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Community Calendar

Thursday, Oct. 8

Senior Menu: Scalloped potato with ham, winter blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Muffin.
School Lunch: Turkey gravy, mashed potatoes.
Cross Country at Northeast Conference Meet, 1 p.m., Webster Golf Course
Parent/Teacher Conferences, 1:30-8 p.m.
GT GBB Fall Skills, 6-8 p.m., Arena
Sixth Grade Girls Basketball Practice, 8 p.m., Arena
Winter Gear Drive at Dacotah Bank, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Winter Gear Distribution, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., Groton Community Center

Friday, Oct. 9

Senior Menu: Baked fish, rice pilaf, carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: No school.
School Lunch: No school.
NO SCHOOL — Staff Development Day
Lake Region Marching Band Festival, 9 a.m., Groton
Football hosts Mobridge-Pollock, 7 p.m., Doney Field

Saturday, Oct. 10

JH Volleyball at Warner Jamboree, 9 a.m.
SDHSAA Second Round Boys Soccer Playoffs, noon
SDHSAA Second Round Girls Soccer Playoffs, 1 p.m.

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1440

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

Canada Halts MAID Expansion

Canada will not allow people whose sole condition is mental illness to pursue medically assisted death, the government announced yesterday. However, the federal government said it would work to extend the option to patients with progressing, incurable illnesses before they lose the capacity to decide.

The decision comes after a parliamentary panel concluded Canada's legal and healthcare systems are not equipped to respond to the mental health expansion. Canada legalized medical assistance in dying in 2016 for terminally ill patients, later widening the criteria to include people who have incurable conditions but do not face imminent death. Around 5% of deaths in Canada—approximately 16,500 per year—are now medically assisted.

Over a dozen countries allow a form of MAID, including France, Australia, and Spain.

Math Meets AI

Prominent mathematics groups are calling for greater transparency and collaboration after OpenAI released 377 mathematical results this week, generated by its proprietary AI models.

The AI behemoth released the new findings a month after it shocked the mathematical community by allegedly cracking the Navier-Stokes equation—one of seven Millennium Prize Problems carrying a \$1M prize. Concerns over whether the models were thinking creatively or borrowing heavily from human mathematicians' work prompted OpenAI to form an independent advisory board. At the board's request, OpenAI provided summaries of the models' reasoning alongside some of this week's proofs. But leading mathematicians continue to call for OpenAI to stop testing problems on unreleased models, arguing that doing so threatens the traditional peer-review process and could alienate humans from the discipline.

OpenAI said its model took about three hours on average to arrive at each solution. Three findings include advances related to three remaining Millennium Prize Problems.

Pike Speaks

Tennessee death row inmate Christa Pike is able to speak but cannot swallow or move her arms, her lawyers said yesterday. Her first words upon waking were reportedly, "Where am I, and who are you?" The comments come after two doses of pentobarbital injections failed to kill her last week.

Pike, 50, is the first person known to have survived receiving a lethal injection. It is not yet clear how, though her lawyers had previously warned that she had a platelet disorder and small veins. The needle may have been improperly placed, or her vein may have blown, causing the drug to enter her arm as opposed to her bloodstream. Pike's lawyers say she contracted pneumonia and now has a blood clot and swollen arms. She was considered brain-dead Monday, but began speaking the next day, they say, hours before life support was due to be removed.

A court is requiring Tennessee to preserve all evidence related to execution day.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Actress Eva Marie Saint, known for roles in "On the Waterfront" and "North by Northwest," dies at age 102. See her life in photos.

... and watch her accept the 1955 Academy Award for best supporting actress.

Disney+ will stream the Super Bowl and two "Monday Night Football" regular-season games this season.

Aerosmith announces two comeback shows in Los Angeles, featuring Run-DMC, Heart, Billy Idol, Slash, and more guest artists.

Science & Technology

Scientists develop ultra-accurate nuclear clock that keeps time by measuring energy shifts inside the nucleus of the atom thorium.

Autonomous navigation system enables uncrewed aerial vehicles to avoid unpredictable, moving objects, with potential applications in search and rescue operations, mining expeditions, and package delivery.

Orangutan mothers seek out opportunities for their young to play with similarly aged apes, despite being the most solitary of all great apes.

Business & Markets

US stock markets fall (S&P 500 -0.2%, Dow -0.7%, Nasdaq -0.2%) as 10-year and 30-year Treasury yields peak at highest levels since 2002.

Federal Reserve's September meeting minutes signal another quarter-point interest rate increase may be necessary before the end of the year to cool inflation.

US consumers predict inflation will hit 3.9% over the next year, marking the highest 12-month outlook recorded since May 2023, per new survey data.

Politics & World Affairs

France suspends police use of stun grenades after a 15-year-old loses his hand during student-led protests.

Syria is reportedly weighing a request by Saudi Arabia to join in the war against Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, with one option being deployment of Syrian troops to Yemen.

Houthi strikes on Saudi airports reportedly kill three people.

FBI officials say they have arrested an 18-year-old ISIS supporter who purchased an AK-47 from undercover agents, planned to attack Minnesota's Mall of America.

Celebrating 85 years

Nancy will celebrate her 85th birthday on Oct 16th.
Family and friends are invited to help her mark
this special occasion by sending birthday wishes to

Nancy Hein,
918 Arbor Lane #46, Aberdeen, SD 57401.
With love and appreciation her family wishes her
a very happy birthday.

Residents hear details, raise questions about proposed Groton school project

By Elizabeth Varin

COLUMBIA – Groton Area School District voters are less than a month away from deciding whether to approve a \$26 million bond to fund a major middle/high school improvement project, and district officials are using a series of public meetings to make their case for the project.

The first of three informational meetings was held Wednesday evening in Columbia, where about a dozen residents heard details about the proposed improvements, why the district says the project is needed and how the bond would help pay for it. The meeting also gave residents an opportunity to ask question and voice concerns ahead of the Nov. 3 election.

A variety of concerns were presented about the current facility, specifically an addition built in 1934. Superintendent Joe Schwan summed up some of the big issues in the nearly-100-year-old portion of the building as electrical access, lighting, HVAC, operable plumbing, fire code compliance and ADA compliance.

Some of the issues were visible just before the start of the school year as a cast iron water supply line going into the high school from the east side broke, causing water to shoot out of the ground. The district quickly brought in a contractor who dug out the pipe, which was literally crumbling as he held it. There are other cast iron pipes in the building that are likely in similar shape and need to be dealt with.

"Coincidentally, we got the bill for that today (Wednesday)," Schwan said to the board. "Just for the eight-foot of plumbing line that we had to replace it was a \$22,000 problem before school started. Those things are expensive when they come up.

"I know we're talking about a lot of money, but when things like that happen, that's not cheap either," he added.

Maintenance on the existing facility has been an ongoing issue, and the proposed renovations will alleviate many of the issues the district needs to fix there, said Board President Grant Rix. An example is a new roof needed on the old gym. The district has patched it, but replacing the existing roof, an at-least-\$350,000 project, is still needed if the bond vote fails.

"There's just a lot of projects that need to get done that this project will take care of for us," he said.

The district has already experienced something like that as large renovations at the elementary school about 10 years ago led to a much more efficient facility, said board member Marty Weismantel. There have been fewer facility maintenance projects than before and utility costs have gone down.

Residents asked a variety of questions, including

- Where do we go to vote?
- What is the interest rate on the bond?
- What would happen if another smaller school closes? If it is absorbed by the Groton Area district would those residents be required to pay and how would that impact everyone's tax bill?

If the bond is approved by voters, tax payers within the Groton Area School District boundaries would pay \$1.10 per thousand dollars of taxable valuation on their property. The district has a tax calculator available on its website for residents to estimate the tax impact on their household. The information is available here: <https://bit.ly/GASD-BondInfo>

Nobody at the meeting disputed the need for construction at the middle/high school.

"We know the school needs it," said Columbia resident Julie Zastrow. "It needed it when I went there."

Board member Marty Weismantel added, "And it hasn't gotten any better."

The district will hold two more informational meetings before voters head to the polls. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 13, in Bristol, followed by a meeting Wednesday, Oct. 21, in Groton.

The bond question will appear on the Nov. 3 ballot. Registered voters also will have the opportunity to vote ahead of Election Day at the Groton Area High School. More information about the project and bond vote is available at <https://bit.ly/GASD-BondInfo>.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

4 South Dakota counties will vote in November on new sales taxes to lower property taxes

BY MAKENZIE HUBER

South Dakotans in two counties will decide in the Nov. 3 election whether to implement a county sales tax for homeowner property tax reduction, while residents in two other counties will vote in special elections later in November.

