Authorities in Saudi Arabia and Jordan initially refused to clear the aircraft for landing, said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

The crew member eventually persuaded Saudi authorities to allow the plane to set down at Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz International Airport in the city of Tabuk.

International aviation standards call for countries to give aircraft facing hijacking or other “unlawful interference” maximum assistance and priority. But the underlying 1944 treaty, the Convention on International Civil Aviation, only requires a country to provide assistance “as it may find practicable,” making it a “relatively soft obligation,” said Vincent Correia, co-director of McGill University’s Institute of Air and Space Law.

Standard practice in a serious emergency is to get an aircraft on the ground as quickly as possible at the nearest suitable runway, “regardless of nationality, flight plan or politics,” said John Gradek, who manages McGill’s Aviation Management Program.

Gradek stressed it’s still not clear why the FlyDubai plane took a 180-degree turn as it crossed into Jordanian airspace before heading southwest to Tabuk. It’s not unusual for flight crews to bypass the nearest airport in favor of one better-equipped to meet a plane’s needs, he said.

Locked cockpits have been central to flight security for 25 years

Netanyahu said the flight’s injured captain saved the aircraft and the 182 people on it by resisting the copilot’s attacks long enough to open the 737’s cockpit door, enabling passengers to subdue the suspect and other FlyDubai crew members to take the controls and land the plane.

Cockpit doors worldwide were reinforced and locked after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks to keep intruders out. The FlyDubai incident, and past crashes caused by pilots who wanted to take their own lives, highlight the risk when a threat comes from inside the cockpit.

“The industry itself needs to recognize that flight deck door — whilst installed for very understandable reasons to prevent a suicidal hijacking by a passenger — has also created a fortress into which the good guys cannot gain access to a rogue individual, be it a hijacker or a rogue crew member,” Baum said.

Airline personnel know more about aviation security weaknesses and can gain the trust of security workers they regularly encounter, Osprey Flight Solutions Chief Intelligence Officer Matthew Borie, whose company advises airlines on flight threats, said.

“Unfortunately, if an insider with nefarious intent wants to carry out something like this, they may actually be best placed to know where the most vulnerable points are and how to breach them,” Borie said.

New York’s governor and AG set to give update on Cornell rape allegations

NEW YORK (AP) — New York’s governor and attorney general were set to give an update Friday morning about the investigation into a woman’s allegations that she was gang raped at a Cornell University fraternity house.

Gov. Kathy Hochul announced Thursday she appointed the office of Attorney General Letitia James as the special prosecutor to oversee the investigation, saying she had lost faith in the local district attorney’s ability to handle the case.

The investigation had initially been closed without charges in 2024.

Last month, the woman filed a civil lawsuit and Tompkins County District Attorney Matthew Van Houten reopened the investigation. He has since been bombarded by criticism that he abandoned the original investigation too quickly.

The attorney general will oversee the investigation and, if warranted, present evidence to a grand jury, Hochul said.

“The young woman at the center of this case deserves to know that every fact will be examined and justice pursued,” she said in a statement Thursday.

Messages left for Van Houten were not immediately returned late Thursday.

The case has roiled the Ivy League campus and raised questions about its response and the larger issue of how sexual assaults are handled on college campuses.

The woman, identified only as Jane Doe in court documents, told campus police in November of 2024 that she was assaulted, then discussed it with the university's internal investigators as part of Cornell's disciplinary process.

The lawsuit against seven fraternity brothers, the university, the Chi Phi fraternity and others alleges that she was plied with drugs and alcohol, then subjected to sex acts by a group of men while she was partially or entirely incapacitated. One of the men sent a social media message to other fraternity members alerting them to what was happening, and inviting people to take part, according to the lawsuit.

Lawyers for two of the men she is suing have denied they participated in a sexual assault. One said his client hadn't touched the woman. Attempts by The Associated Press to reach the other men or their representatives have been unsuccessful.

Iowa lawmakers to vote on raising tax incentive cap for a \$15B steel plant

By HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Iowa lawmakers will return to the Statehouse Friday to consider expanding the ceiling on state tax incentives in an effort to secure a \$15 billion steel plant project for the state.

President Donald Trump announced the plant Monday alongside Iowa elected officials, heralding the project as a major economic and national security investment.

Five weeks before the midterm elections, Republicans seized on the promise of good-paying jobs and a central role for the heartland in the push for American steel manufacturing. It's celebrated as an opportunity for southeast Iowa, an area along the Mississippi River that once thrived as a hub for industry but has since suffered from shuttered facilities and dwindled populations. Still, the deal and the tax abatements it could carry have also been met with some skepticism in rural Iowa and Des Moines alike.

And while Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said the "deal is done," state action and local officials in the days since suggest otherwise.

Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds on Tuesday called lawmakers back for the special session, saying "reasonable and limited updates" to the state's economic development program were needed to advance the project proposed by Mesabi Metalics, a Minnesota company owned by the India-based conglomerate Essar Group.

The terms of an agreement between the state and Mesabi Metalics have been outlined in a memorandum of understanding; neither provided a copy when asked for one.

While the specific location remains undisclosed, elected officials have indicated the project is set for Lee County. Still, the chair of the county board of supervisors said this week that the company has not yet committed to the project site.

Mesabi Metalics "looks forward to breaking ground in the near future," Jesse Harris, a spokesperson for the company, said in a statement Tuesday. He said the company is "optimistic" that changes to the law will be enacted based on conversations with legislators and elected officials.

The White House said Thursday that the Iowa project is only possible because of the president's policies. "President Trump has a proven record of securing historic investments, creating high-paying jobs, and bringing manufacturing back to the United States," spokesperson Taylor Rogers said in a statement.

The pivot to Iowa seems to have moved quickly

Iowa state Rep. Matthew Rinker said he joined conversations on a potential project in his district several months ago.

Still, as recently as July, job listings on Mesabi's website for the steel plant were based in Paducah, Kentucky, according to a version saved in the web archive. Jobs are now listed for Iowa, though the job responsibilities for a government relations manager still include interfacing with Kentucky's economic

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 32 of 63

development team.

While the company had been in discussion with Kentucky officials, the scale of the project "more than doubled over the negotiation period," spokesperson Brandon Mattingly said in an email.

Iowa "did get kind of into the mix late," said Rinker, a Republican. "I think once they got here, they realized this is where they needed to be."

First, though, changes in state law are necessary for Iowa to compete against other states for the project, Reynolds said in her proclamation. She is asking lawmakers to modify the economic development program so that tax credits on eligible projects can be worth up to 10% of investments, an increase from the current 5%, and paid out over 10 years instead of five.

For a \$15 billion project, that could mean up to \$1.5 billion in kickbacks payable over 10 years once the plant is running and contingent on jobs.

A major investment opportunity could carry risks for local communities

Lee County does not have any zoning or permitting ordinances that would be required for the project itself. The company would need a permit for hauling on the county's secondary roads.

The scale of an investment such as this one is asymmetrical with the legal and administrative capacity of a small, rural community, said Anthony Pipa, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who studies development and policy in rural areas.

While there's a lot of potential upside to a project of this scale, that asymmetry also leaves those communities vulnerable and without significant leverage, he said. Pipa also pointed to examples of massive proposed investments that didn't come to fruition.

In neighboring Wisconsin, for example, Trump announced a Foxconn Technology Group display screen manufacturing facility and its promise of 13,000 jobs, saying it would be the "eighth wonder of the world." The state Legislature, at the urging of then-Republican Gov. Scott Walker, approved up to \$3 billion in state tax breaks for the Taiwanese manufacturing company if it hit employment and investment benchmarks, though those were significantly scaled back by Walker's successor, Democratic Gov. Tony Evers.

Foxconn has since dramatically reduced the scope of the project and now says it will employ about 2,600 people by the end of 2029.

Wisconsin Democrat Gordon Hintz, a leading opponent of the Foxconn project when he was a state lawmaker, said he sees parallels with what's promised in Iowa.

"The idea of having domestic production in an Upper Midwest, post-industrial economy has a lot of appeal," said Hintz, who is now a county executive. "The devil's in the details."

The Lee County Economic Development Board, which Rinker said was pivotal in bringing the Mesabi project to Iowa, said the plant brings "extraordinary opportunity," while acknowledging the ongoing questions that need to be addressed "about workforce, infrastructure, housing, and community services."

"We take both seriously," board CEO and President Emily Benjamin said in a statement. "Our job is to help make sure growth like this benefits the people who live and work here."

Pete Hegseth creates a Pentagon Office of Religious Affairs reporting directly to him

By TIFFANY STANLEY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth is launching an office of religious affairs, the latest of his faith-related reforms at the Pentagon.

He announced in a speech Wednesday that the office will help offer "first-class religious support" and will report directly to him.

"Our department is, you might say, putting on the full armor of God, because while we wage physical war, we all know the real battle is spiritual," he said.

Hegseth has infused his evangelical Christianity into his leadership of the Pentagon, hosting Christian worship services for employees and often speaking of the United States as a Christian nation.

The Office of Religious Affairs, or ORA, will advocate for military chaplains and religious support "at the

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 33 of 63

highest level of the Department," according to a Pentagon statement. It will not "compel religious participation, favor one faith, or diminish the rights of personnel of any faith or lack thereof."

Some criticism of the initiative surfaced quickly.

The Pentagon "owes it to the nation's service members to defend religious freedom," said Rachel Laser, head of Americans United for Separation of Church, which has sued the Pentagon over its worship services. "Hegseth's latest announcement violates that promise by elevating Christianity to an even higher role in shaping U.S. military policy."

Other federal agencies have had religious or faith-based offices, which were established under President George W. Bush and were continued in different forms under the Obama and Biden administrations. President Donald Trump established a White House Faith Office and had a similar effort during his first term.

Shaun Casey, a religion scholar, led the State Department's Office of Religion and Global Affairs during the Obama administration. The office did not promote religion or spiritual well-being, he said. "It was there to understand what were the political implications of lived religion in the various hot spots around the world."

The leader of the new office has not been named. A Pentagon memo said the religious affairs director will coordinate spiritual resources, including "faith-based homeschool support for military families." Hegseth has also pushed the military school system to introduce more coursework that draws from conservative and Christian influences.

The memo mentions "faith-based initiatives supporting Department-wide suicide reduction." In recent years, the military has become increasingly dependent on chaplains to help address the growing numbers of troops in mental health distress. Hegseth has said he wants chaplains to focus more on God and less on therapeutic "self-help and self-care."

The secretary has pushed other changes within the military's chaplain corps, which provides spiritual care to troops. He ordered chaplains, who are commissioned officers, to no longer wear their rank on their uniform but instead be identified by religious insignia.

The Defense Department also slashed the number of religious affiliations it officially recognizes, down to 31 from more than 200 previously recognized traditions. The list no longer includes atheists, Unitarian Universalists, pagans and Wiccans.

Hegseth spoke directly to chaplains in his address Wednesday at Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia. Using Christian-inflected language, he said: "Live your calling. Stand firm. Preach truth. Minister to the flock."

He then quoted from the Bible: "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do unto me?"

Trump administration says it has no plans for ICE officers at polls.

Activists are preparing, anyway

By REBECCA SANTANA and ALI SWENSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With early voting already underway, a question worrying some voters is what role — if any — immigration enforcement officers might have at polling places through Election Day.

Department of Homeland Security officials say they don't plan to send immigration enforcement officers en masse to patrol the polls and dismissed concerns that they plan to do so as "fearmongering." Election legal experts say federal law clearly prevents the government from deploying any armed troops, agents or officers to election sites except to "repel armed enemies of the United States," a high bar to clear.

But organizations who represent Latino, Black and Asian American voters say the rhetoric and ICE's own activity make them worried at a time the number of immigration arrests is soaring as President Donald Trump carries out his mass deportation agenda.

Feds say ICE won't 'patrol' the polls, but don't rule out going entirely

During congressional testimony earlier this year, the then-acting head of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Todd Lyons, and the head of Customs and Border Protection, Rodney Scott, said they had no plans to send officers to the polls. Lyons has since left the position.

A Department of Homeland Security official also told state election administrators that immigration agents

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 34 of 63

will not be stationed at the polls for the midterms.

In September, DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin accused Democrats of "fearmongering" in raising concerns over ICE officers going to polling places. He said officers won't go to patrol or monitor polling places broadly, but could go for specific reasons such as arresting someone if they have a warrant or are responding to a threat.

Earlier this year, Attorney General Todd Blanche, who was then the deputy attorney general, also weighed in on the issue, saying: "Why are there objections to sending ICE officers to polling places? Illegals can't vote."

Trump, who has repeatedly raised the specter of widespread illegal noncitizen voting even as research and investigations show it is incredibly rare, hasn't said he would direct ICE officers to be at polling places but also hasn't ruled it out. When asked in May if he would send the National Guard or ICE to voting locations in November, he said: "I'd do anything necessary to make sure we have honest elections. We have to have honest elections."

In a Time magazine interview published Thursday, Trump responded, "Haven't thought of it," when asked if he planned to dispatch ICE agents to polling places.

The Department of Homeland Security, in a statement to The Associated Press, said people in the country legally have "nothing to fear" and that: "ICE is not planning operations targeting polling locations. ICE conducts intelligence-driven targeted enforcement, and if an active public safety threat endangered a polling location, they may be arrested as a result of that targeted enforcement action."

The Department also said they are "laser focused on prosecuting and removing aliens who vote and preventing the dilution of the votes of U.S. citizens."

Deploying armed officials at polling places is against the law

Federal law dating to the Civil War prohibits "troops or armed men" from being deployed to places where elections are being held "unless such force be necessary to repel armed enemies of the United States."

"It is completely and obviously illegal," said David Becker, a former U.S. Justice Department attorney who leads the nonprofit Center for Election Innovation & Research. "As soon as there is an armed individual at a polling place, there will be a court action; jurisdictions are preparing for it."

Jonathan Diaz, director of voting advocacy and partnerships at the Washington-based nonprofit Campaign Legal Center, said his group interprets the law to include anywhere voting occurs, including polling places, early voting centers, drop boxes and election offices where ballots are delivered.

He thinks even the narrow scenarios Mullin laid out, such as ICE officers pursuing an individual warrant at the polls, are legally dubious.

"The statute does not carve out exceptions for routine law enforcement," he said.

If ICE officers are near, but not at, the polls, it would raise legal questions that have not yet been considered, Diaz said. But there are several other federal and state statutes barring voter intimidation that could apply.

Local election officials addressed the possibility of federal agents showing up at the polls during a gathering this week in the nation's capital and said they had been preparing for it.

Dean Logan, who oversees Los Angeles County's elections, said while he welcomes people monitoring the election process, he does not want distractions for voters trying to cast their ballots.

"We're going to make sure that we have boots on the ground to make sure the voter is not disrupted in that process," he said during the meeting of the Partnership for Large Election Jurisdictions.

Democrats, Latino activists are concerned

Trump administration critics point to the president's comments saying he thinks Republicans should "take over the voting in at least 15 places." They also note some longtime Trump allies, including right-wing podcaster Steve Bannon, welcoming an ICE presence at the polls.

Dan Freeman, litigation director for the Democratic National Committee, agrees there is a low likelihood of immigration agents at voting locations, but his team is prepared to go to court should the administration try.

"President Trump is not willing to rule it out. Secretary Mullin is not willing to rule it out. And so we have

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 35 of 63

to be ready," Freeman said.

Activists who have filed lawsuits to prevent any ICE presence at polling locations say the rhetoric from the administration and its allies coupled with months of immigration enforcement activities have left Latino, Asian American, Black and other voters concerned.

Activists say many Latinos, even U.S. citizens, already limit everyday activities because they are worried about ICE. They say it doesn't take a lot to spread fear on Election Day.

Juan Proaño who heads the League of United Latin American Citizens, said ICE doesn't have to show up in force at numerous sites. Information spreading quickly on social media about one polling place could easily cause voters in other areas to stay away, he said.

"Just the mere presence of them in and around polling locations is enough of a deterrent for our community," he said. "The threats that we're getting now, that we are hearing today, are impacting the decisions that folks will make on Election Day."

Community groups mobilize to reassure hesitant voters

Activists point to an incident in Syracuse, New York, over the summer in which agents from Homeland Security Investigations, an arm of ICE that has largely taken the lead on investigating alleged voter fraud, went to a polling place to serve a written notice to a woman who they accused of publicly posting personal information about federal officers.

Despite the concerns, they are encouraging members of their communities to vote, reminding them of their rights and are stepping up efforts to assist voters with legal help.

Thu Nguyen, who heads OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates, said the group is recruiting monitors to observe the election process in response to fears they've been hearing. Nguyen said their U.S. citizen members are concerned in part because ICE has detained Americans during past operations or because they might be related to someone without immigration status and fearful of drawing attention to them.

A nonpartisan coalition of Trump administration opponents said it is planning a program in areas with large minority voting populations — Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina and Ohio — to boost voter confidence that they can cast a ballot safely. Those states also have competitive U.S. Senate races this year.

The program, called VoteSafe, includes recruiting trusted community leaders to help address voter hesitation associated with fears around armed agents at the polls, said Mary Corcoran, executive director of the Save America Movement and a leader in the effort.

"Our job is to overcome it," she said.

Venezuelan delivery driver shot by ICE has surgery to remove bullet

AUSTIN (AP) — A Venezuelan delivery driver who was shot by a federal immigration agent in Texas had surgery Thursday to remove the bullet lodged in his back for nearly two weeks.

Wilber Rafael Garces Perez, 28, had appeared in court in a wheelchair on Wednesday, wearing a sling on his arm. He remains in custody on charges that he assaulted an officer while trying to evade arrest.

Garces Perez struck an officer with his side mirror on Sept. 20 while trying to drive away, authorities said. The federal officer who shot Garces Perez, and who allegedly was hit by the side mirror of Garces Perez's car, wasn't wearing a body camera.

Garces Perez faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted on the assault charge.

The bullet was successfully removed during surgery, and Garces Perez is recovering in the custody of the U.S. Marshalls, said Fabiana Melendez Ruiz, a spokesperson for his legal team.

His case has sparked outrage and protests in the Texas capital city against President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown, including agents' conduct.

Garces Perez said he was struck by a law enforcement SUV and spun around before he was shot. Federal officers told investigators, however, that Garces Perez attempted to strike an officer with his car at the end of the chase before the officer fired his weapon.

Footage provided Wednesday in court shows officers pulling over Garces Perez in Austin, where he was delivering food for DoorDash.

New York's governor removes DA in Cornell rape allegations, appoints AG Letitia James to take over

By LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

ITHACA, N.Y. (AP) — New York's governor appointed a special prosecutor Thursday to oversee an investigation into a woman's allegations that she was gang raped at a Cornell University fraternity house, saying she had lost faith in the local district attorney's ability to handle the case.

Gov. Kathy Hochul said she had signed an executive order appointing the office of New York Attorney General Letitia James as the special prosecutor to oversee the investigation, which had initially been closed without charges in 2024.

The woman's allegations got a rush of new attention when she filed a civil lawsuit last month. Tompkins County District Attorney Matthew Van Houten reopened the investigation Monday, but has been battered by criticism that he'd abandoned the original investigation too quickly.

"Newly released information continues to raise serious questions about the investigation conducted by the Cornell Police Department and the decision by the Tompkins County District Attorney not to prosecute an alleged sexual assault on Cornell University's campus in October 2024," Hochul said.

"This has, in turn, undercut my faith, and the public's faith, in the District Attorney's ability to effectively investigate and prosecute the case at this time."

Hochul said the attorney general would oversee the investigation and, if warranted, present evidence to a grand jury.

"The young woman at the center of this case deserves to know that every fact will be examined and justice pursued," Hochul said. "This action will ensure that the matter is fully and thoroughly investigated without conflict or bias, and handled independently with the rigor that this matter demands."

Messages left for Van Houten were not immediately returned late Thursday. Hochul, James and Van Houten are all Democrats.

A campus roiled by continued revelations

Hochul's announcement came shortly after dozens of students and community members spent hours demanding transparency and accountability from university leaders at a forum sponsored by Cornell's student government. The case has roiled the Ivy League campus and raised questions about its response and the larger issue of how sexual assaults are handled on college campuses.

The woman, identified only as Jane Doe in court documents, reported the alleged assault to campus police in November of 2024, then discussed it with the university's internal investigators as part of Cornell's disciplinary process.

The lawsuit against seven fraternity brothers, the university, the Chi Phi fraternity and others, alleges that she was plied with drugs and alcohol, then subjected to sex acts by a group of men while she was partially or entirely incapacitated. One of the men sent a social media message to other fraternity members alerting them to what was happening, and inviting people to take part, according to the lawsuit.

Lawyers for two of the men she is suing have denied they participated in a sexual assault. One said his client hadn't touched the woman. Attempts by The Associated Press to reach the other men or their representatives have been unsuccessful.

When he reopened the investigation earlier this week, Van Houten said he would review new information in the woman's lawsuit. But he also issued a statement defending his initial decision not to prosecute, maintaining the woman's first account to police didn't include allegations that she was drugged against her will, incapacitated beyond the ability to consent, or forced into sex.

Under pressure from the public and politicians, including Hochul, Cornell agreed Wednesday to bring in outside lawyers to independently investigate how it handled the woman's allegations.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 37 of 63

Students, community call for change

Over more than 2 1/2 hours Thursday, students and other members of the Cornell community expressed anger, frustration and grief over the school's handling of sexual assault allegations in general, with several speakers sharing their own experiences of sexual violence.

Many criticized Cornell President Michael I. Kotlikoff and the university's administration, calling for greater transparency and accountability in the handling of the case, stronger sexual assault prevention efforts and changes to Greek life.

Jane Wang, a sophomore, said at the forum that when she reported being sexually assaulted on campus a year ago, she was met with a slew of paperwork and little guidance or follow-up. After an initial email chain about starting the investigation, she got few updates and had to prod for answers, she said. The process left her feeling an "overall sense of helplessness within a broader institution."

"My main message for Cornell here is that we can't be treating these cases only with care and attention after it catches national news," Wang said, calling for the university to improve the "seriousness and timeliness" of its response to sexual assault allegations.

There was no immediate response to a message seeking comment about the forum and Wang's case sent to the university late Thursday.

Cornell has said it took a series of actions after the woman identifying as Jane Doe reported being raped at the Chi Phi fraternity in 2024.

It announced publicly that it had opened an investigation, condemned the alleged behavior, indefinitely suspended the fraternity, and convened a university task force to study ways to more effectively protect students against sexual assault.

It also conducted a monthslong investigation, which ended with some students being disciplined or expelled, though it has declined to provide specifics, citing student privacy rules. The university issued a statement Monday saying it supported reopening the criminal investigation.

"I think what happened here is an American problem," said Hayden Watkins, an undergraduate and executive vice president of the Student Assembly, which hosted the forum.

"People kind of put Cornell on this pedestal because we are an elite institution," he added. "But if it's happening at places like Cornell, it's happening on college campuses all across the country."

How Tennessee's failed execution of Christa Pike unfolded, minute-by-minute

By KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Christa Pike was scheduled to be executed. But after two injections, she kept breathing. She made snoring sounds, she talked, she said her arm was hurting.

Pike, sentenced to die for torturing and killing 19-year-old Colleen Slemmer in 1995, said as her scheduled lethal injection began that she was at peace.

Strapped to a gurney around 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Pike, who was allowed to give a final statement, said she was leaving the world with love.

"I'm ready to be free," she said. "This is a happy day."

Leaving prison in an ambulance, not a hearse

Pike, now 50, was 18 when she committed the murder and would have been the first woman executed in Tennessee in more than 200 years.

But instead she survived two doses of the pentobarbital meant to kill her. She left the prison in an ambulance instead of a hearse.

The Associated Press was among those who witnessed her failed execution. She was already strapped to the gurney, with IV inserted in her arm, when prison officials raised the curtain to the execution room at 7:27 p.m.

Her spiritual adviser was standing beside the gurney near her head. He spoke to her. They sang a song. The lyrics were not audible, but included repeating the phrase — "I love you." The spiritual adviser stroked

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 38 of 63

her forehead.

Minutes ticked by. She raised her head and looked around; she smiled. Then she said her arm was hurting and asked a prison official in the room if it was supposed to feel that way.

Ten minutes in, at 7:37 p.m., she sighed, the IV in her arm fed from a control room adjacent to the death chamber, separated by a ledge. At 7:41 p.m., a rock or paper weight about the size of a golf ball was placed on the ledge. Prison officials have not confirmed what it means, but its placement appeared to coincide with a direction in the protocol that says after the drugs are administered, a five-minute count-down begins until the curtain is closed.

At 7:46 p.m., officials closed the curtain, blocking the witnesses' view of the death chamber. Pike's spiritual adviser left the chamber and sat briefly with her attorney in the media witness room.

The curtain rose again three minutes later. The Tennessee lethal injection protocol calls for a second round of pentobarbital if the inmate is not deceased after the first round.

An hour-plus of what sounded like snoring

Her spiritual adviser returned to the chamber and stood beside Pike with his hands folded. Pike appeared to begin to lose consciousness at some point and started making a sound like snoring. She continued to do so for the next hour, a sign that she was alive long after she was expected to be dead.

Her head raised slightly off the gurney and turned to the side at about 7:56 p.m. She kept breathing.

Officials closed the curtain again at 8:06 p.m.