State lawmakers and the governor gave counties the authority during this year's legislative session to implement their own sales taxes for the first time in state history, with proceeds going toward lowering homeowners' property taxes. Counties are limited to a half-percent tax. Lawmakers and the governor also decided to use proceeds from next year's increase in the state sales tax rate, from 4.2% to 4.5%, to reduce property taxes for homeowners statewide.

Brown County commissioners included a provision in their Aug. 18 ordinance requiring a public vote on Nov. 3. In Codington, Clay and Charles Mix counties, residents gathered enough petition signatures to refer the ordinances to voters.

Codington County will vote on the issue on Nov. 3. Because ballots were already printed when petitioners in Clay and Charles Mix counties submitted signatures, those counties will hold special elections Nov. 17. State law requires special elections to be held between 60 and 90 days after the submission of a validated petition.

Six other counties have adopted a sales tax without putting it to voters or being subjected to a referendum. Custer, Fall River, Lawrence, Lincoln, Meade and Pennington counties' half-percent sales tax ordinances will be implemented in January.

Two more counties have passed ordinances that are still within the window for a potential referral.

Hughes County commissioners passed a half-percent sales tax ordinance that has a deadline of Oct. 14 for a referral petition. Yankton County commissioners passed a half-percent ordinance but intend to lower the sales tax rate to 0.25%, requiring a new ordinance, said Auditor Patty Hojem. Both counties missed the Oct. 3 deadline for a January implementation, so the taxes wouldn't take effect until July 2027.

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.

Help crops and reduce flooding and pollution with new approach to drainage, speaker tells farmers

BY JOSHUA HAIAR

BROOKINGS — Farmers could reduce their reliance on groundwater, help mitigate downstream flooding and improve crop yields during droughts by storing their drainage water in a pond or wetland, according to a speaker at the Eastern South Dakota Water Conference.

Chuck Brandel is a drainage expert with ISG, an engineering and architecture firm with offices in South Dakota and other states. He delivered a presentation about "drainage water recycling" to conference attendees Wednesday at South Dakota State University's McCrory Gardens Education and Visitor Center.

Brandel said the practice capitalizes on water moving through existing networks of perforated pipes buried beneath a crop field, called drain tile, which farmers install to remove excess water from the soil. Instead of allowing that water to drain away, drainage water recycling stores the water in ponds or wetlands and uses it for irrigation when the farmer wants it.

"In some cases, you can gravity-feed your tile system into a low spot," Brandel told South Dakota Searchlight after the presentation, "and then you're pumping that back out and putting that back on the field."

Brandel said the practice could do a lot for South Dakota, such as reducing downstream flooding and farm-chemical runoff, improving crop yields by making more water available for irrigation during droughts, and reducing the amount of groundwater used for irrigation. A prior speaker presented a chart showing irrigation accounts for 86% of South Dakota's water use.

Multiple speakers at the conference said South Dakota needs more water to keep up with development and population growth projections. Some South Dakota water systems depend on pockets of groundwater known as aquifers.

Brandel said the reduction in groundwater use for irrigation could be substantial if drainage water recycling is widely adopted.

"If you build enough storage, you could potentially switch it all over," he said, referring to individual farmers' irrigation.

An Environmental Defense Fund estimate says building a pond, wetland or other storage area for a drainage water recycling system could cost \$10,000 to \$20,000 per acre-foot of storage. An acre-foot is the volume of water needed to cover 1 acre of land to a depth of 1 foot. The estimate lists additional costs to install drain tile, irrigation and other parts of the system.

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.

Abortion foes plan to propose pill restrictions in the states

They want mandatory ultrasounds, waiting periods and in-person visits

BY SOFIA RESNICK

As they await a federal decision on a potential nationwide ban on telehealth abortions, anti-abortion activists plan to push more states to require women to visit a doctor's office, get an ultrasound or wait before they can get abortion pills.

Under its current guidelines, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not require in-person visits, ultrasounds or waiting periods for women seeking abortion pills. Nevertheless, 10 states without total abortion bans still require them.

One of those states is Florida. The state only allows abortion up to six weeks — which is before many women discover they are pregnant. Under state law, women must first get an ultrasound and then wait at least 24 hours before receiving pills or a procedure. By that time, they might be beyond the six weeks threshold.

"Floridians are already under a time clock," said Lana'e Hernandez, a case manager for the Florida Access Network, an abortion fund that helps women pay for their abortions and travel to other states if they fall outside Florida's narrow window.

"I see a lot of clients having to then travel out of state and take even more time off of work, adding another barrier to accessing care because of those laws combined."

Medication abortion typically involves two drugs: mifepristone and misoprostol. The FDA approved the two-drug regimen in 2000 and gradually loosened restrictions as safety reviews showed a low risk of serious and life-threatening conditions. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the Biden administration suspended enforcement of the rule that patients had to take the medication in person, and the FDA of-

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ficially removed that requirement in 2023.

But anti-abortion organizations and attorneys general have challenged these changes in ongoing federal lawsuits. And in 2025, activist groups successfully pressured the Trump administration's FDA to review the safety data again.

On Wednesday, the FDA is expected to update the public on the progress of this review, though the agency is not expected to issue a final ruling on telehealth access to the pills. The Washington Sun recently reported that the Trump administration wants to delay any potentially controversial actions around abortion until after the midterm elections. The administration has also delayed multiple ongoing federal lawsuits until after the review.

Abortion rights advocates say reversing telehealth access to medication abortion would have a huge impact across the country. Medication abortions now account for about 65% of all abortions, and roughly 28% of all abortions are through telehealth, according to KFF, a health research group.

Critical elections

In statehouses, the midterm elections could determine whether more states will seek to restrict medication abortion.

Meanwhile, Democratic control of Congress could doom President Donald Trump's nominee for FDA commissioner. During her confirmation hearing last month, nominee Heidi Overton would not say whether she would recommend changes to mifepristone regulation, but in the past she has expressed anti-abortion views and written that the medication is dangerous.

National anti-abortion leaders told Stateline they will not be satisfied if the FDA determines that mifepristone is safe and can be administered via telehealth.

"There are comorbidities that come with mifepristone, like ectopic pregnancies that need to be diagnosed prior to the actual provision of mifepristone, and right now under the FDA system, that's not working," said Bradley Kehr, vice president of legal affairs of Americans United for Life. "So states are stepping in to say that they have serious concerns, and they're taking action for the safety of their citizens."

Peer-reviewed studies overwhelmingly show a low risk of serious adverse events for medication abortions up to 10 weeks' gestation, including via telehealth. But national anti-abortion groups have pointed to examples of coercion and non-peer-reviewed white papers to argue the risks are more significant than what the FDA has reported, and that ultrasounds should be required before the pills are administered.

Hernandez of the Florida Access Network said ultrasounds might be appropriate for women who have irregular periods or are at risk for an ectopic pregnancy, but that they should not be universally mandated by lawmakers. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, for patients with regular menstrual cycles and no risk factors for ectopic pregnancy, a clinical examination or ultrasound is not necessary before taking abortion pills.

"These are conversations that you should be having with your medical professional and not the government mandating you to do one thing or another," Hernandez said. "You should be able to trust your physician to tell you whether you need an ultrasound or not to have an abortion."

Abortion rights advocates say abortion is being singled out even as more medical care is being delivered via telehealth.

"When it comes to telehealth for abortion care specifically, a lot of those concerns, I think are coming from a place that's really informed by abortion stigma," said Kimya Forouzan, the principal state policy advisor of the Guttmacher Institute, a research and policy organization that supports abortion rights. "Receiving medication abortion via telehealth is not different than any other form of telehealth care."

Existing restrictions

In addition to Florida, Alaska, Georgia, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, South Carolina, Utah and Wisconsin require ultrasounds or other in-person requirements before medication abortions. In-person requirements can include an initial in-person exam, in-person counseling, a requirement that the pills be dispensed in person or a requirement that the first dose be taken in person.

Thirteen other states (Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Dakota,

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Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia) ban all abortions.

In Alaska, Missouri and Wisconsin, plaintiffs have challenged the laws on state constitutional grounds. Wyoming last year enacted a law requiring ultrasounds and a 48-hour waiting period before medication abortions. But a state district judge overturned the law in June, ruling that it violated a constitutional amendment protecting healthcare decisions, and that the state "offered no cogent evidence illustrating that a waiting period is necessary for any purpose."

At the federal level, plaintiffs have argued that state regulations on abortion pills should not supersede the federal guidelines.

"The FDA sets the bar, and states don't get to impede access to an FDA-approved medication," said Kirsten Moore, director of the Expanding Medication Abortion Access (EMMA) Project, which tracks litigation related to medication abortion.