For the next 40 minutes, Pike could be heard from behind the curtain. She sounded like she was snoring, a rhythmic, regular breathing pattern.

Inside the prison, Pike's attorney, Randy Spivey, later told the media that at about 8:22 p.m. he demanded access to a telephone to contact other lawyers on the team. He said he demanded the execution be halted and that life-saving medical care be given to Pike. He said he received confirmation at about 8:50 p.m. that an ambulance was on the way.

At 8:53 p.m., an announcement came: "Will witnesses please exit the area." The media was escorted out, and a prison spokesperson said she had no information to provide about what had happened.

Fire trucks and ambulances arrived in front of the prison at around 9:14 p.m. Pike's attorneys later issued a statement that she had been taken to a hospital and was being treated, though they did not know the specifics of her condition. On Thursday afternoon, they said she was in critical condition receiving medical care.

Governor orders a review

The Tennessee Department of Correction issued a statement saying the department followed protocol. "The lethal injection chemical in the protocol has consistently been effective, and the protocol does not allow for additional procedures beyond what was carried out this evening," the agency wrote. "Christa Pike has been transported to an off-site medical facility."

The agency has not said what went wrong. It was the second time this year that Tennessee has been unable to complete an execution, though in the other case, officials couldn't find a suitable vein for an IV line so the drugs weren't administered.

Gov. Bill Lee ordered a review and postponed another execution scheduled for later this year, calling what happened in the death chamber "deeply disturbing."

Slemmer's mother, May Martinez, had traveled to Nashville to see the sentence carried out.

"I didn't get justice for my daughter," Martinez told the AP by telephone.

"I watched the whole thing. She was awake," Martinez said. "She was moving her head, moving her feet. She was trying to sit up. Didn't work the first time they gave her a shot. It didn't work the second time so she's in the hospital and alive."

"This isn't justice for Colleen."

Astronauts arrive at International Space Station on the quickest US express flight yet

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Four astronauts pulled up at the International Space Station on Thursday after launching on an eight-hour express that set a U.S. speed record.

The fresh arrivals include a Canadian whose wife will give birth while he's away.

SpaceX launched commander Jessica Watkins and her crew for NASA after a three-week delay to fix their Dragon capsule's leaking fuel system. Thick clouds threatened all morning to halt the countdown but in the end, the skies cleared enough to allow for a safe liftoff.

Although their stay at the International Space Station will last a long six months, the flight there was the quickest yet not only for Elon Musk's company, but any American entity, including NASA. The space station's convenient location when the astronauts launched enabled the fast transit.

With the late morning liftoff from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Watkins became the first Black woman to lead a crew to orbit. A geologist who worked with NASA's Mars rover Curiosity a decade ago, Watkins is making her second trip to the space station following a lengthy stay in 2022.

"Thanks for an amazing ride," Watkins radioed following liftoff.

The others are newcomers to space: NASA's Luke Delaney, a retired Marine; Canada's Joshua Kutryk, a colonel in the Royal Canadian Air Force; and Russia's Sergey Tetyatnikov, a former submariner. They will replace four astronauts who have been living at the orbiting laboratory since February.

This was the 13th crew launched by SpaceX for NASA, not counting 2020's test flight. All four embrace their Crew-13 designation that pays homage in their mission patch to Apollo 13. The harrowing 1970 moonshot ended with the astronauts' safe return.

References to the number 13 abounded Thursday. Watkins and her crew rode to the launch pad in black Teslas bearing plates that read "Lucky 13." What's more, they carried up a small crocheted golden dragon named Lucky with a four-leaf clover around its neck.

"We figured it wouldn't hurt to bring a little of our own luck just in case, but clearly we don't need it," Watkins said from orbit, noting they were "four of the luckiest humans on or off planet Earth."

Kutryk will become the fourth man to become a father while orbiting Earth. Wife Heather is due to give birth to their third child in late November. The Canadian Space Agency promises plenty of support for the entire family when the big day comes.

"A lot of life-changing things can happen over six months," NASA manager Dana Weigel said on the eve of liftoff, noting that the space agency will do its best to keep Kutryk looped in to his family.

In 2004, NASA provided a radio link between space station astronaut Mike Fincke and his wife's delivery room during the birth of their daughter. Five years later, Randy Bresnik, commander of next year's Artemis III mission, dialed in to his wife's hospital from orbit.

The happy news traveled more slowly for Austrian astronaut Franz Viehbock. His daughter was born a few hours after he launched to the Soviet Union's Mir space station in 1991. He was not informed until the next day.

SpaceX, meanwhile, is on a roll. Three hours after Crew-13 blasted off, SpaceX launched a Falcon rocket from California with more than 100 mini satellites. Another Falcon was set to soar late Thursday night from Florida, with a classified satellite for the National Reconnaissance Office. All this comes the same week that the company's massive Starship reached orbit for the first time.

Federal report says pilots weren't warned about wind before Amazon cargo plane crashed in Miami

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

Despite regulations requiring it, an air traffic controller failed to tell the pilots of an Amazon cargo plane about the potential for strong tail winds as they landed in Miami, careening off the runway and killing five people last month, according to a preliminary report Thursday from the National Transportation Safety Board.

Just four minutes before clearing the plane for landing, an air traffic controller had provided a wind advisory to a different flight, noting gusts of up to 25 mph (40 kph) from the south. But the controller "did not issue information about the wind" to the pilots of the Amazon cargo plane, the report said.

According to federal regulations, "both wind direction and velocity were required to be stated when authorizing use of a runway when a tail wind component exists," the NTSB report said.

The preliminary report did not list a cause of the crash. The ongoing investigation could take more than a year to complete.

The airplane, carrying packages of contact lenses for Amazon, came in fast after a flight from Puerto Rico and barreled roughly 1,200 feet (366 meters) past the end of the runway at Miami International Airport on Sept. 6. It smashed into a van carrying workers for a company that cleans airplanes. Five people who were in the van died. Two others in the van sustained serious injuries, as did the driver of a car that was hit by the plane. The two pilots had minor injuries.

Tail winds can make landing a plane harder

Experts said it appears the weather played at least some role in the accident. Tail winds can make it harder to slow a plane and push it past an ideal landing spot on a runway.

"When you've got winds like that, it is your responsibility as a controller to issue that to a pilot, especially on landing and especially when you have gusts," said Tony Mello, a former Federal Aviation Administration official who oversaw air traffic control services in the central U.S.

Landing with a gusting tail wind "requires more concentration on the part of the pilot" but is not impossible, said former NTSB member John Goglia.

Failing to share the wind conditions "was a significant omission but, in and of itself, would not have caused a crash," Goglia said. "Every crash is a chain of events. That's just one event."

The plane had little runway left when it touched down

A summary of cockpit voice recordings previously released by the NTSB said one of the pilots repeatedly warned his counterpart that they were going too fast as they approached for landing and after touchdown. But the fellow pilot never gave "a consistent verbal response" to the warnings, the NTSB said. The two pilots had flown together for the first time just earlier that day, according to the preliminary NTSB report.

The cockpit audio recordings also captured a series of automated warnings from the plane about the speed of descent and the approaching terrain.

When it touched down, the plane was traveling at 184 mph (296 kph) and was already about three-quarters of a mile past the start of the runway, the NTSB report said.

The pilots may have tried too late to abort the landing. Data from the plane show its wheel brakes were applied, then released as the engines throttled to "go-around" thrust values before the brakes again were applied with about 415 feet (126 meters) of runway remaining.

The plane ran off the pavement while still traveling at 130 mph (209 kph), then struck some airport equipment and the cleaning crew's van before crashing through a perimeter fence, hitting a car on a public road and coming to rest with its nose in a parking lot fence, the preliminary report said.

Plane's operator says it is focused on safety

After the crash, Amazon suspended its partnership with 21 Air, which operated the plane. The North Carolina carrier had flown packages for Amazon since 2024. The Boeing 767 that crashed was 32 years old and originally built to carry passengers. It was converted to a cargo plane in June 2016, the preliminary NTSB report said.

The plane's operator, 21 Air, said in a written statement Thursday that safety is "a core focus" of its organization.

"We are reviewing the information in the NTSB preliminary report closely, alongside our own internal safety and operational protocols, and we will take all appropriate action to improve our safety based on the facts as they are established," the company said.

The Miami crash came less than a year after a UPS cargo plane crashed at Louisville's Muhammad Ali International Airport after losing its engine while accelerating down the runway. That crash killed all three pilots and 12 people on the ground. Twenty-three more were injured.

What to know about Christa Pike and her failed lethal injection execution attempt in Tennessee

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

Tennessee's failed attempt at executing Christa Pike despite administering two doses of a lethal drug in the state's death chamber has left her in critical condition, according to her attorneys.

Pike, 50, was still in the hospital Thursday and her lawyers said they did not know her long-term chance for recovery. Tennessee went forward with the lethal injection Wednesday eight hours after it was originally scheduled to have taken place, a delay caused by a court ruling that temporarily paused the execution.

What happened to Pike is "singular and unparalleled," said Robin M. Maher, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center. She said Pike was the only person who has remained alive after lethal injection drugs were administered in an execution.

Here's what to know about Pike's failed execution:

An execution delayed, prolonged then failed

Pike's execution was supposed to start at 10 a.m., but a federal appeals court stopped it about an hour before. The state appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, and it took eight hours for the conservative majority to overrule the lower court and let the lethal injection with the barbiturate pentobarbital to proceed.

About 90 minutes later, prison officials raised the curtain to the execution chamber, where media witnesses saw Pike strapped to a gurney with an IV in her arm. She said she was leaving the world with love.

"I'm ready to be free," she said. "This is a happy day."

She sang a song with her spiritual adviser, looked around and after several minutes said her arm was hurting or burning and asked if it was supposed to feel that way.

The curtain to the witnesses was closed then opened again around the time a second dose of pentobarbital would be administered. Pike appeared to lose consciousness, but she continued breathing and at times made snoring-like noises for the next hour.

Prison officials closed the curtain for good about 40 minutes after they first opened it. Pike's attorney demanded a telephone to ask a court to stop the execution.

It's unknown what was happening to Pike from the time the curtain closed for good at 8:06 p.m. until her attorney was told an ambulance was coming and witnesses were told to leave around 8:50 p.m.

"We at this point do not know the ramifications of the chemical torture that she has endured," Pike's attorney Randy Spivey said.

Prison officials have not said when their attempt to execute Pike turned into life-saving efforts. They have only released a statement saying their lethal injection protocols were followed.

Tennessee governor stops December execution to investigate

Within hours, Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee canceled the state's last execution of 2026, scheduled for Dec. 3, and ordered a comprehensive third-party investigation into what went wrong with Pike.

"It needs to be done thoroughly and however long that takes, whatever process is required to make sure we get to the very end of it and all the questions are answered," Lee said.

It's not the first time Lee has ordered an investigation into capital punishment in Tennessee. Four years ago, an independent review found the state didn't follow its own execution rules and failed to properly test lethal injection drugs. That probe came after an April 2022 execution was stopped because of mis-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 42 of 63

handling of drugs.

In May, Tennessee stopped the execution of Tony Carruthers after medical workers who got an IV into his right arm couldn't get a secondary IV line after trying his other arm, his left hand and his left foot, then failing to establish a central line. The governor ordered officials to wait at least a year before trying to execute Carruthers again.

Pike's lawyers called for the governor to now spare her life.

"Christa has endured punishment greater than any other person in the history of the American death penalty. The governor must commute Christa's sentence now," Spivey said.

Pike's lawyers warned of medical conditions

Pike's legal team has previously told courts and Tennessee prison officials that she had medical conditions that would make death by lethal injection agonizing.

They said Pike suffered from a condition with elevated platelets known as thrombocytosis. They argued the condition could cause issues with blood clotting at injection sites or bleeding that could affect her lungs.

Medical workers also had trouble drawing blood from her, and setting an IV line is a harder process, her lawyers said. Spivey said he counted at least seven spots where needles were put into her left arm Wednesday and that at least one needle bent on an unsuccessful attempt.

Pike's biggest fear from being executed wasn't "a fear of dying. It was a fear of a prolonged, painful, traumatic death. And that's what happened minus the death," said Stephen Ferrell, an attorney for Pike.

Pike killed 19-year-old job corps classmate

Pike didn't deny she killed 19-year-old Colleen Slemmer in 1995. The two were classmates at Knoxville Job Corps.

Prosecutors said Pike feared Slemmer was a romantic rival and lured her to a secluded area where she and her boyfriend slashed Slemmer with a box cutter and beat her with a large chunk of asphalt. The case got widespread attention because of the brutality of the killing, the ages of the people involved and because a satanic symbol was carved into the victim's body.

Pike said she was sexually abused starting from when she was a toddler and that she was raped at ages 11 and 17. Her lawyers said her death sentence was unfair because she was 18 at the time of the crime and the jury wasn't told about the abuse and how that might have affected her behavior.

Slemmer's mother witnessed the execution attempt and said her daughter didn't get justice.

"I watched the whole thing. She was awake. She was laughing. She was moving her head, moving her feet. She was trying to sit up. Didn't work the first time they gave her a shot. It didn't work the second time so she's in the hospital and alive," May Martinez said by telephone.

Tadaryl Shipp, Pike's boyfriend, has admitted that he was the one who carved a pentagram, a star-shaped symbol associated with Satanism, into her body. He was 17 at the time of the killing and was sentenced to life with the possibility of parole because of his age.

Christa Pike is in critical condition after Tennessee's failed execution attempt, her lawyers say

By KIM CHANDLER and KRISTIN M. HALL Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Christa Pike was in critical condition Thursday and receiving "lifesaving care" at a hospital, her lawyers said, a day after a failed attempt to execute her pushed Tennessee's governor to halt further executions this year and order an independent review.

Pike, who was sentenced to death for a 1995 murder, was taken to a hospital Wednesday night after surviving a double dose of the drug Tennessee uses to execute prisoners.

"We don't have a sense of her prognosis or much update on her health at the moment," attorney Randy Spivey said during a news conference. "But we know she is alive right now."

The failed execution, which one death penalty expert described as unprecedented, led Republican Gov. Bill Lee to order a review, calling what happened "deeply disturbing" and indefinitely postponing Pike's

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 43 of 63

execution and another one that had been scheduled for this year. It also reignited the debate over the state's execution procedures, including its single-drug lethal injections.

Spivey called the process cruel and torturous, saying he was "haunted" by watching and hearing Pike talking, singing and then snoring loudly during her more than 90 minutes in the death chamber. Her attorneys also said it was unclear if she might have suffered brain damage from being deprived of oxygen.

May Martinez, whose daughter was murdered by Pike and her boyfriend and who traveled to Nashville to watch the execution, was also upset.

"I didn't get justice for my daughter," Martinez told The Associated Press on Thursday.

"I watched the whole thing. She was awake. She was laughing. She was moving her head, moving her feet. She was trying to sit up," Martinez said. "Didn't work the first time they gave her a shot. It didn't work the second time."

A prolonged attempt ends in failure

It was not immediately clear what went wrong. Pike's attorneys said there were a number of possibilities.

The execution team worked for an hour to administer the lethal drugs, said Spivey, who counted at least seven needles in her left arm.

During the struggle to locate a vein, Pike even suggested where they might find one, he said.

"Please try here, please try here," Spivey recalled her saying. "She told them over and over, please try higher on my shoulder."

At one point Pike asked prison officials if her arm was supposed to feel that way, though it's unclear if it was after the first dose entered her body because officials don't share that information.

Neither the initial nor the backup dose of pentobarbital worked. Pike was still snoring when the execution chamber's microphone was cut off more than an hour into the attempt.

Another Pike attorney, Steve Ferrell, said she feared there would be complications because of a lifelong blood disorder that made it tough to get needles into her veins. "Throughout her life, she's explained to us that she had trouble having blood drawn," he said.

It was quite possible, Ferrell said, that the IV line didn't enter her vein properly and the drug was filling her arm instead of entering her bloodstream.

Lee said it appeared prison staff followed procedure.

Attorneys seek commutation

Pike's lawyers now want her death sentence to be commuted. Now age 50, she was sentenced to death for a murder she committed at 18. She would have been the first woman executed in Tennessee in more than 200 years.

An appeals court had stopped her execution an hour before it was scheduled to begin Wednesday morning, but the U.S. Supreme Court overturned that stay hours later.

It was the second time this year that the state was unable to complete an execution. In the other case, officials couldn't find a suitable vein for an IV line so the drugs weren't administered.

Pentobarbital, the barbiturate Tennessee uses for executions, has been used to carry out death sentences in multiple states and by the federal government. But concerns have been raised about the potential for "unnecessary pain and suffering."

Dr. Ervin Yen, an Oklahoma City anesthesiologist who has no link to Pike's execution but has witnessed others, said it's possible that if the prison staff was using a small vein, there could have been some burning, as mentioned by Pike's attorneys.

"It just depends on the vein that you're injecting it in and how fast you are injecting," Yen said.

The state changed its execution method two years ago

In 2024, Tennessee switched from a three-drug series for lethal injections to a single drug, pentobarbital. That came about two years after the state abruptly halted the execution of Oscar Smith and acknowledged it had failed to ensure its lethal injection drugs had been tested properly.

Robin M. Maher, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center, said what Pike experienced is "singular and unparalleled" in that she survived long enough to be moved to a hospital.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 44 of 63

Seven others have survived medical problems due to an execution team's failure to access a vein to administer lethal injection drugs, but no one has stayed alive after receiving the drugs used in executions, she said.

Executions in the U.S. have fallen sharply since the beginning of this century, but the number nearly doubled last year behind a record increase in Florida.

Pike would have been the 30th person executed in the U.S. this year.

Awake in the death chamber

Strapped to a gurney, Pike described herself as at peace and said "I'm ready to be free. ... This is a happy day."

But she remained awake, and at one point she complained about a feeling in her arm.

An hour after officials first raised the curtains, witnesses reported that a second dose of pentobarbital was administered. Pike could still be heard snoring behind a closed curtain until the microphone was cut off almost 30 minutes later.

Her lawyers filed an emergency motion with the Tennessee Supreme Court seeking to immediately halt and stay the execution, saying she was in "unnecessary agony" and the procedure violated her right to be executed free of cruel and unusual punishment.

Pike acknowledged her role in the killing

Pike and her boyfriend were convicted of the fatal stabbing of 19-year-old Colleen Slemmer, a classmate. The killing stoked fears of Satan worship because of a pentagram carved on Slemmer's body.

She didn't dispute that she helped kill Slemmer, but supporters argued that her mental illness and allegations of severe sexual abuse should be considered. She was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder after the killing.

"It took me numerous years to even realize the gravity of what I'd done," she once said.

Judge denies defense motion asking Lindsay Clancy be found not guilty due to a lack of evidence

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The judge in the Lindsay Clancy murder case on Thursday refused to declare her not guilty, turning down a defense motion that had argued there wasn't enough evidence to prove she was responsible for killing her three children.

During Clancy's first trial, which ended Sept. 4 with a deadlocked jury, her defense argued that she was not criminally responsible because of a mental disease, specifically a rare condition called postpartum psychosis. As such, the defense didn't dispute that the 36-year-old former labor and delivery nurse carried out the killings at her family's Massachusetts home in 2023.

However, in a hearing earlier this week, Clancy's attorney Kevin Reddington tried to persuade the judge that prosecutors had not offered any proof that Clancy did it. Prosecutors argued there was plenty of evidence, calling Reddington's claim "laughable."

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know needs help, the national suicide and crisis lifeline in the U.S. is available by calling or texting 988.

Prosecutors have yet to decide whether they will put the case in front of a jury for a second time. They could choose to retry her on first-degree murder charges or seek to try her only on lesser charges, including second-degree murder or manslaughter, or drop the case entirely.

In his ruling Thursday, Judge William Sullivan noted that for the purposes of his decision, he was required to analyze the evidence in the light most favorable to prosecutors — and that it was up to the jury, not the judge, to decide whether to believe expert witnesses for the defense who testified that Clancy was not responsible for her actions because of mental illness.

"There was evidence introduced, both physical and circumstantial, that would permit a rational trier of

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 45 of 63

fact to find beyond a reasonable doubt the elements of the charge of murder," Sullivan wrote.

At the first trial, prosecutors acknowledged that Clancy had mental health problems that included months of treatment and a stay in a psychiatric hospital, but argued that she knew what she was doing when she strangled the children — the youngest just 8 months old — then tried to kill herself.

Sullivan had declared a mistrial with the jury split 11 to 1 in favor of acquitting Clancy of murder charges.

In Tuesday's hearing, Reddington suggested the entire case "was based on speculation" and listed shortcomings in the prosecution's case. There was almost no police investigation, he claimed, and significant questions revolving around Clancy's condition outside the night of the killings and her lack of memory of what happened.

At the trial, jurors heard testimony that Clancy said she heard voices instructing her to kill 5-year-old Cora, 3-year-old Dawson and 8-month-old Callan Clancy. Her DNA was found on exercise bands used to strangle them. Before the trial, Reddington himself filed a motion in which he said Clancy was willing to stipulate, in writing, to her involvement in the children's deaths.

"For the first time, the defendant is arguing that there is no evidence she did this," Prosecutor Shanan Buckingham told the judge. "I'd suggest to you the entire record is voluminous as to information supporting the fact that she did this."

Clancy remains charged with murder and is expected to stay at a psychiatric hospital until her case is resolved.

Clancy could have been sentenced to life in prison if convicted of murder. If acquitted, the judge could have ordered her confined to a mental health facility.

Her former husband, Patrick Clancy, who discovered the children's bodies, has said in interviews that he forgives her. The livestreamed trial generated intense public interest and drew attention to maternal mental health after childbirth.

New ICE guidance bans high-speed car chases and sets tighter rules for traffic stops, a memo shows

By RYAN J. FOLEY Associated Press

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers have been ordered not to engage in high-speed car chases and to make vehicle stops only if they have completed specific training, under new internal guidance issued after several drivers were shot in encounters with ICE.

A memo sent to officers in ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations division and obtained by The Associated Press warned they are not authorized to chase vehicles that fail to pull over under any circumstances. Instead, officers should take down the vehicles' information for further investigation, according to the memo signed by ICE's executive associate director Marcos D. Charles and dated Wednesday.

The new guidance comes after ICE-initiated vehicle stops have repeatedly escalated when drivers have refused to cooperate or tried to flee. ICE agents have fired their guns during more than a dozen such encounters since last year, killing at least four people and wounding several others.

President Donald Trump's administration has faced internal tension over how to handle traffic stops, which are seen as particularly high-risk encounters.

After fatal shootings of drivers in Maine and Texas in July, ICE officers were directed to temporarily pause most vehicle stops. But the next day, Trump went on social media to direct the agency to continue traffic stops, calling them "one of ICE's most important and effective Crime Fighting tools."

ICE has faced intense pressure from the White House to deport more people who are in the country illegally, and its arrests have reached record numbers. At the same time, the agency's rapid hiring spree last year resulted in some poorly vetted and trained officers hitting the streets.

In a statement, ICE downplayed the significance of the memo, which said the new guidance was intended to replace and amend prior directives issued earlier this year, last year and in 2018.

"Occasionally, ICE leadership issues guidance reminders to law enforcement officers," the statement said. "Vehicle stops and arrests of illegal aliens continue."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 46 of 63

The new memo outlines steps intended to improve the safety of vehicle stops for ICE officers, drivers they are targeting, their passengers and the public.

The memo told ICE's field office directors that they must ensure vehicles used for traffic stops have lights and sirens that let the public know they are law enforcement vehicles when activated. All officers on the scenes of vehicle stops must wear and activate their body cameras, under the guidance.

In addition, only officers who have completed one of five specific agency training courses can conduct vehicle stops. Officers who have not completed the training courses can only participate in vehicle stops "in a support capacity" as passengers and cannot be the drivers of any of the vehicles involved.

The guidance says ICE officers can continue to use a controversial technique known as pinning, which is defined as "using a vehicle or physical barrier to trap or stop a car," but only if they have received special training. Similarly, only trained officers can use spike strips that deflate tires to prevent drivers from fleeing.

The memo came the day that courtroom testimony highlighted ways in which two ICE officers involved in a vehicle stop, pursuit and shooting that wounded a delivery driver in Austin last month would not have complied with the new guidance.

During a bond hearing for Wilber Rafael Garces Perez, testimony showed that the officer who shot him wasn't wearing a body-worn camera. The ICE officer who did have a camera was driving in a separate car and turned it off during the pursuit.

Prosecutors presented surveillance video that showed an ICE agent chasing Garces Perez at high speeds through residential streets after he fled an initial traffic stop.

Garces Perez faces federal assault charges after investigators say he struck an ICE officer with his driver's side mirror. That officer then shot into Perez's vehicle, lodging a bullet in his back, officials say.

Attorneys for Garces Perez have called the charges against him "retaliation" and have argued that the camera footage was inconclusive because it didn't fully capture the moment when he allegedly tried to flee.

Renee Good's family sues US government and immigration officials over her killing in Minneapolis

By TIM SULLIVAN, KATHY McCORMACK and MARK VANCLEAVE Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Renee Good's family sued the U.S. government and the architects of President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown Thursday, saying "the time is absolutely now for accountability" for her killing in January by a federal agent in Minneapolis.

Good's partner, Becca Good, and her brother Brent Ganger on behalf of her larger family, accused the government and Jonathan Ross, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer who shot into her SUV and killed her, of unjustified and excessive use of force.