In an ongoing federal lawsuit over North Carolina's restrictions, the plaintiffs argue that the state law conflicts with the FDA's regulatory authority. A federal judge in 2024 ruled that the state could not ban the mailing of abortion pills, since federal rules allow it. But the judge upheld the state's ultrasound requirement and its waiting period.

The case is pending appeal, with oral arguments scheduled for later this month at the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which last year upheld medication abortion restrictions in West Virginia, which bans all abortions and explicitly telehealth abortions. In that case, plaintiff generic mifepristone manufacturer GenBioPro argued the state's ban violated the federal regulation of abortion pills, but the appeals court affirmed the lower court's decision that FDA regulations did not preempt the state's abortion ban.

Earlier this year, Iowa also enacted a law requiring abortion-inducing medication to be prescribed in person and dispensed in a medical setting.

Beaufield Berry, executive director of the Iowa Abortion Access Fund, said that since the law went into effect, her group has gotten more calls from people asking for financial help to travel out of state. She said there are two abortion clinics left in the state, both in central Iowa, making it especially difficult on people in rural areas.

"It's really hard for some people to be able to make an appointment to go get an ultrasound, and then if they do that, then they're running up against that six-week clock," Berry said.

"For an in-person visit, that's transportation, missing work, finding childcare. And in many cases, the act of having an abortion, you may not have support," she said. "They may be underage, and so that creates even more barriers to getting an in-person meeting."

Different strategies

Kehr of Americans United for Life said anti-abortion state lawmakers are still figuring out their individual strategies for restricting access to abortion medication. He cited the 10th Amendment, which gives states the authority through their police power to protect their citizens, as a legal justification for mandating ultrasounds or in-clinic visits before abortion pills are dispensed.

"Other states are taking different approaches, whether it's the ultrasound provision to check for ectopic pregnancies and things like that, or the actual consideration of abuse that's occurring," Kehr said.

"We've had multiple stories of men forcing their pregnant girlfriends or wives to take mifepristone. So looking at it from an abusive perspective or a coercive perspective, states are really looking at the gamut of options under the 10th Amendment powers."

Model legislation developed by the National Right to Life Committee, known as the Abortion Pill Provider Liability Education (APPLE) Act, and introduced this year in New Jersey and Ohio, would require abortion-pill prescribers to inform patients about the risks of the drugs, as well as her right to sue the provider if she faces complications.

The National Right to Life Committee also supports in-person visits and mandatory ultrasounds.

"Requiring a healthcare provider to confirm, locate, and date a pregnancy before prescribing a dangerous mixture of abortion-inducing drugs is a bare-minimum safety standard, and we believe it should apply in every state," Ingrid Duran, director of state legislation for the National Right to Life Committee, wrote

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in an email.

Also looming in the background are interstate fights over so-called shield law providers prescribing medication virtually. Attorneys general in Alabama, Arkansas and Louisiana filed lawsuits last week targeting shield laws and in California, Massachusetts and New York, and individual doctors prescribing abortion pills to women in states with abortion bans.

"A woman can't possibly receive fully informed consent specific to her when the dispensing provider doesn't even know how far along she is in her pregnancy because the risk is different depending on how far along she is," said Dr. Christina Francis, an OB-GYN based in Fort Wayne, Indiana, who is CEO of the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, which has opposed abortion pills since they were first approved in 2000.

"We believe that women deserve fully informed consent, and that necessarily involves an ultrasound when we're talking about pregnancy."

Stateline reporter Sofia Resnick can be reached at sresnick@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.

Sofia Resnick covers reproductive rights for Stateline. She has been a journalist for 20 years, covering reproductive health policy and politics for more than a decade, specializing in stories about how the religious right has manipulated science to change policy and tracking the long tail of the fall of Roe v. Wade.

Trump auto-enrolls 10s of millions in child investment accounts

BY ASHLEY MURRA

WASHINGTON — Every child in the United States with a valid Social Security number is now enrolled in a tax-advantaged investment account, titled a "Trump Account," President Donald Trump announced Wednesday.

Parents must claim the accounts by downloading a Trump Account mobile app. Children born from 2025 through 2028 will automatically receive a one-time deposit of \$1,000 from the U.S. government, once parents or guardians officially claim it.

Children born before the eligibility window, up to age 10, can receive a \$250 deposit donated by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, of Dell Technologies fortune.

Surrounded in the Oval Office by U.S. Treasury Department officials, business moguls and a half dozen children holding a banner reading, "Thank You for Trump Accounts," the president said parents and guardians have voluntarily created accounts for 8 million children since the July 4 launch.

"With today's announcement, we're building on that success by 70 million accounts of children across America," Trump said. "Put very simply, this money is your child's future."

The White House estimates over 60 million accounts have been added via auto-enrollment, but did not provide a specific figure.

The president signaled to the children standing by the Resolute Desk and said, "These beautiful young children are extremely rich — they are now, and they will be in the future, extremely rich. So they have something to look forward to."

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the accounts mark the "beginning of the ownership society."

"I was talking to these great young people earlier," he said. "They already know about compounding. They understand how the stock market works. ... I think this is going to be a real-time financial literacy project."

Investments from government, philanthropy

More than \$4.5 billion has been deposited into the accounts since July 4, according to the White House. Trump said Wednesday "much of that" has come from large donors, including the Dells, and Altimeter tech investment firm founder Brad Gerstner, who attended the announcement.

Parents and guardians have claimed roughly \$2.6 billion in philanthropic contributions to date, with more available, according to the White House. The U.S. Treasury has so far seeded the accounts with \$1.3 billion.

Another \$638 million has been deposited into the accounts from friends and family of the individual ac-

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countholders, according to the administration.

Family and friends can contribute up to \$5,000 annually to the accounts. Parents and guardians can elect to divert pre-tax contributions from their paychecks directly into their child's account. Employers can match up to \$2,500.

Over 70 companies have signed on to contribute to accounts of employees' children, according to the White House.

Certain contributions, like the government's one-time \$1,000 deposit and contributions from state and local governments and nonprofits, do not count toward the \$5,000 cap.

Susan Dell said she has received letters from parents and grandparents who have claimed the contribution from her foundation.

"It's not just the money that matters — that does matter — but knowing that someone believes in you and your future that matters just as much," she said. "These accounts are ready. They're waiting for you, and they have money in them. So claim your child's accounts and start adding money to their accounts and preserving a wonderful future for them."

The Dell Foundation targeted the contributions to 25 million children from ZIP codes with median family incomes of up to \$118,000.

The Trump administration is directing families to the website trumpaccounts.gov to find how to download the app and manage the account.

The White House estimates the government's \$1,000 seed money could grow to approximately \$6,000 by age 18, if the family never contributed another dollar, assuming historical return data.

A child's account that receives the maximum family and employer contributions of \$5,000 at the start of each year could grow to nearly \$200,000 by age 18, assuming a 7% annual rate of return, according to a Fidelity Investment hypothetical example, not adjusted for inflation.

Used for retirement, education or down payment

The Trump Accounts, as named in the 2025 law dubbed "the big beautiful bill," are structured like a traditional individual retirement account, but with different investment features and restrictions.

Money in the account can be invested in mutual funds or exchange traded funds that track the returns of large American companies, for example the S&P 500 index.

Investments will legally belong to a minor, but can only be managed by a parent or guardian until a child's 18th birthday.

The accounts are bound by certain restrictions, including a prohibition on withdrawals until age 18, when the account essentially becomes an individual retirement account subject to tax penalties for early withdrawal before age 59.5.

Some penalty-free exceptions include accessing the cash for a first-home purchase of up to \$10,000, birth or child adoption fees up to \$5,000 and qualifying medical expenses.

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

Documents show DHS probed nonprofits, obtained millions of records in hunt for noncitizen voters

BY JONATHAN SHORMAN

The Department of Homeland Security obtained tens of millions of unspecified records as part of a sweeping nationwide effort to find voter fraud, according to internal DHS reports, and weighed using undercover agents to investigate voter registration efforts by nonprofit groups.

The reports from May and June by Homeland Security Investigations, a sub-agency of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, provide updates on its "election integrity" investigations. They are included in a trove of documents obtained by the pro-democracy group Democracy Forward through a records request and released Wednesday.

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The HSI reports detail an expansive review of nonprofit organizations involved in voter registration. A June 1 report says 82 “NGOs” — nongovernmental organizations — had been reviewed in Pennsylvania alone. Groups in Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey and Ohio also came under scrutiny.

The June 1 report describes the potential for undercover operations, and refers to efforts across Homeland Security to identify organizations that “may be predatory in nature, particularly those suspected of illegal alien registration and voter encouragement.” Organizations in New Jersey and Pennsylvania remained areas of focus, the report says.