The Jan. 7 shooting, captured on bystander video, was "the predictable and intended product" of the Trump administration's crackdown on Somali and other immigrants in Minnesota dubbed Operation Metro Surge, according to one of the two lawsuits.

"She was the love of my life," Becca Good said at a news conference announcing the lawsuits. "I'm here today because last January, the whole world had to watch as our entire universe was destroyed — as the sunshine who was my amazing Renee was robbed from us, from her children, and from her community."

The lack of accountability stuns Good's family

The killings of Good, a 37-year-old mother of three, and another U.S. citizen, Alex Pretti, in Minneapolis just weeks later sparked outrage across the country and calls to rein in immigration enforcement. At least 10 people have died in encounters with immigration officers during Trump's second term.

The crackdown, a pillar of Trump's second term, has prompted a slew of lawsuits filed by everyone from Chicago-area pastors to more than a dozen states and the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Hundreds of protesters have been arrested, but few have been convicted of any crimes.

"What happened to Renee was completely senseless," Ganger said. "And the fact that there's been no accountability, no investigation, no expression of condolence, no change in policy is completely mind blowing."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 47 of 63

The lawsuits — one against the government, the other against Ross and officials including White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, ex-Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and White House border czar Tom Homan — seek unspecified damages for wrongful death, conspiracy and other violations.

"Our government has become a grave and mortal threat to its own citizens," the family's lawyer, Antonio Romanucci, told reporters.

The Justice Department has not responded to an email seeking comment.

Ross shot Good as she turned her car away from him

Renee Good was killed while driving with Becca on a street where masked federal immigration officers were conducting an enforcement operation. They had just dropped their 6-year-old son at school. Renee stopped their red SUV in the street and honked her horn to warn people about the operation while Becca got out and started recording video with her cellphone.

Bystander video shows Renee Good in the driver's seat, her car blocking part of the road, as she repeatedly honks the horn. Two immigration officers get out of a truck, their faces covered, and one orders Good to get out of the car. She reverses briefly, then turns the steering wheel as an officer again demands: "Get out of the car."

Almost simultaneously, Becca Good, standing in the street, shouts: "Drive, baby, drive!"

The officer standing in front of the vehicle pulls his weapon and fires into the windshield. He lurches back as the car turns away from him. The officer, by then very close to the open window on the driver's side, fires two more times, fatally shooting Renee Good, according to an analysis of the videos by The Associated Press and others.

Federal officials at the time said the officer acted in self-defense and that Good had engaged in "an act of domestic terrorism."

Becca and Renee Good were not legally married, according to a family lawyer, but referred to one another as wives. They had only recently relocated to Minneapolis from Kansas City, Missouri.

"I don't hate the people that took Renee from us," Becca Good said.

"But what I want them to understand: Every single day they get to look at their children and their wives and their sisters and know what they took from our family. They took a mother away from her children. They know that. And they will carry it forever."

Government tried to hide the truth, lawsuit says

The wrongful death lawsuit against the U.S. government seeks damages for "the immense suffering" Good endured in her final moments and her family's "profound and permanent" loss.

The other lawsuit, against Ross and top federal immigration officials, paints Operation Metro Surge as a conspiracy to trample the civil rights of immigrants, and accuses the administration of targeting Becca instead of thoroughly investigating Good's killing.

The government sought to hide evidence of what happened, it said, and officials worried that pursuing a civil rights investigation would undermine Trump's claims that Good had tried to kill an officer.

The operation, the conspiracy lawsuit said, was a "carefully planned, coordinated effort" to make Somali and Hispanic immigrants "the object of aggression and abduction." The crackdown used violence and the threat of arrest to intimidate neighbors and allies "who observed, documented and warned."

Other defendants include: Corey Lewandowski, a Trump campaign manager who also served as one of Noem's advisers; former acting director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Todd Lyons; former U.S. Border Patrol commander Gregory Bovino; and 10 unnamed federal agents.

The news conference announcing the lawsuits was held in the atrium of the University of St. Thomas School of Law, and dozens of law students looked on as the family and lawyers spoke.

"The time is absolutely now for accountability for the deep damage done by ICE and others," Ganger said. "We will not be quiet. We will not go away."

Lawsuits are 'uphill battles'

Good's lawyers acknowledged the complexity of the cases, and legal scholars said they could be challenging to win.

"They're going to face significant uphill battles," said Rachel Moran, a professor at the University of St. Thomas law school. "These are both complicated types of lawsuits, and so I can't predict how they will play out. But I'm sure the government will have many, many types of responses to why the lawsuits should not go forward."

But she noted the conspiracy lawsuit, in particular, could reveal many unknown details about the crack-down, including the involvement of some of the country's top officials.

"Yes, ICE agents on the ground acted problematically, but that was at the behest, in many ways, of people very high up in the administration," she said.

Third aircraft carrier and thousands of troops head to Mideast as Trump weighs new Iran strikes

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN, MICHELLE L. PRICE and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military is dispatching roughly 9,000 troops aboard a group of ships to the Middle East, a U.S. official said Thursday. The bolstering of the American military presence comes as President Donald Trump warned anew that new strikes against Iran could be on the horizon.

The troop movement, which includes a third aircraft carrier, underscores the rapidly evolving dynamic of Trump's war against Iran as he ponders his next move, with midterm elections in the United States looming large and new signs that the nature of the conflict may be becoming more complex.

Trump has threatened that a post-midterm election escalation — despite his initial promises to Americans of a campaign that would last a matter of weeks — remains a viable option. Further complicating matters, Trump told reporters Thursday that early indications suggest that Iran is linked to the FlyDubai co-pilot who stabbed his captain and tried to crash an Israel-bound flight on Wednesday.

In an exchange with reporters at the White House, Trump raised the connection when asked by a reporter if there were any links between the pilot behind the attack and Tehran.

"I would say the answer, based on what I'm hearing, is 'yes,' but we're working on it right now," Trump said, without offering details.

Trump added that if the link to Iran is established, the United States would retaliate. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed in a Fox News interview earlier Thursday that investigators believe the FlyDubai suspect underwent "Islamist, radical indoctrination" but did not provide further details.

"Oh, they'll be hit very hard, don't worry," Trump said. "You just ask them. They know what happened. They'll be hit very hard."

Thousands of US sailors and Marines head to the Middle East

Meanwhile, the group of ships now en route to the Middle East together carry over 7,000 sailors and 2,000 Marines.

It includes the USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group, which recently deployed with the cruiser USS Chosin, and the USS Makin Island amphibious readiness group, which includes the USS John P. Murtha and USS Anchorage amphibious landing ships.

It could mean that three carriers are in the region as early as the end of October, according to the U.S. official, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military operations.

Given the personnel already in place in the Middle East, the move would bring the U.S. naval presence to an unusually high number of more than 20,000 sailors and Marines as well as hundreds of aircraft. The Navy previously had three carrier strike groups in the Middle East in April for the first time since 2003.

The carriers USS George H.W. Bush and the USS George Washington are in the region now, along with the USS Boxer amphibious readiness group. The Washington is typically deployed to the Pacific Ocean, but it was moved to the Middle East to relieve the USS Abraham Lincoln, whose arduous deployment resulted in the crew being at sea for more than 260 days straight.

Trump explains why he rejected Iran's latest truce proposal

Trump, in a Time magazine interview published Thursday, also raised the prospects of new strikes, saying it is "possible" that he will ramp up bombing in Iran after the Nov. 3 elections in the United States.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 49 of 63

When pressed, Trump said he could not go into further detail about his strategy.

"I can't tell you that because look, you know, you're asking, where are you going to bomb?" Trump said. He said in the interview, conducted Monday, that he rejected the latest ceasefire proposal from Iran because "things that I wouldn't have approved a year ago I wouldn't have today."

Trump cited as an example an offer from Iran to "open up" the Strait of Hormuz, the key energy shipping corridor, but said the overall proposal was "not good enough."

The war shows signs of getting more complicated

Asked if the increasingly unpopular war would threaten Republican Party chances in November, Trump at first responded, "It's possible." But then he added, "It should help, because Iran will not have a nuclear weapon."

The president said "100% of the people" oppose Iran having nuclear attack capabilities "including world-wide."

"So, when you say it that way, it would help," Trump added. "If you don't say that, it could hurt."

Yet, there's also growing concern that Tehran might be turning to asymmetrical tactics following the FlyDubai attack and another suspicious incident in the U.K.

Authorities believe that Iran might be looking to shift strategy just as the U.S. finds greater success in loosening Iran's grip over the Strait of Hormuz and getting Gulf allies' oil to market, while a Navy blockade is shutting down Iran's own oil exports.

British authorities announced on Thursday the arrest of a dual U.K.-Iranian national on suspicion of plotting a terror attack following a security incident at a U.S.-run military air base in England that British authorities have linked to Tehran.

The arrest of the 27-year-old man in Central London came after U.K. authorities arrested five men, all British nationals in their 20s and from London, in the early hours of Sunday on suspicion of explosives and terror offenses close to the RAF Fairford air base

The base has been used by American bombers to strike Iran. The suspects have since been released on bail.

Former Dallas officer who shot Black man in apartment that she mistook for hers gets parole

By JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

A white Dallas police officer convicted of killing a Black man in his apartment that she mistook for her own was granted parole Thursday after serving seven years of her 10-year sentence.

The Texas Board of Pardons and Parole, which is appointed by Gov. Greg Abbott, rejected Amber Guyger's initial parole request in 2024, but approved her case over the objections of victim Botham Jean's family the first time she was eligible to ask again.

Guyger, 38, was convicted of murder in the 2018 killing of 26-year-old Jean, an accountant from the Caribbean island nation of St. Lucia, who had been eating a bowl of ice cream when Guyger entered his home and shot him. Guyger was arrested three days after the shooting and was fired before her murder trial.

She had faced up to life in prison or as little as two years. Prosecutors initially asked the jury for a sentence of 28 years.

The shooting drew widespread attention because of the strange circumstances and because it was one in a string of shootings of Black men by white police officers. Guyger's sentencing hearing also included a stunning courtroom scene when Jean's brother and the Black judge presiding over the case embraced the sobbing Guyger.

At trial, Guyger said that after a long shift at work and still in uniform, she walked up to Jean's apartment — which was on the fourth floor, directly above hers on the third — and found the door unlocked. She said she thought the apartment was her own and that Jean was an intruder when she drew her service weapon and entered.

Civil rights attorney Lee Merritt said Thursday that Jean's family "strongly opposed this parole."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 50 of 63

"They stood up again and again to ask that the full sentence be served. A 10-year sentence was already a fraction of what was lost. Releasing Ms. Guyger after seven years makes that loss feel even smaller in the eyes of the system. It is not smaller," Merritt said.

In 2024, a jury ordered Guyger to pay Jean's family nearly \$100 million in a federal civil trial.

In granting her release, the board said it reviewed a "plethora" of information in her case.

The board said Guyger's record did not include a documented pattern of violent or assaultive arrests or convictions, and showed she completed programs in her prison treatment plan to get and keep a job when she is released.

The board said the state prison system will determine when she is released. Texas Department of Criminal Justice officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment Thursday.

Guyger's legal defense team did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Dallas police said the department played no role in Guyger's request for parole or the decision to release her.

"The Dallas Police Department understands this decision may bring renewed attention and emotion surrounding the tragic death of Botham Jean. Our thoughts remain with the Jean family and all those impacted by his loss," the department said.

A plumber and a dentist are praised as heroes in FlyDubai near-disaster

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — A dentist and other passengers wrestled with a violent copilot. A plumber seized the controls as the plane plunged towards the desert. And the captain, despite being stabbed, managed to open the cockpit door — helping save all 182 people aboard the Israel-bound flight.

"Hollywood isn't creative enough to come up with stories like this!" said Mike Huckabee, the U.S. ambassador to Israel.

Although major questions remained unanswered on Thursday about the attacker and his motive, the story of ordinary passengers saving the FlyDubai flight from disaster has quickly become the stuff of legend.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warmly embraced plumber Yaniv Hayoun shortly after the passengers arrived in Tel Aviv late on Wednesday. He later posted a five-star review of Hayoun's professional services, calling him "a hero who has saved many lives."

"He can help you too — I highly recommend him!" Netanyahu added on X.

Hayoun was among several Israelis recommended for the Presidential Award for Civilian Heroism, while Indian Capt. Smit Machchhar was called "a HERO" by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

One met the prime minister wearing a bloody shirt

Many of the details emerged in a rush shortly after the passengers, most of them Israeli, landed back home to cheers and waving flags.

Hayoun, apologizing for his bloody shirt, within minutes was telling the prime minister and journalists what happened.

There had been little time for him and the others to think. Passengers screamed after spotting the copilot stabbing the captain, and the flight from Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, to the Israeli city of Tel Aviv began a steep dive. Some believed they were about to die.