“The objective is to determine potential opportunities to leverage UC (undercover) resources, including the possible deployment of undercover agents (UCAs), to support investigative efforts in the field,” the report says.

Overall, the records offer a window into the Trump administration’s push to root out voter fraud, and especially noncitizen voting, ahead of the midterm elections. While a few months old, they suggest that finding noncitizen voters was an active focus within Homeland Security Investigations, along with identifying any organizations suspected of registering noncitizens to vote.

Noncitizen voting

Noncitizen voting is a rare occurrence, studies have consistently found.

The Justice Department has brought a few dozen cases this year, and U.S. Attorney General Todd Blanche in late September announced indictments against 10 noncitizens over allegations of unlawfully voting. But the census reports 154 million people voted in the 2024 election.

With early voting beginning across many states, Trump’s bid to assert authority over voting has largely failed. The U.S. Supreme Court blocked his plans to use the U.S. Postal Service to restrict mail ballots and the SAVE America Act, which would require voters to show proof of citizenship, stalled in Congress.

But Democrats, voting rights groups and some election officials are concerned Trump may take more extreme action in the coming weeks. They have braced for possible federal interference, including the prospect of ICE or other federal agents deploying to the polls (Homeland Security denies any plans to target polling places).

“This trove of ICE documents provides chilling new insights into the breadth and depth of the Trump-Vance administration’s efforts to pursue baseless claims of widespread election fraud and assert greater federal control over elections ahead of the 2026 midterms,” Hart Wood, senior oversight counsel at Democracy Forward, said in a statement.

Homeland Security and ICE didn’t respond to questions on Wednesday.

At a news conference last week to announce indictments against alleged noncitizen voters in Minnesota, Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin said the Trump administration would never allow the votes of noncitizens to cancel out the votes of American citizens. He said that only citizens should be electing the country’s leaders.

“Our message to aliens who vote in American elections is clear: We will find you, arrest you, and you will face the consequences, including criminal charges and deportation,” Mullin said.

Nonprofits reviewed, researched

The reports in the records obtained by Democracy Forward describe efforts by HSI to research and review an array of nonprofit groups. In some instances, HSI appeared satisfied after its examination.

The June 1 report notes that research was completed on approximately 41 non-governmental organizations in New Jersey, with “no derogatory information” found. Research on 20 nonprofit funds linked to a Washington, D.C.-based charitable foundation also turned up nothing, the report notes.

But the report also says the Pennsylvania chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations was “flagged for further investigation.” CAIR is one of the country’s leading Muslim civil rights groups.

Ahmet Selim Tekelioglu, CAIR Pennsylvania executive director, in a statement said the organization’s civic engagement programs have expanded over the years and include voter registration efforts that seek to ensure Muslim Americans are empowered to vote and fully engaged in the civic process.

“Our voter registration program follows all applicable voter registration rules and requirements,” Teke-

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lioglu said.

Education Minnesota, an educators union, is named in the June 1 report as one of 22 organizations that HSI was beginning to research at the time. Monica Byron, Education Minnesota's president, said the organization learned of the investigation on Tuesday because of Democracy Forward.

Byron said the group shares Democracy Forward's concerns about potential government surveillance of lawful voter registration activities.

"We do not know the details of any investigation into our union, but we will not be deterred in encouraging all eligible members to exercise their right to vote in the upcoming election," Byron said in a statement.

Tens of millions of records

The HSI reports show that Heather Honey, a DHS official who came to prominence denying President Donald Trump's 2020 election loss, obtained 48.4 million records through "independent sources of information." Additionally, HSI drew upon some 50.6 million records from the Department of Justice.

The exact nature of the records isn't described, but the DOJ has sued dozens of states for voter records, including sensitive personal information such as driver's license and Social Security numbers. The department hasn't won any of the lawsuits, but at least 16 states have voluntarily provided the data.

The Supreme Court ruled in September that states can use a powerful Homeland Security program called SAVE to help identify possible noncitizen voters after voting rights groups sued to block its use, alleging that it often relies on inaccurate data and has a track record of wrongly flagging U.S. citizens. The decision's impact on the midterms is expected to be minimal because most states are already too close to a federal election to conduct mass purges of voters.

But the HSI reports suggest that while the legal fight over SAVE was playing out in the courts, Homeland Security was nevertheless analyzing a vast collection of records for signs of voter fraud.

HSI's June 1 report says 26,563 records derived from ICE had been prioritized for "downstream vetting," with a focus on Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Priority states for HSI's review of Justice Department records included those states, as well as Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia and Texas.

The report notes that records were sent to iLab — an apparent reference to HSI's Innovation Lab — for "secondary enrichment and identification of high-value targets."

Jacob Fischler contributed to this report.

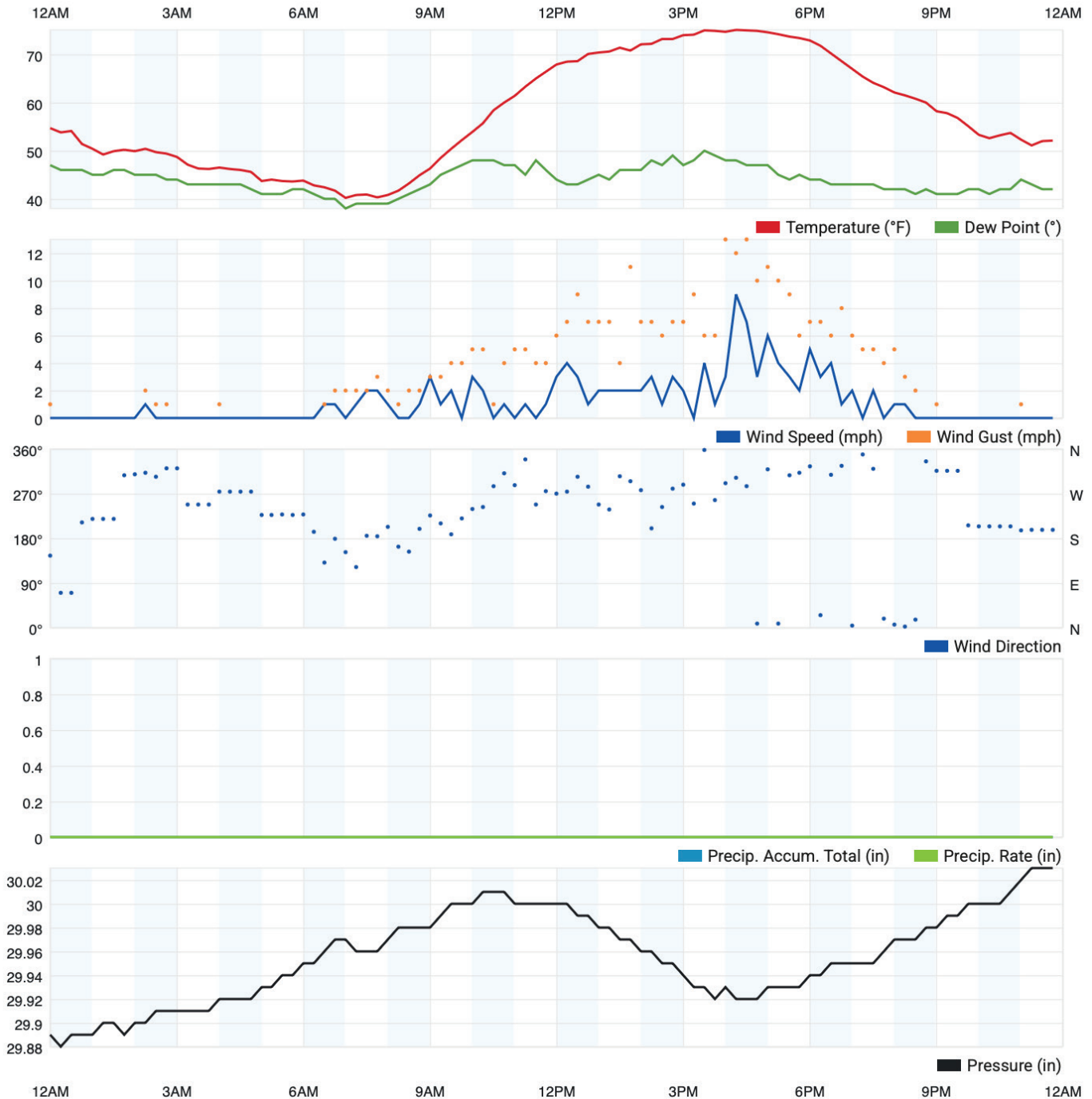
Jonathan Shorman covers democracy for States Newsroom. Based in Kansas City, his coverage area includes elections and voting rights, fights over state and federal power, civil liberties and more. An alumnus of the University of Kansas, he previously covered politics for The Kansas City Star.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

October 7, 2026



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Thursday



High: 69 °F

Isolated
Sprinkles

Thursday
Night



Low: 45 °F

Partly Cloudy

Friday



High: 79 °F

Mostly Sunny

Friday Night



Low: 66 °F

Mostly Clear

Saturday



High: 84 °F

Sunny and
Breezy

WARM THROUGH SATURDAY...