A handful of Israelis reacted, hurtling up the aisle after the badly wounded captain managed to open the cockpit door. That was crucial, as cockpit doors are typically locked to prevent hijackings.

They had to struggle, Hayoun said, with the captain's body resting against it.

The plumber seized the controls, just like in the movies

Hayoun said the copilot appeared to be trying to damage the plane's controls. He grabbed the copilot, and others began struggling with the man.

Hayoun then tackled the controls. He had no training, but he remembered what he had seen in movies.

"I asked him, how did you know how to do that? And he said, 'Well, I, I watched these air disaster films,'" Netanyahu told Fox News on Thursday.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 51 of 63

It was not clear who among the passengers had security experience, though military service is compulsory for most men and women in Israel.

Soon, crew who had been traveling on the plane stepped in to stabilize it, issuing a mayday call and seeking a place to land.

"He managed to stabilize the plane by the skin of his teeth," another Israeli praised for intervening, Asaf Rajuan, told journalists. Aviation experts have marveled that the plane didn't crash after a descent so sharp that the rudder was torn away.

A dentist treated the wounded pilot

The handful of Israeli passengers grappled with the copilot for several minutes before subduing him and binding his hands with the cord from a set of headphones.

One of them, Dr. Shota Musayev, a dentist, also attended to the captain, who appeared to have lost a lot of blood. "He was just praying the whole time and was in contact with me, and I was afraid we would really lose him," Musayev said.

In video that Musayev shot and shared with The Associated Press, the captain lay on the floor of the cabin, saying his head was in pain.

Musayev later told journalists he and the other responders knew they'd had just seconds to act before a "critical event."

But even with the copilot bound and subdued, they were scared that other attackers might be on the plane. They sent other people around the cabin to stand by.

"We didn't know where we were going to land. Underneath us there was only desert. We were afraid that they were taking us to a hostile country," Rajuan said. "We didn't know who to trust. We didn't know if the pilot was with us or not ... We started suspecting the flight attendants, too."

Finally, just about an hour after the plane issued a distress call, it made an emergency landing in Saudi Arabia.

Now, investigators from across the region are working to understand what led to the attack. The copilot still has not been publicly identified.

As of Thursday evening, the world had not yet heard from the central hero, the captain, who India's Embassy in the United Arab Emirates said was "in good health and recovering well."

This Head Start center teaches in two languages. A Trump overhaul would require one: English

By GISELA SALOMON Associated Press

IMMOKALEE, Fla. (AP) — It's almost noon, and after playing on the playground, working with clay and washing their hands, the 2-year-olds are ready for lunch.

The eight children and their Head Start teachers pray in English, thanking God for the meal. Then, the adults bring over several bowls.

"Hoy tenemos arroz." In Spanish, the teacher announces the children are having rice. A little boy grabs a ladle and scoops rice onto his plate.

Both English and Spanish are core to daily life in this Head Start preschool in Immokalee, Florida — an agricultural area about 120 miles (190 km) northwest of Miami. The center serves more than 50 children from mostly Guatemalan families, ages six months to 5 years. Most students arrive speaking little or no English.

Children who speak a language other than English at home account for at least a third of the enrollment in Head Start, a federally funded early childhood program serving roughly 700,000 low-income children and their parents. For decades, Head Start has supported these kids by hiring multilingual teachers to teach them English, while using their home languages as a foundation.

But an overhaul of Head Start's standards proposed by President Donald Trump's administration would amend that approach.

If finalized, the proposal would require Head Start programs to conduct all education in English, though

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 52 of 63

programs could seek waivers and certain Tribal-language instruction would be exempt.

"A firm foundation in the English language" is critical to preparing kids for school, said the Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees Head Start.

How Head Start teaches in multiple languages

Toys line shelves in the Immokalee classrooms, labeled in English and Spanish — helicopters, airplanes, tower builders. Bilingual signs show shapes in different colors and list children's birthdays. Every day, teachers sing and read in both languages.

One afternoon, it suddenly grows dark outside and thunder rolls. Noticing the preschoolers look worried, a teacher explains in English, "When you see it, it's lightning. When you hear it, it's thunder. What was it?"

"Thunder," a boy responds. Another answers in Spanish, noting the danger: "Es muy peligroso."

"Si te cae un rayo muy fuerte, te puedes lastimar," the teacher responds. (If a very strong bolt of lightning hits you, you could get hurt.) Then she adds in English: "So we don't go outside."

This is part of Head Start's Planned Language Approach in action. Educators help children learn English while also using the language they speak at home — not simply as an accommodation, but as a teaching strategy.

Research shows skills and knowledge developed in a child's home language can provide a foundation for learning English. If a child already knows the word for "yellow" in Spanish, she doesn't have to completely rediscover the concept behind the color when learning the word in English.

Asked for research supporting the proposed English-only requirement, the Department of Health and Human Services pointed to Trump's executive order designating English as the country's official language. "The changes set forth in the proposed Head Start rule help achieve these goals by exposing children to English earlier, during a critical time in children's development," a department spokeswoman said.

But education studies don't back up the administration's claim, said Michael López, a child psychologist who has led Head Start studies for the federal government.

"There's really not any credible research basis that suggests that English-only instruction will produce stronger English academic outcomes," López said. "It's a mistake. It's really going back 30 years."

Dual-language instruction produces better academic outcomes, he said, including in subjects like mathematics.

In the 1970s, Head Start began requiring centers with significant numbers of non-native English speakers to hire at least one staff member fluent in their home language — a regulation still in place today.

The Trump administration wants to drop that requirement, saying it could help centers more easily staff classrooms.

The language changes are part of a broader effort by the Trump administration to eliminate or rewrite many federal Head Start requirements for classroom conditions, curriculum and safety. Instead, state and local regulations — which are often more lenient — would apply.

The proposed changes do not require a vote in Congress, but the administration is required to seek and consider feedback from the public. Thus far, most comments related to the English-only proposal oppose that approach.

Multilingual approach allows parents to participate in learning

At Immokalee, teachers give daily notes to parents when they pick up their children, writing in both English and Spanish.

Beyond these simple reports are monthly parent meetings, plus four in-person parent-teacher conferences every year — two at the children's homes and two at school. (Those conferences would become optional under the Trump administration proposal.)

In all of these interactions, parents and staff currently speak in Spanish with each other.

The executive director overseeing the Immokalee center said she is unsure what the English-only proposal would mean in practice.

"I don't know how you're going to keep people from ... speaking Spanish, because it is the home language," said Isabel Garcia, who, as executive director of the Redlands Christian Migrant Association, supervises 26 Head Start and Early Head Start locations. "It is important that (family members) feel comfortable

understanding what is happening with their child.”

HHS told the AP the English-language requirement would apply only to instruction. Head Start teachers could continue using kids’ home languages to explain safety rules or providing comfort, for example — and when communicating and engaging with families, the department said. In fact, the law requires Head Start centers to communicate with parents in a language they understand, “to the extent practicable,” which wouldn’t change.

The department acknowledged eliminating requirements for bilingual staffers “may negatively affect communication with non-English speaking families and weaken family engagement.”

It suggested using online translation tools.

A Russian drone hits a Kyiv school as Moscow presses its aerial campaign against Ukraine

By SUSIE BLANN and BARRY HATTON Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A Russian drone struck a school in Kyiv on Thursday, city officials said, as the Ukrainian capital endured another day of relentless aerial attacks.

Children and staff at the school were in shelters when the drone hit, Mayor Vitalii Klitschko said, and its warhead didn’t explode. No casualties were reported, but the building’s brick facade showed a large hole, revealing a staircase, and burn marks alongside smashed windows.

Kyiv has felt like a city under siege in recent weeks, with repeated air raid alerts, punctuated by loud explosions from drone and missile strikes. The onslaught aims to terrorize civilians, officials and analysts say, and break their will to resist 4½ years after Russia’s full-scale invasion.

The strain is showing. Maryna Lystopad, 35, said her hair has started falling out due to the stress from escalating attacks and never knowing where the next attack will hit.

“It’s really horrible. I can’t take it anymore. I think, I think that soon we’re all going to leave. I’m really not doing well,” she told The Associated Press. “I’m constantly anxious. I can’t relax. I keep thinking that if something happens, if something hits, one of my relatives could be killed.”

Lystopad said she recently had to travel to another part of Kyiv and had been “genuinely stressed” the whole way there.

“I kept checking, like, whether anything was flying in, where it was going, where am I supposed to go? Where am I supposed to run?” she said.

Ukraine’s air defenses are stretched

The front line in eastern and southern Ukraine hasn’t seen major shifts since last year, but the country is struggling to fend off Russia’s intensified aerial attacks on cities that include ballistic missiles and high-flying jet-powered drones.

Reflecting the urgency of Ukraine’s plight, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he held a conference call Thursday with senior military and government officials in charge of protecting infrastructure, as some areas fall behind on implementing previously agreed measures.

He said the Foreign Ministry and Defense Ministry will review agreements Ukraine has made with partner countries on supplying ammunition for air defenses and F-16 fighter jets, with an updated schedule of deliveries to be presented within 24 hours.

“It is important that we have additional missiles in October,” Zelenskyy said on social media.

In response to Russia’s attacks, Ukraine has fired its long-range drones at manufacturing plants deep inside Russia and has targeted Russia’s drone launch sites. Zelenskyy said Thursday that Kyiv’s forces struck a site in Russia’s southwestern Oryol region that is used to store and launch attack drones.

Ukraine also has repeatedly attacked Russia’s oil refineries from Moscow to Siberia, sparking a wide-spread fuel crisis. President Vladimir Putin said in a rare admission Thursday that because of these strikes, “according to our estimates, we lost around 1%” of gross domestic product.

“They started attacking oil refineries and openly declared the goal of damaging our economy. Did they achieve their goal? Partially,” Putin said at a meeting of the Valdai Club forum of international foreign

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 54 of 63

policy experts.

Separately, Zelenskyy said Ukraine had deployed its domestically developed short-range FP-7 ballistic missile in combat for the first time, without elaborating on when or where the mission took place. Accompanying the post was an image of a missile being launched, and he said the next stage would be to scale up production. The Associated Press was not able to verify the claim independently.

To turn the tide, Ukraine needs U.S.-made Patriot missiles that can effectively defend against ballistic missiles, but they are in short supply since the Iran war began. A plan to produce them inside Ukraine could take years to bear fruit.

Kyiv is racing to produce interceptors that can bring down fast-moving jet-propelled drones as the swift cycle of military innovation during the war continues.

Sanctions are key to stopping Russia, Ukraine says

Ukraine wants tougher sanctions imposed on Russia to prevent it from getting key high-tech components for its arsenal.

Britain on Thursday imposed sanctions on 31 Russian individuals, entities and ships it says are linked to disinformation, attempts to avoid energy sanctions and the mistreatment of Ukrainian civilians in areas seized in the war by Russia.

Moscow, meanwhile, is pressing its advantage before Ukraine comes up with an answer to the latest challenges.

Two Russian drones hit an important bridge across the Dnipro River in Kyiv on Thursday, Klitschko said, with traffic suspended until a safety inspection could be done.

Also, the Parkovyi data center in Kyiv, which provides cloud services and server hosting, was critically damaged and has stopped operating following repeated Russian strikes, the company said. Client data has been moved to backup sites in the European Union, it said on Facebook.

Russia steps up a campaign against Ukraine's power grid

Ukrainian officials didn't report any energy infrastructure being hit Thursday, a day after what officials said was the biggest Russian attack on the power grid since spring.

Wednesday's barrage marked "the beginning of Russia's strike campaign aimed at degrading Ukraine's energy security ahead of winter ... and forcing Ukraine to capitulate," said the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank.

Russia is expected to step up attacks on the electricity supply as the weather gets colder. It was 19 degrees Celsius (66 F) in Kyiv on Thursday, and mild temperatures were set to continue.

In a surprise development, Russia for the first time on Wednesday used a jet-powered drone fitted with a warhead designed to sever high-voltage pylons, said Serhii Beskrestnov, an adviser to Zelenskyy on defense technology.

Trump sidesteps questions on endorsing Netanyahu before Oct. 27 Israeli elections

By SEUNG MIN KIM and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump won't say whether he thinks Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should be reelected when voters head to the polls later this month.

The president, who sat down with Time magazine for a 75-minute interview published Thursday, sidestepped multiple questions about Netanyahu's reelection bid. Israelis are set to vote Oct. 27, in the first national elections since the 2023 Hamas attack on Israel.

The absence of an endorsement is a setback for the Likud party politician, who has billed his tight ties to Trump as a selling point for keeping him in power.

"I can only say that I'm not involved in politics anymore," responded Trump, when asked if Israelis should give Netanyahu another term.

The U.S. president is in fact ramping up his campaigning for Republicans in the November midterms,

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 55 of 63

and has made a public flex of his political influence abroad on a scale that few if any U.S. presidents have exerted.