Today



Highs: **67-74°**

Lows: **40s**

Friday



Warmer

*S winds gusting
25-35 mph*

Highs: **76-88°**

Lows: **56-68°**

Saturday



Hot, Dry, & Windy

*Winds gusting 25- 40
mph, highest across the
Sisseton Hills.*

Highs: **80s**



Lows: **45-61°**

Sunday



30% chance of
Showers over n
central SD

*N winds gusting
25-35 mph*

Highs: **55-72°**

Lows: **36-43°**

Monday



Cooler

40-60% chance of
Showers

Highs: **50s**

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

weather.gov/abardeen

Our warm and dry weather will continue through Saturday. Warm and windy weather is expected Saturday, with strong winds migrating across central and northeastern South Dakota through the day. Wind gusts will be 25 to 40 mph with higher gusts on the eastern slopes of the Sisseton Hills. Given the well above normal temperatures, low humidity and widespread agricultural activity, there is a heightened concern for fires Saturday afternoon.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 76 °F at 4:23 PM

Low Temp: 40 °F at 6:59 AM

Wind: 14 mph at 4:24 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 87 in 1936

Record Low: 9 in 1895

Average High: 64

Average Low: 37

Average Precip in Oct.: 0.61

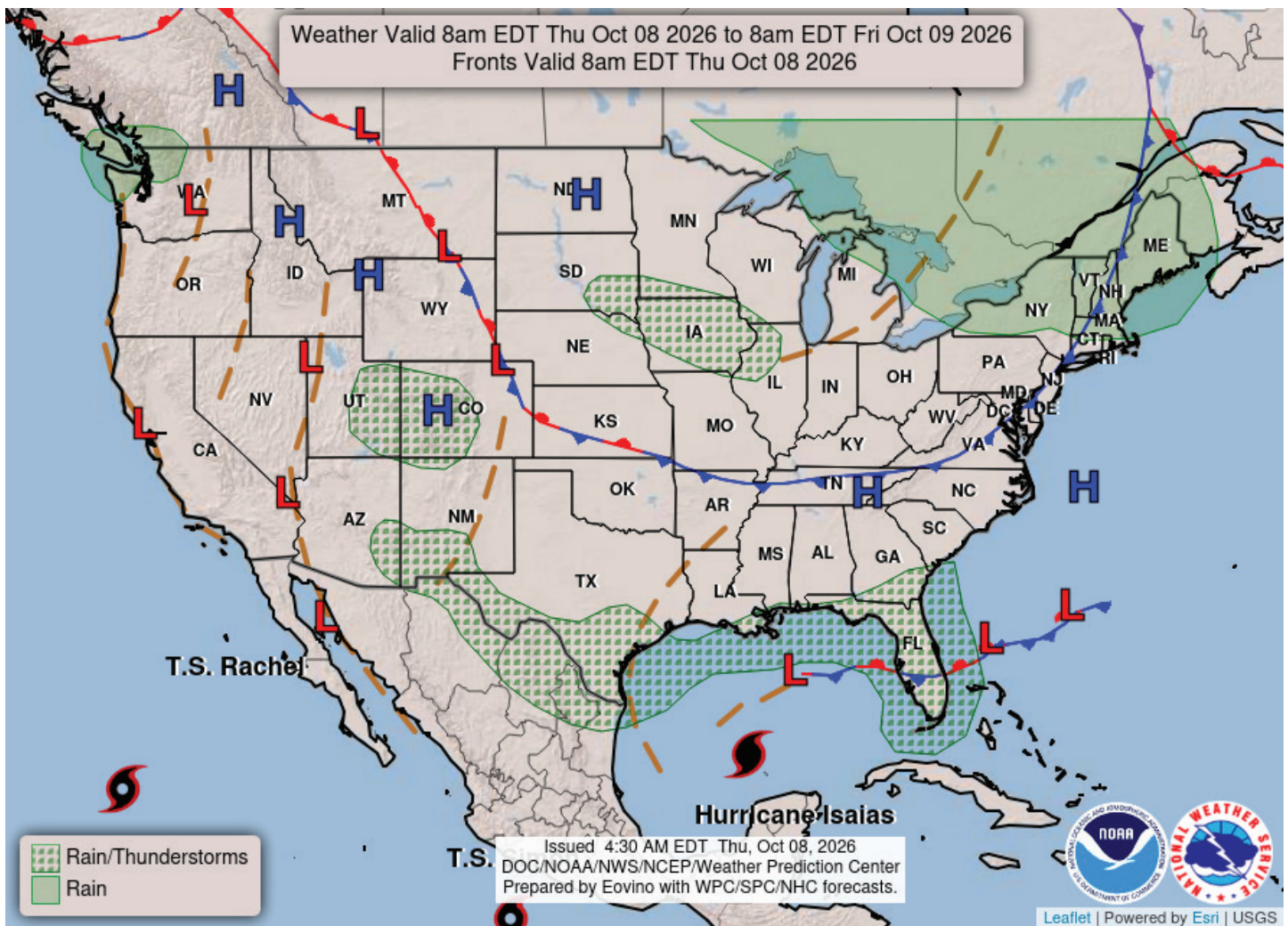
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 18.94

Precip Year to Date: 22.08

Sunset Tonight: 7:00 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:40 am



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Today in Weather History

October 8, 1982: October 8th and 9th, 1982, a record-breaking snowstorm (at that time) for so early in the Fall paralyzed the northern Black Hills with three to six feet of heavy, wet snow and 40 to 70 miles an hour. Some snowfall amounts included 41 inches at Galena, 36 inches at Lead, and 23 inches at Deadwood. Five to six feet of snow was typical in the higher elevations. The heavy wet snow caused numerous problems. The roof of a clothing store in Lead collapsed under the snow's weight, and several other businesses were damaged.

The roofs of at least three trailer homes also collapsed. The combination of high winds and heavy snow broke tree branches (causing extensive timber damage), power lines, and telephone poles. The damage was done to 40 miles of power lines, including 30 broken power poles. Some residents were without power for five days. The city of Deadwood was without electricity and water for at least three days

1871 — Prolonged drought and dessicating winds led to the great Chicago fire, the Peshtigo horror, and the Michigan fire holocaust. Fire destroyed more than seventeen thousand buildings killing more than 200 persons in the city of Chicago, while a fire consumed the town of Peshtigo WI killing more than 1100 persons. In Wisconsin, a million acres of land were burned, and in Michigan, 2.5 million acres were burned killing 200 persons. "Tornadoes of fire" generated by intense heat caused houses to explode in fire, and burned to death scores of persons seeking refuge in open fields. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1878: An estimated F3 tornado struck Monticello, Iowa, around 5:30 pm. The Catholic Church was demolished, along with several homes. The business portion of the town was comparatively uninjured. While no lives were lost, 11 people were injured. The German Church in Richland township was destroyed, along with other buildings in the surrounding county. A wind and hail storm occurred during the evening hours in Sigourney, Iowa, causing considerable damage. Fences and shade trees were blown down, and much glass was broken by hail, which fell in large stones.

1901 — A deluge at Galveston, TX, produced nearly twelve inches of rain in about a six hour period. The rains came precisely thirteen months after the day of the famous Galveston hurricane disaster. (David Ludlum)

1919: An intense tornado moved through the town of Hoisington, 11 miles north of Great Bend, Kansas. It damaged or destroyed 60 homes which resulted in \$200,000 in damages. Business papers and canceled checks were found at Lincoln, 55 miles to the northeast.

1946: A minimal Category 1 hurricane made landfall over Bradenton, Florida, before tracking north-northeast across Tampa Bay. The storm was the last hurricane to make direct landfall in the Tampa Bay area.

1982 — An unusually early snowstorm hit the northern Black Hills of Wyoming and South Dakota. The storm produced up to 54 inches of snow, and winds as high as 70 mph. The snowfall was very much dependent upon topography. Rapid City, 20 miles away, received just a trace of snow. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Unseasonably cold weather prevailed from the Upper Mississippi Valley to the southeastern U.S. Thirty cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Madison WI with a reading of 22 degrees. The low of 28 degrees at Evansville IN was the coolest of record for so early in the season. Hot weather continued in the southwestern U.S. Phoenix AZ reported a record high of 104 degrees and a record tying 116 days of 100 degree weather for the year. Tucson AZ established an all-time record with 72 days of 100 degree weather for the year. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Snow was reported across parts of northern New England. Two inches blanketed Mount Snow VT. Warm weather continued in the northwestern U.S. The afternoon high of 80 degrees at Stampede Pass WA exceeded their previous record for October by seven degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Morning lows in the 20s were reported from the Northern Plains to the Upper Great Lakes. International Falls MN and Marquette MI reported record lows of 22 degrees. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in central California as the Oakland Athletics won the American League pennant. San Luis Obispo CA reported a high of 99 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)



Praying Through the Silence

In the moments when God seems silent, keep praying and let His presence bring you peace.