He has endorsed candidates like Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in his unsuccessful bid for a fifth term, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and Polish President Karol Nawrocki, as well as several Latin American leaders.

Trump's tepid comments sharply contrast with his more fulsome displays of support for Netanyahu in the past. In a 2019 campaign, Netanyahu purchased massive billboards picturing him with Trump and the message "Netanyahu. In Another League." Trump, in turn, highlighted the campaign ad in his own social media feeds.

Trump says Israeli leader is resilient

In the Time interview, Trump, however, didn't miss an opportunity to highlight his own record on Israel as the reporters made several attempts to get him to talk about Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister, and his reelection battle.

Trump did note that Netanyahu has shown resilience over the course of his political career.

The Israeli leader is in the midst of a yearslong corruption trial, faced massive protests in 2023 after introducing a plan to restructure Israel's judiciary and his image has been tarnished by his government's intelligence and security lapses ahead of the Oct. 7, 2023, attack by Hamas on Israel.

Last November, Trump sent a letter to Israeli President Isaac Herzog asking him to pardon Netanyahu on the corruption charges and praised the prime minister as "a formidable and decisive War Time Prime Minister."

"Well, people have written off Bibi many, many times, just like they've written off me many, many times," Trump said. "I wouldn't underestimate Bibi."

On Netanyahu's most serious opponent, centrist Gadi Eisenkot, Trump said, "I don't hear bad things about him."

In June, before Eisenkot announced he was running, Trump said he would "most likely" endorse Netanyahu but that he would have to see who he was running against him first.

The US-Israeli relationship has become strained

Trump remains a popular figure in Israel.

During his first term, he lent unprecedented support to Israel's claims to territory seized in war, including by moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem.

The robust support continued in his second term, as he backed Israel's actions in Gaza and joined it in bombing Iran. Netanyahu has been a frequent guest at the White House and frequently speaks to Trump on the phone.

The alliance has been particularly beneficial to Netanyahu, who has sought to tie himself to Trump to improve his image at home.

But there has been strain between the two leaders over the course of the seven-month Iran war.

Trump was critical of Israel's decision to attack a critical Iranian gas field in the first weeks of the conflict. Trump in June called Netanyahu "crazy" and said that he was "a little bit perturbed" as Israel's fighting with Hezbollah militants in Lebanon was holding back peace talks with Iran.

Netanyahu makes a risky move

In August, Netanyahu rejected Trump's latest plan to advance the stalled ceasefire in Gaza, pushing back on the U.S. administration's call for Israel to withdraw from territory it controls in Gaza until Hamas has been disarmed.

With the move, Netanyahu rolled the dice on potentially angering Trump, who he has repeatedly said is the greatest friend Israel has ever had in the White House.

Going along with Trump's plan could arguably be more perilous for Netanyahu's reelection chances as the country remains deeply traumatized by the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that happened on his watch. Netanyahu's nationalistic base opposes concessions to the Palestinians.

Federal scholarship for private school and homeschooling opening to most kids in at least 30 states

By BIANCA VÁZQUEZ TONESS AP Education Writer

Nearly all schoolchildren in at least 30 states can apply for a new federal scholarship next year to help pay for private school, homeschooling and other educational expenses, according to regulations proposed Thursday by the Trump administration.

The first national school choice scholarship program, the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit, will launch Jan. 1, establishing a taxpayer-funded incentive for families to choose private or homeschooling in participating states. Taxpayers who donate to an organization passing out the scholarships will receive a federal tax credit, a perk expected to further fuel the conservative school choice movement.

About 96% of children in those states should be eligible, according to the department. Children attending public schools could use the scholarships for extra learning expenses.

"Education freedom is the key to unlocking opportunity and success for our next generation of students," said U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon in a statement issued Thursday. The federal scholarship program, she said, will ensure "every child has access to the education they need, not one limited by ZIP code, family income, or government-imposed barriers."

School choice scholarships have been available for decades in conservative-led states and throughout the South, giving individual students taxpayer-funded grants ranging from a couple thousand dollars to more than \$30,000 a year. In places where they are available to all students regardless of income, such as Florida and Arizona, the majority of students using the money were already in private or home school or were from affluent neighborhoods, an analysis by The Associated Press showed.

The federal program departs from most state programs by not forcing students to leave public school to qualify for a scholarship. Public school students could use the money for tutoring or special education therapies, although the Republican administration has not provided specific criteria for eligible expenses yet.

Regulators say they have set up the program in a way that will make it easier for poor students to apply, proposing to let students use proof of participation in a government assistance program in lieu of providing income documentation. Foster children would not have to provide any income verification when they apply, officials said.

Experiences with school choice scholarships in other states have shown barriers to using the programs go beyond paperwork hurdles. Many families often do not know scholarship programs exist. Federal officials have not said how they would tell taxpayers and students about the scholarships.

How the scholarship and tax credit will work

Taxpayers will have the chance to donate to a scholarship program in a participating state, even if they do not live there, starting Jan. 1. Individuals can donate up to \$1,700 and receive a federal tax credit for the same amount in exchange. Federal officials propose a couple filing jointly could give as much as double that amount.

Scholarship organizations in each state would decide how much to grant to each child who applies, depending on available funds and student need. Children could qualify if they are in elementary through high school and their families earn up to three times the area's median income. For a family of four in Houston, for example, that equates to more than \$300,000.

Scholarship recipients could use their funding to pay for religious or private school tuition, homeschooling costs, tutoring and special education therapies, books, computers and other expenses connected to enrollment or attendance, according to officials at the Treasury Department.

At least 30 states have opted in, and more may sign up

States could not turn to laws or regulations to narrow the uses for the scholarships or the type of organization that can grant them, federal officials said.

But states can choose whether to participate in the program.

According to the most recent Treasury Department list, as of mid-September these states are in for 2027: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana,

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 57 of 63

Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming.

Governors from Arizona, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Oregon have said their states will not join, with some arguing these programs divert resources from public schools.

More than two dozen states have yet to say what they will do. In New York, Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul has been supportive, and the state is expected to sign up.

Governors deciding whether to participate face many competing objectives and interests. There is the opportunity to bring significant new education money to students who need extra support, such as tutoring or extra speech therapy that their public school does not provide. At the same time, large scholarship programs in states such as Florida and Arizona have accelerated a growing enrollment crisis in public schools.

Even so, the federal program is expected to bring taxpayer money for private school tuition to several states that have yet to embrace vouchers or education savings accounts.

Education advocates disagree on whether states should participate

In Massachusetts — a state with historically robust public school funding, caps on charter school expansion and no taxpayer funding for private school tuition — education advocates on both sides are lobbying the governor to take a stand and pushing the public to register their opinion.

The state's association of school superintendents opposes the idea that districts should take advantage of the program by creating their own nonprofits to accept donations and distribute scholarships. Many big city school districts around the country already have their own foundations. In Massachusetts, where every municipality has its own district, the majority of the more than 300 school systems have no such entity.

"Districts face a significant disadvantage compared to the private school networks that already have elaborate fundraising and scholarship infrastructure in place," reads the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents' position paper. The group said requiring families to apply for scholarships and, in many cases, prove income eligibility were "bureaucratic hurdles that will certainly leave behind our most vulnerable families."

On the other side, former Boston City Councilor and former public schoolteacher Annissa Essaibi George has argued Boston Public Schools faces severe budget shortfalls and needs new streams of income.

And besides, she argued in an op-ed published in a neighborhood newspaper: "Massachusetts taxpayers will be eligible to take advantage of this program whether the governor opts in or not. The only question is whether those dollars come back to Massachusetts children, or instead flow to students in states that moved faster."

In just a few years, after donations from taxpayers pick up, the IRS and the Treasury Department predict the program will direct nearly \$26 billion into as many 2.2 million scholarships each year.

The federal tax-credit scholarship program was signed into law last year by President Donald Trump as part of his signature tax breaks and spending cuts bill. The public has 60 days to comment on the Treasury Department's proposed regulations.

DC judge permanently dismisses case charging ex-Olympian with vandalizing Reflecting Pool

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A judge in the nation's capital agreed on Thursday to permanently dismiss a criminal case charging a former Olympian with vandalizing the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, a move that could prevent federal prosecutors from reviving the case under political pressure from President Donald Trump.

D.C. Superior Court Judge Todd Edelman ordered the dismissal of David Hearn's case with "prejudice," which would block U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro's office from refiling the felony charge against him. The judge ruled nearly a month after hearing attorneys' arguments.

Hearn's lawyers say Trump administration officials have continued to falsely accuse the Maryland resident of vandalizing the reflecting pool despite Pirro's decision to drop the case on July 31. Trump responded by

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 58 of 63

saying Pirro “choked” and “folded like an umbrella.”

Edelman said the case presents “exceptional circumstances” that warrant dismissing the case permanently. He agreed with defense attorneys that the government “shot first and asked questions later” by charging Hearn in a “a lightning-fast indictment process.”

“While the government wishes to hold open the possibility of the development of evidence that would support a future prosecution, its own representations make plain that such a possibility is theoretical at best, and more likely, is simply fanciful,” the judge wrote.

Permanently dismissing the case protects Hearn from prosecutors electing to revive the case under political pressure from Trump, the judge said.

“Although the prosecutors assigned to this case have deemed it meritless, the President of the United States has repeatedly disparaged them and pressured them to change course,” Edelman wrote.

In a court filing in July, Pirro said new evidence produced by the Interior Department showed Hearn wasn’t responsible for damage to the pool’s lining. Pirro’s office attributed the damage instead to a botched installation by a contractor as well as a rush to complete the project in time for this summer’s America 250 celebration in Washington.

Pirro’s admission was an embarrassing setback for the White House. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum has backed Trump’s claims that vandals damaged the pool.

Hearn has said he was on a bike ride on June 19 when he reached in to examine the pool’s newly peeled coating and briefly touched a chunk attached to the side of the pool. But he said he obeyed a park worker’s command to let go of it.

Hearn was charged with one count of property destruction, which carries a maximum prison sentence of 10 years. His lawyers questioned whether prosecutors properly presented the grand jury with adequate evidence to support the charge and the amount of damage alleged by the government.

Hearn, 67, of Bethesda, Maryland, competed in three Summer Olympics, earning his best finish, ninth, at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee says on its website.

Trump, a Republican, appointed Pirro, a former Fox News host, to serve as the top federal prosecutor for the District of Columbia. Edelman was nominated to the bench by Democratic President Barack Obama.

Hearn’s attorneys said the ruling is “a victory for the rule of law and for an innocent American seeking justice” and allows Hearn to “move forward with his life as he deserves.”

“This administration chose to pursue an unjust prosecution against Mr. Hearn. It should not get repeated chances to wield the power of criminal prosecution against someone who should never have been prosecuted,” the lawyers said in a statement.

Most Americans blame Trump for high prices as his economic approval hits new low, AP-NORC poll shows

By JILL COLVIN and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans are deeply frustrated with President Donald Trump’s handling of the economy and rising prices, with most panning his performance and blaming his policies as higher costs threaten his party’s chances in November.

A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that only 17% of U.S. adults approve of the Republican president’s handling of the cost of living. Just 26% approve of his handling of the economy overall, marking a new low.

A majority, 65%, of U.S. adults now blame Trump’s policies for persistently high costs more than factors outside of his control, signaling growing weariness over his aggressive use of tariffs and continued unhappiness with the war with Iran.

The dismal numbers come just weeks before midterm elections that will determine whether Republicans maintain control of Congress and while Trump is hitting the campaign trail with an aggressive schedule of rallies. But Trump — who has asked voters to pretend that he is on the ballot as he tries to bolster turnout — remains deeply unpopular, with even many Republicans faulting him for failing to deliver on

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 59 of 63

promised relief.

"I was hoping it would be better or different, but it's not really good," said Robert Gault, 66, a retired factory worker from Bradford, Pennsylvania, who describes himself as a Republican.

"Our president, I thought, was going to help the country, and so far he has not really seemed to have done that with the economy or in general. He's not really done what I was hoping he would," said Gault. "He said, 'Make America Great Again.' And I have not seen him do that."

Costs drag on Trump as the economic pain keeps coming

Over the last few months, Americans have grown more worried about being able to afford basics like groceries and gas. About half of U.S. adults now say they are "extremely" or "very" concerned about being able to fill their tanks, up from 39% in July. About half are also highly concerned about being able to afford food.

Prices are "extremely exorbitant. Just the cost of everything is going up as a result of fuel," said Pedro Sanchez, 52, of Perris, California, who voted for Trump and works in law enforcement. "I used to have a lot more disposable income. I don't have that any more. It's gotten eaten up because of all these increases in the cost of everything."

Trump's current approval on the economy is a 14 percentage point drop from March 2025, just after he took office for the second time. His struggles on the issue mark a significant departure from his first term, when the economy was often a point of strength.