Psalms 46:1-2: 1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea;

If God's silence is beneficial for us, then how should we respond when we feel as if there's a wall blocking our access to Him? The answer is to keep praying. It's important that we continue talking to the Lord even when we can't sense Him responding.

First, pray. While Jesus was on the cross, He demonstrated that we can approach God with our deepest questions (Mark 15:34). The Lord invites us to talk with Him about anything because He understands us perfectly.

Second, ask Him to reveal His will. Remember that God's timing may not match ours, but He's always listening.

Third, trust Him. We're to be still in the Lord's presence as He works in our life—and believe that He always sees the way clearly. God desires for His children to keep coming to Him, even when He seems quiet, and even when we feel like giving up.

Finally, open the Bible and start reading. The Holy Spirit living within us will interpret God's Word to our heart, and we'll begin to hear Him speaking through it.

In addition to talking to God, practice being silent in His presence. When we listen carefully, He satisfies the deepest longings of our heart with a sense of Himself. And in time, anxiety gives way to peace.

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.07.26

15 19 33 52 57 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 56 Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.06.26

26 32 42 51 54 22

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$364,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 41 Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.07.26

7 10 19 20 43 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,100,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 56 Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.07.26

8 16 21 25 30

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$82,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 11 Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.07.26

17 18 23 66 69 1

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 40 Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.07.26

11 13 14 21 65 19

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$516,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 40 Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Trump's executive order on dyed diesel will offer little relief, farmers and truckers say

By SARAH RAZA and MAE ANDERSON Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Farmers, truckers and economists say a move to cut taxes on diesel will provide little relief from record-high fuel prices that have soared since the U.S. attacked Iran months ago.

Industry groups said they appreciate President Donald Trump's executive order expanding the use of a diesel now reserved for off-road work, but farmers already have access to the fuel and many have already wrapped up harvest. Truckers will struggle to navigate differing state rules.

"In the context of diesel prices that are over two dollars more than they were last year, it just doesn't come close to closing that wound," said Matt Perdue, president of the North Dakota Farmers Union.

With less than a month to go before the November election, diesel prices continue to hit record highs as some farmers transport their crops for processing and others rush to complete their fall harvest. Many have been feeling the squeeze as costs for inputs like diesel, fertilizer and seed have soared thanks to refinery constraints and supply disruptions amid the Iran war.

Diesel averaged \$6.30 per gallon across the country on Wednesday, more than 70% higher than one year ago, according to motor club AAA. The executive order defers the \$0.24 federal tax per gallon of regular diesel, used for road projects, until the end of the year. Most states also levy their own tax on diesel.

"Dyed" diesel is the same as regular diesel, except for its red dye to help law enforcement enforce penalties for on-road use. It's already allowed for off-road purposes like farming equipment, such as tractors and combines, as well as construction and heating uses.

Who will see benefits

Savings can compound if states take similar actions; many have eased restrictions or waived taxes on dyed diesel, including South Dakota and Iowa. Perdue said North Dakota has waived the tax on regular diesel. But where the state decision is focused on farmers, he believes the federal decision would largely benefit those on other levels of the supply chain.

Farmers who will see the most benefit are those who haul their own product, like livestock or fresh produce, on public roads. Those who have already wrapped up harvesting won't see savings.

"Most of our diesel use is behind us," said Perdue, who grows spring wheat, durum and canola on his family farm.

Both trucking companies and independent truckers may not see much relief either. The effect is likely to be negligible for big trucking companies because the order is on a federal level and states make their own rules, Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy, wrote in a social media post.

"The largest diesel users are the least likely to use dyed diesel," he wrote. "A national carrier crossing five or six states in a day faces enormous risk with a patchwork of rules, legal in one state, and subject to fines in the next."

Many states exempt road diesel from sales tax but apply sales tax to dyed diesel instead, he said.

Easing limits on red-dyed diesel will likely have a minimal effect for small truckers, who pay for fuel up front, said Todd Spencer, president and CEO of trade group the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association. He estimates every \$1 increase per gallon in fuel costs independent truckers about \$400 more per week.

Increased demand for dyed diesel

The savings will be small, but it could still increase competition for dyed diesel, said David Ortega, food economics and policy professor at Michigan State University.

"I think there's a real chance this could backfire and make the situation worse for farmers," he said. "Basically anybody that's running a truck on the highway on regular diesel can now be using this off-highway diesel. Even someone that owns a diesel pickup truck potentially has access to this other type of diesel."

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Perdue in North Dakota said he expects a "rush for dyed diesel, and we'll see how the supply responds." But not all dyed diesel pump stations are set up for larger trucks like semis, said Paul Mitchell, a professor of agricultural and applied economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

"It's going to come down to infrastructure ability to get your vehicles to a place that you can use and fill them up with," he said.

Supply shortages persist

Henry Hanscom, American Trucking Associations chief advocacy and public affairs officer, pointed out that the executive order directs temporary penalty relief and potential tax deferral for using red-dyed diesel, not outright tax forgiveness. He said the ATA would review the Internal Revenue Service's implementing guidance of the policy when it is available.

Last month, Trump had threatened a diesel export ban, though he later said it is off the table. On Friday, G7 countries agreed to release 100 million barrels of oil and fuel products.

"One of the problems we have right now in the world is there's not enough diesel fuel," said Gregg Ibendahl, farm management specialist at Kansas State University.

But underlying causes like geopolitical issues won't be solved overnight.

"The problem we've accumulated right now with the Strait of Hormuz and the Russia-Ukraine war, those are going to be longer term things to get fixed," he said. "Getting that world supply back up again is going to be, I think, at least a year, even in the best cases."

Wife of ex-Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro seeks release from US jail

By PHILIP MARCELO and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The wife of former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro was set to be back in court Thursday, where her lawyers will urge a judge to free her from jail and put her under house arrest because she has heart problems.

Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores have been behind bars in New York since early January when forces seized them from their Caracas home in a middle-of-the-night raid.

Both have pleaded not guilty in a criminal case first brought six years ago against them and numerous alleged co-conspirators. They face potential life prison sentences if convicted of being part of a conspiracy to send cocaine into the U.S.

Their attorneys have asked for the case to be dismissed on the grounds that they have immunity as the leader and first lady of a foreign country.

Lawyers for Flores, 69, have also argued that she has medical issues that cannot be treated effectively in jail, and that she could instead be allowed to live under 24-hour guard at a residence in New York.

They also said she suffered permanent scarring when she was "thrown against a wall or dresser" during the U.S. military action that led to her capture.

Her lawyers say she has lost 25 pounds (11 kilograms) while imprisoned at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn and has been told that she might need heart surgery. They said she also suffers from "lingering lightheadedness, dizziness and shortness of breath" and might have suffered a minor heart attack in July.

Prosecutors opposed the bail request. In a court filing, they wrote that Flores would pose an "extreme risk of flight and danger to the public" if released. They also said she has been taken from the jail to get treatment at a local hospital, when care was needed.

President Donald Trump's administration has defended the raid to capture Maduro as a "surgical law enforcement operation." Maduro has called himself a prisoner of war and his capture a kidnapping.

Flores is charged with participating in a cocaine importation conspiracy with her husband, Maduro, who served as Venezuela's president from 2013 until his capture by American forces in January.

Lawyers for Flores said she was no threat to flee because she is "intent on supporting her husband with her constant presence."

Hurricane Isaias is expected to get stronger on its way to Florida, Alabama and Mississippi coasts

By R.J. RICO, DAVE COLLINS and HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

Isaias surged toward the U.S. Gulf Coast on Thursday as the first hurricane of the Atlantic season, prompting mandatory evacuations and school closures in parts of Florida.

Isaias was forecast to intensify rapidly and bring strong winds and a life-threatening storm surge to the Florida Panhandle, southern Alabama and southern Mississippi when it makes landfall on the northern Gulf Coast late Friday or early Saturday. Heavy rain with the risk of flooding was possible into the weekend as far inland as the Tennessee Valley.

The hurricane had maximum sustained winds around 80 mph (129 kph) and was moving east-northeast at 9 mph (15 kph) early Thursday morning, the National Hurricane Center in Miami said. It was centered about 420 miles (676 kilometers) south-southwest of the mouth of the Mississippi River.

Coastal communities moved quickly to prepare. Some Gulf oil wells paused production, and at least four Florida school districts canceled classes for later in the week while Okaloosa County announced mandatory evacuations for some coastal areas. Governors in Florida and Alabama declared a state of emergency for dozens of counties.

The National Weather Service told communities from Ocean Springs, Mississippi, to Gulf County, Florida, to prepare for the possibility of "long-duration power outages."

The hurricane formed late in the season

Isaias developed more than four months into the Atlantic hurricane season and was short by one day of tying a 121-year-old record for the area's latest-forming hurricane. According to the National Weather Service, the record dates to 1905, when the year's first Atlantic hurricane formed on Oct. 8.

The Atlantic hurricane season has been unusually quiet this year because of a strong El Niño, which disrupts storm formation over that ocean. Storm activity has been above average in the Pacific, where Tropical Storm Simon formed Wednesday off Mexico.

Isaias is expected to strike a swath of coastline that's familiar with major hurricanes.

One of the 20th century's worst storms, Hurricane Camille, killed more than 250 people after hitting land near Waveland, Mississippi, in 1969. Hurricane Katrina in 2005 razed neighborhoods in Mississippi, flooded New Orleans and killed nearly 1,400 people. And Hurricane Michael leveled homes and buildings near Panama City, Florida, in 2018.

Oil production and tourism already affected

Ahead of the storm, oil and gas producers shut down a significant share of offshore production in the Gulf, which accounts for almost 15% of crude pumped annually in the U.S.

As of Wednesday about 25% of the oil production in the region was temporarily halted, taking about 511,000 barrels a day off the market, according to the Marine Minerals Administration. It said eight of the Gulf's 371 manned oil platforms were evacuated.

With oil prices already high, the production cuts are steep enough to affect markets, though other Gulf hurricanes have caused larger disruptions, said Jim Burkhard, global head of crude oil market research for S&P Global Energy. More concerning, he said, is whether Isaias strikes as a powerful storm near refineries.

As it moves inland, Isaias might also disrupt Saturday's college football showdown between rivals Georgia and Alabama, a game President Donald Trump has planned to attend.

In Alabama, the cities of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach issued a statement encouraging people in low-lying areas to voluntarily evacuate.

Gulf Shores resident Maranie Adams gathered water and other supplies as her family moved belongings, including a hot tub motor, to higher ground. Her family planned to ride out the storm at home, roughly a half-mile from shore, sheltering indoors alongside their flock of chickens.

"We're having to get crates to bring them into the house so they don't blow away," Adams said. "It's going to be noisy."

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Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey issued a state of emergency for 40 counties, while Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis declared one for 25 counties in the Panhandle and Big Bend regions. The state also planned to deploy a Miami-based urban search and rescue task force.

In Pensacola, electric utilities were pre-positioning crews to quickly repair any power outages. City officials provided sand for residents to fill sandbags to protect their homes against flooding. And Mayor D.C. Reeves urged people to check on older adult neighbors and others who might need help.

"Obviously no need to panic at this point," Reeves told a news conference. "This is really about preparation."

The long-deployed USS Lincoln is returning home to San Diego

By JULIE WATSON and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The USS Abraham Lincoln is returning home to San Diego Thursday after supporting the Iran war during a record long deployment of 265 uninterrupted days at sea that included reports of deteriorating conditions among its crew.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth flew out to the carrier on Wednesday to give the crew the Presidential Unit Citation, the highest honor a unit can receive that is typically reserved for significant achievement in combat.

Hegseth pushed back against what he said were efforts to turn the "Lincoln into some sort of a symbol, a symbol of dysfunction or a symbol of low morale or a symbol of a failed mission."

He said that "what makes the U.S. military and the U.S. Navy and all these sailors different is that you adapt and that you're resilient and you overcome — you finish the mission nonetheless."

Hegseth told the crew that President Donald Trump "tracked your activities from day one and couldn't be more proud of what you executed."

The Navy initially downplayed problems on the carrier

The carrier drew national attention following reports of stress among the crew and poor mental health, as well as supply shortages, including food and hygiene products, during its Iran war mission.

The Navy initially downplayed any problems, and Trump commented in August that the Lincoln's lengthy deployment was "not nearly long enough."

The carrier had left San Diego in November and arrived in the Middle East in January. U.S. and Israeli forces launched airstrikes against Iran on Feb. 28.

Navy leaders, however, eventually acknowledged there were some issues aboard.

In August, acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao said the Lincoln maintained adequate food supplies, but because combat operations limited resupply opportunities, meal options were reduced from two to one for a short time. He said in a letter to a Democratic lawmaker seeking information that four nutritionally balanced meals were served daily.

After more than 10 months at sea, the Lincoln's crew got a stop in Thailand early last month on the way back from the Middle East.

Long deployments can tax service members

Extended naval deployments can wear on service members who are away from home for long periods and increase strain on the ship and its equipment.

The Navy told lawmakers that eight sailors attempted suicide during the record-setting deployment, though experts say that number is low in a strike group of 6,000 sailors over 10 months.

According to the citation that Hegseth read to the crew, the Lincoln and its strike group executed 3,693 combat missions, delivered 1.37 million pounds of ordnance, launched 450 Tomahawk cruise missiles, shot down 77 one-way attack drones, sank 64 Iranian warships, destroyed 21 anti-ship cruise missiles and defended against four fast-attack craft and explosive-carrying ships.

The Lincoln, which set a record for days in between ports of call, is the second carrier to endure an unusually long deployment to support the war against Iran and to receive the Presidential Unit Citation afterward.

Hegseth in May met the crew of the USS Gerald R. Ford during its return from a 326-day deployment — the longest for an aircraft carrier in the past 50 years and a record in the post-Vietnam War era.

Another carrier, the usually Asia-based USS George Washington, relieved the Lincoln in the Middle East in August.

Rescuers pull bodies from rubble as Ukraine's death toll rises to 22 from a Russian missile strike

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Rescuers searched through the rubble of a residential building hit by a Russian missile in the northern Ukrainian town of Pryluky on Thursday as the death toll rose to 22, including five children, Ukraine's State Emergency Service said.

The strike Wednesday in the country's Chernihiv region also injured 54 people, seven of them children, the agency said. In the immediate aftermath, rescuers had pulled 15 survivors out, including a child.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that a cruise missile directly hit the building in Pryluky, some 150 kilometers (93 miles) east of Kyiv, the country's capital.

The strike was part of a massive Russian missile and drone barrage on Kyiv and a dozen other regions on Wednesday, coinciding with Russian President Vladimir Putin's 74th birthday.

"This is the kind of 'gift' Putin gave himself for his birthday," Zelenskyy said in a nightly video address Wednesday. "The killing of children, the killing of people."

Zelenskyy warned that Russia will likely escalate daily missile and drone attacks as winter approaches.

Ukraine's energy company DTEK said the national grid operator Ukrenergo had ordered emergency power outages in Kyiv, and explained that this is separate from regular, rolling outages scheduled across the country and would not be applied during those shutdowns.

Russia and Ukraine are locked in a long-range aerial war while their armies remain largely deadlocked on the front line, more than 4 1/2 years since Moscow's full-scale invasion.

Late Wednesday, Russian drones struck Kyiv's Obolonskyi and Desnianskyi districts, police said.

In Obolonskyi, north of central Kyiv, a drone hit a courtyard between apartment buildings, killing two people and injuring seven, including a 12-year-old boy and a 16-year-old girl.

In Desnianskyi, on the capital's northeastern outskirts, a drone hit a residential building, killing two women and injuring five, among them girls aged 1 and 6.

Deported to Central African Republic, a transgender woman who lived openly in Miami is hiding again

By MARK BANCHEREAU Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — In Miami, Daniela Fuentes styled hair for clients and performed in drag at a nightclub called Azúcar. She wore her blond wig in public and dressed as the woman she had known herself to be since adolescence in Cuba.

Now, more than 6,000 miles (10,000 kilometers) away in the Central African Republic, she wears men's clothes, lowers her voice and tries not to draw attention to the breasts she developed after beginning hormone treatment as a teenager. As part of U.S. efforts to deport people to countries other than their own, authorities sent her Aug. 29 to a place where she has no ties and where advocacy groups have reported arbitrary detention, torture, and other rights violations of sexual and gender minorities.

"Everything is difficult here because I have to hide who I am," said Fuentes, a 32-year-old transgender woman living on a compound she rarely leaves, sharing a room with four Cuban men also deported from the U.S. "I don't know this place, the people or the language, and I have no idea what will happen to me."