Trump spent much of the 2024 campaign hammering President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, Democrats, on inflation and promising to lower prices. Now, there's widespread disappointment with his performance. About 7 in 10 Americans say Trump's handling of the cost of living has been "worse than expected." That includes roughly half of Republicans, who are also broadly concerned about being able to afford groceries and gas.

"Groceries are just like kind of out of control. It seems like everything is going up," said Bethany Lnenicka, 41, who operates a small farm in Fairfax, Iowa. "It's just one thing and the next week it's another thing. It's just insane. And of course your income doesn't go up."

A political independent who typically votes Republican and has voted for Trump three times, Lnenicka said she had hoped his second term would be more like his first.

"I just do not feel like it has gotten a lot better," she said.

About 6 in 10 Republicans disapprove of Trump's handling of the cost of living, according to the new poll, up from about half in April.

"It definitely doesn't feel like we have trended in the right direction," agreed Kristen Slaven, 41, a mental health therapist who lives in Gluckstadt, Mississippi, and typically votes Republican. She said Trump is focused on the wrong things.

"Obviously wars don't help. When they're necessary, I understand. But our focus on renaming bodies of water and pieces of land, that's just stupid to me when people can't feed their family," she said.

"I had hoped that it would be better," Slaven added.

Some Republicans are still willing to cut Trump some slack

Despite their frustration, most Republicans, 67%, say factors outside of Trump's control are more to blame for high prices.

"I think inflation is a very difficult thing to tackle," said Fred Naumann, 51, a Republican and longtime Trump supporter who lives in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Though he would like to see interest rates come down, Naumann, who works in the automotive industry, supports tariffs and the war with Iran, believing it was necessary.

Overall, however, most Americans, 69%, continue to say the war has not been worth fighting, up slightly from 64% in July. Only 28% approve of how Trump is handling Iran.

Americans are also unhappy with Trump's trade wars. Only about 3 in 10 U.S. adults approve of how he is handling trade negotiations with other countries, down from about 4 in 10 in March. And 64% say he has "gone too far" on imposing new tariffs on other countries, up from 58% in January.

Overall, the picture is not better. Only about 3 in 10 Americans approve of how Trump is handling his

job as president. And about 6 in 10 say the country as a whole is "much" or "somewhat" worse off than when he began his second term.

The issue on which Trump maintains relative strength is border security, with about half of Americans saying they approve of his performance.

Trump faces more blame than Biden did

Trump's low grade on the economy rivals Biden's 28% approval rating in June 2022, when there was record-high inflation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

But Americans were less likely to blame Biden in the lead-up to that year's midterm elections, a sharp contrast with the solid majority who hold Trump responsible now. In October 2022, 44% of Americans said Biden's policies were responsible for high prices, while 55% blamed factors outside of his control.

Sanchez, a Republican who voted for Trump, blames him, at least in part.

"I think he has a lot to do with it. This war in Iran, the tariffs that he's placing on other countries, obviously are affecting us. Those two things are things he's been directly involved in that directly affect the economy," he said. "I think with Biden, a lot of the stuff was outside of his control. It was all the COVID and how that affected everything else. I don't think that there was much that he could have done."

He had high hopes for Trump's return. Now, things seem worse than under Biden.

Supreme Court grants review of Trump administration's mandatory detention policy for immigrants

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to review a Trump administration policy denying bond hearings for immigrants as the government carries out a sweeping crackdown.

The justices will consider whether immigrants who have been living in the U.S. have a right to a hearing to determine if they should remain detained while challenging their possible deportation.

The case will test a key pillar of the Trump administration's hard-line immigration agenda.

Most appeals courts to have considered the issue have found that it violates federal law to detain immigrants, including those living in the U.S. illegally, without a bond hearing. Those decisions conflict with rulings by the 5th and 8th circuits, which held that immigrants accused of illegally entering and remaining in the U.S. must be detained while their deportation cases are pending.

The high court agreed to hear the case of Ricardo Aparecido Barbosa da Cunha, a citizen of Brazil. Authorities say he entered the United States illegally two decades ago and applied for asylum in 2016. He sought a bond hearing after an immigration judge determined that his detention was mandatory following his September 2025 arrest.

He has never been charged or convicted of a crime, his attorneys said. The court is expected to hear the case in the coming months.

President Donald Trump's administration had urged the high court to take up a different but related case that involves the broader constitutional implications of the new policy.

Attorneys from the Republican administration argue the circuits' split is "disrupting the orderly administration of immigration law." They say the nation's courts have been inundated with thousands of petitions filed by immigrants challenging the government's legal interpretation.

"The result is an unworkable patchwork of inconsistent immigration enforcement, where aliens present without admission are subject to mandatory detention in some circuits but are entitled to bond hearings and often released in others," lawyers for the administration wrote.

The plaintiffs are immigrants represented by the American Civil Liberties Union, which says hundreds of district court judges have joined most circuits in rejecting the Trump administration's new reading of the statutes. Plaintiffs' lawyers say the administration is trying to deny bond hearings for immigrants apprehended anywhere in the U.S. — no matter how long they've lived in the country — rather than limiting the restriction to noncitizens stopped at the border.

"Millions of noncitizens could be affected by the government's new interpretation," ACLU attorneys wrote.

The Trump administration says its new mandatory detention policy is legal under a 1996 immigration law. The policy change departs from the practices of prior administrations, which typically allowed most noncitizens without criminal records to request a bond hearing if they were arrested away from the border.

Inside Ken Paxton's jet-setting lifestyle: California wineries, European hot spots and ski resorts

By BRIAN SLODYSKO and JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — When Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton launched his campaign for Senate last year, he skipped the local pageantry.

Instead, records show, the conservative firebrand announced his bid on Fox News, cleared his calendar and booked a hotel in Augusta, Georgia, during the storied Masters golf tournament, a trip that cost Texas taxpayers at least \$25,000.

The trip reflected a transformation that has unfolded over Paxton's 11 tumultuous years as Texas' top law enforcement official: His focus has increasingly extended beyond state lines. As he steadily built a national political profile and became a star in President Donald Trump's MAGA universe, Paxton took frequent trips and spent less time in Texas, according to an Associated Press review of state records.

Since assuming office, Paxton left nearly 730 workdays blank on his official calendars and took over 275 out-of-state trips to places such as the California wine country, Caribbean resorts and European tourism hot spots. The travel cost Texas taxpayers a minimum of \$1.9 million to cover expenses charged by his security detail, records show. It is unclear how Paxton has financed much of his portion of the travel.

The pattern became more pronounced as Paxton's profile rose. Early in his tenure, his official calendars were packed with job-related duties. In 2021, more than 90 workdays were blank — a number that reached 112 in 2024, the last full year the AP had records for.

Texas does not require the attorney general to report his day-to-day whereabouts, and other state records do not often reveal the length or purpose of the out-of-state travel. Texas, however, keeps records of monthly expenses incurred by his security detail. Those records show reimbursements for travel outside Texas spiked from about \$30,000 in 2015 to nearly \$400,000 in 2024.

"There is clearly a pattern of behavior here that may make some voters question how seriously Ken Paxton has taken the job," said Joshua Blank, the director of research for the Texas Politics Project at the University of Texas at Austin.

Paxton's record as attorney general and his travel have become an issue in the Senate campaign, a race that could prove pivotal in deciding party control of the chamber.

His Democratic opponent, James Talarico, criticized Paxton for spending July 4 in Great Britain and accused him of focusing more on his standing in Trump's political movement than on issues facing Texans.

Paxton's campaign declined to comment and directed all questions to the Texas Attorney General's office, which did not respond to a detailed list of questions.

In an unsigned statement, Paxton's office said that calendar entries do not "capture someone's full workday, including hours of calls, negotiations, case strategy, and briefings with his team that fill every day."

Paxton's office said he has been a leader of legal efforts that secured large settlements from drugmakers and tech companies, which required routine travel. He travels with a security detail, like other high-profile state officials, because he faces threats "stemming from his courageous work ... fighting on behalf of the people of Texas," his office said.

"His schedule is built to be immediately responsive to the most pressing issues in order to best serve Texans," the statement reads.

Since taking office more than a decade ago, the former state lawmaker and probate lawyer has been under a cloud of scrutiny. Paxton was investigated by the FBI without being charged. Without admitting guilt, he paid restitution to settle felony securities charges brought by state prosecutors. And he was impeached — but later acquitted — by fellow Republicans on accusations of abusing his office and accepting bribes.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 62 of 63

He has survived politically thanks to a deep well of support from his Christian conservative base and a close affiliation with Trump. He cemented the bond early in his tenure by turning his office into an operating base for the conservative movement and pursuing litigation to further its goals.

Paxton "learned that litigation itself generated political capital," said Brandon Rottinghaus, a professor of political science at the University of Houston.

Paxton's evolution into a national political figure can be seen in his official calendars. Early in his tenure, his schedule was packed with the typical duties of a state attorney general.

Over the last five years, the calendars contained few listings of such activities, appearing to confirm what two former deputies told impeachment investigators in 2023: He often skipped meetings and was indifferent to many of his job's day-to-day duties.

"He was gone a lot, he was traveling, he was out," Mark Penley, a former deputy attorney general, told impeachment investigators.

Over a two-year period ending in 2024, he flew to the Caribbean, Israel, India, Taiwan, South Africa, made three trips to Europe and hit five different ski towns in the Rockies, including five visits to Park City, Utah, according to reimbursement records for his security detail.

Texas conservatives, including Paxton, have long treated California as a punching bag. "Don't California My Texas" is a favorite phrase of Republican Gov. Greg Abbott, who uses it as a pejorative shorthand for the left-wing values commonly associated with the west coast state.

That kind of disdain has not stopped Paxton from spending time in California, where he spent a portion of his youth. Records show Paxton has taken roughly 25 trips to the state, costing Texas taxpayers about \$180,000.

"I don't like to admit that I go to California. But it's beautiful," Paxton said on the "Swimming with the Sharks" podcast last November.

He has shown a particular fondness for Northern California's wine country, which he visited at least five times, records show.

A wine country visit in 2024 cost the public over \$14,000, records show. During the trip, Paxton ventured near Yosemite National Park, records show, where his campaign paid for meals, including \$436 dropped at Mammoth Rock Restaurant, a French-inspired brasserie that offers "elevated" classics such as escargot and duck confit.

Today in History: October 2, Marshall joins Supreme Court

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, Oct. 2, the 275th day of 2026. There are 90 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 2, 1967, Thurgood Marshall joined the U.S. Supreme Court as its first African American justice; he would serve on the bench for 24 years until his retirement in 1991.

Also on this date:

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson had a serious stroke at the White House that left him paralyzed on his left side.

In 1942, the RMS Queen Mary, an ocean liner carrying thousands of American soldiers as a converted troop ship during World War II, accidentally rammed and sank the escort ship HMS Curacoa in the North Atlantic, killing over 300 crew members aboard the Curacoa.

In 1944, German troops crushed the 2-month-old Warsaw Uprising, during which a quarter of a million people were killed.

In 1970, one of two chartered twin-engine planes flying the Wichita State University football team to Utah crashed into a mountain near Silver Plume, Colorado, killing 31 of the 40 people on board.

In 1968, as many as 300 people were massacred at a student protest in Mexico City's Tlatelolco plaza in what the government initially reported as a lawful suppression of a violent riot just 10 days before the Summer Olympics' Opening Ceremony.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 02, 2026 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 118 ~ 63 of 63

In 2006, an armed milk truck driver took a group of girls hostage in an Amish schoolhouse in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania, killing five of them and wounding five others before taking his own life.

In 2016, Hall of Fame baseball broadcaster Vin Scully signed off for the last time, ending 67 years behind the mic for the Dodgers as he called a 7-1 loss to the Giants in San Francisco.

In 2018, U.S.-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a critic of Saudi Arabia's government, was killed by Saudi Arabian officials at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey.

In 2020, stricken by COVID-19, President Donald Trump was injected with an experimental drug combination at the White House before being flown to a military hospital, where he was given remdesivir, an antiviral drug.

In 2023, a fire broke out in a nightclub in the southeastern Spanish city of Murcia, killing 13 people and injuring several others.

Today's Birthdays: Singer-songwriter Don McLean ("American Pie") is 81. Fashion designer Donna Karan (KA'-ruhn) is 78. Actor Avery Brooks is 78. Photographer Annie Leibovitz is 77. Singer-actor Sting is 75. Actor Lorraine Bracco is 72. R&B singer Freddie Jackson is 70. Nobel Peace Prize laureate Maria Ressa is 63. Singer-songwriter Gillian Welch is 59. Actor-talk show host Kelly Ripa is 56. Actor Efren Ramirez is 53. Musician Brittany Howard (Alabama Shakes) is 38.