The Central African Republic — one of the world's poorest countries, a place with a history of conflict that the U.S. State Department advises American travelers to avoid — is one of at least 12 African nations that signed agreements to accept "third-country" deportations, a policy the U.S. Supreme Court last month

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allowed to continue, at least temporarily.

In the Central African Republic — where transgender people have little to no legal protections and are marginalized in much of society — Fuentes dons her wig only in the privacy of her bathroom. She described disguising herself as protection, first in U.S. detention and now in a country she first heard of when she was already headed there on a deportation flight.

"My whole life, my whole identity, was taken away from me," Fuentes said.

Public records say a judge ordered Fuentes to leave the U.S. but offer no other information. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials did not reply to emailed questions.

Tens of thousands of people have been deported to "third countries"

Fuentes' compound in the capital, Bangui, is an apartment complex where the government houses male deportees.

Fuentes said she can leave but that officials have advised her and others to avoid it — they have no identification, which could lead to issues with the police. It also means they can't work, she said, and she's waiting on travel documents that would allow her to leave the country. The International Organization for Migration, an agency associated with the United Nations, has provided food, and the migrants say they've crowdsourced for donations to buy groceries.

The U.S. — via agreements often not made public — has deported about 25,000 people to more than two dozen countries that aren't their own, the vast majority to Mexico, according to a tally by Third Country Deportation Watch, a partnership of Refugees International and Human Rights First. The U.S. has not released numbers or details.

From January 2025 to August 2026, more than 500 were sent to countries in Africa, according to a Human Rights Watch report published Thursday — including at least 12 people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender and were deported to places that criminalize same-sex relations or public same-sex romantic conduct. Some advocates say the number is likely higher.

"These are not bureaucratic errors or isolated incidents," said Bridget Crawford, of the group Immigration Equality. "They are the predictable result of policies that purposefully abandon our legal and moral obligation to protect LGBTQ+ immigrants fleeing persecution."

The U.S. government says the policy is lawful and that receiving governments provide assurances deportees won't be persecuted or tortured.

Daniela Fuentes says ICE detained her with men before deportation

Fuentes grew up in La Lisa, on Havana's outskirts, and said she understood from childhood that she was different. She began living as a woman in adolescence and started taking hormones at 18.

She ran a salon from her home, coloring and cutting hair. She said she was harassed because of her gender identity and attacked at least twice, leaving scars on her arm and head. Police also questioned her about operating a private business, she said — though housefront businesses are common in the area.

In 2023, Fuentes sold her home and left amid a deepening economic crisis and a crackdown on dissent — even as Cuba, one of Latin America's most progressive countries for LGBTQ+ rights, adopted new inclusion laws. Making her way to the U.S., she said, she presented as a man traveling through Central America; she believed it was safer.

After seven months in Mexico, she said, she entered the U.S. through Texas via CBP One, a President Joe Biden-era online appointment system that allowed migrants to live in the country for two years on humanitarian grounds. Then she went to Miami.

There, she began living openly as a woman again. She found work styling hair and performed at Azúcar. Though she lacked permanent legal status, Fuentes said Miami offered something she'd rarely experienced: the freedom to move through daily life as herself.

That ended when officers encountered her outside a motel. Fuentes said they learned she had missed an immigration court hearing in Texas. She said she asked that the case be moved to Florida but received no response.

Fuentes said she was taken into custody and later placed in immigration detention with men. Officials confiscated her wig and gave her a male detainee's uniform, she said.

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Such treatment is in line with a January 2025 executive order directing officials to exclude transgender women from women's prisons and detention centers.

"When I learned that they were going to put me with men, I almost fainted," Fuentes said.

Deportees said they boarded a flight without knowing the destination

Fuentes was held at two detention facilities in Florida, then transferred to Texas. When armed officers arrived there, she said, she suspected she was facing deportation, but they didn't reveal she was being sent to Africa until about five hours into the flight.

Other deportees on the flight told AP they also weren't told the destination until they were on the plane. Dozens have been sent to the Central African Republic, including an Iranian woman facing persecution in her home country and an Afghan whose brothers worked with the U.S. military.

Fuentes said she does not understand why she was sent to Africa rather than Cuba. She told AP she has no lawyer.

The U.S. does repatriate Cuban citizens, as part of agreements to resume deportation flights in 2023, despite tensions in relations between the countries. Charter flights have arrived in Havana regularly.

Yasmany Moreno, another Cuban deportee in Bangui, said that upon arriving, the group had no visas or documents establishing their legal status in the country. Officials spoke of providing assistance for 90 days, he said, but the deportees didn't know what would happen afterward or where they would live.

Several told AP their longer-term status remained unclear and that U.S. authorities had taken their identity documents.

A policy officer at the Central African Republic's Foreign Ministry said the deportees are in "good hands" and are being monitored by the International Organization for Migration. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

The U.S. this year committed to \$85 million in funding to IOM for Central African Republic operations including "assistance to migrants" and "community stabilization."

IOM says migrants can seek asylum in the country, request assistance to return home or get help traveling to another place they're authorized to enter. It referred questions about the deportees' status and individual cases such as Fuentes' to Central African Republic officials. A government spokesperson didn't reply to phone calls and text messages seeking comment.

Human Rights Watch's report says some people deported to third countries face detention, abuse and the prospect of persecution. Eswatini has held deportees in a maximum-security prison without charges. Equatorial Guinea has held them against their will at a hotel owned by the president's family.

"Several of these African governments are not only complicit in U.S. abuses but have violated the human rights of these deported people themselves," Michael Garcia Bochenek, of Human Rights Watch, said in a statement.

Fuentes and other deportees say they can't work, with most days spent at the compound

Fuentes said the Cuban men in her room know she is a woman and look out for her. She rarely feels safe enough to leave. Once, at a supermarket, workers pointed at her breasts and initially refused to sell her fruit, she said. Other people in Bangui have mocked her and pointed at her.

"My personal appearance is awful," she said. "I look like a different human being."

Moreno described restrictions on the group's movements, saying officers accompanied them to the market and on occasional outings but restricted them from going out at night.

Fuentes and Moreno said they have no passports or other identification and cannot work. Most days, Fuentes remains at the compound, looking at her phone and waiting for travel documents.

She said Cuba has agreed to accept her return — a Cuban embassy document shows she is authorized.

But Fuentes said she hopes to seek asylum elsewhere, possibly Canada.

"The harassment and economic hardship that caused me to flee still remain," she said.

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Nobel Prize in literature to be awarded in Stockholm

By KOSTYA MANENKOV and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — The Nobel Prize in literature will be awarded Thursday by the Swedish Academy in Stockholm.

Last year, Hungarian writer László Krasznahorkai, whose surreal and anarchic novels combine a bleak world view with mordant humor, won the Nobel Prize in literature for work the judges said upholds the power of art in the midst of “apocalyptic terror.”

Three science awards were announced earlier this week. The Nobel for medicine went to three scientists whose work led to a tool that uses light to help unravel how the brain works. The physics award recognized a scientist’s efforts to demystify a rare group of neutrinos. The chemistry prize recognized two scientists for untangling mysterious mirror images in molecules, a discovery that has been used to develop countless drugs.

This week ends with Friday’s peace prize. The Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences will be announced Monday.

The prize money this year is 12 million Swedish kronor (about \$1.2 million), whether for an individual, small group of laureates or organization.

As Democrats eye big midterm wins, Republicans look to turn the tables in some House districts

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The midterm elections might look ominous for President Donald Trump, but there are places where his Republican Party could turn the tables on Democrats if it can peel off a few key wins in key congressional races.

National organizations are pumping money behind candidates that Republicans hope can provide bright spots. Here’s a look at places where that cash bump — and prime issues like redistricting, immigration and top-of-the-ticket races — might help the party hold their own on Election Night on Nov. 3.

It still won’t be enough, counters Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee spokesman Aidan Johnson, who says his party remains “firmly on offense and on track to take back” the House majority.

An open New Hampshire seat and Trump PAC spending

The race in the state’s first district has no incumbent as Democratic Rep. Chris Pappas runs for Senate against John E. Sununu, a former Republican congressman who served a single term as senator from 2003 to 2009.

Stefany Shaheen, a former Portsmouth city councilor and daughter of retiring Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, won a hotly contested Democratic primary. She’s facing Anthony DiLorenzo, who was endorsed by Trump and owns several car dealerships.

The seat used to frequently flip between parties, but has remained blue since Pappas first got to Congress in 2019, and the district narrowly supported Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris over Trump in 2024.

Shaheen has focused on the rising cost of health care and opposing Trump’s tariffs and trade wars, which she says have hurt New Hampshire consumers.

DiLorenzo has taken a more moderate stance on immigration than Trump, calling for pro-business reforms to the federal system. But he’s also echoed the president’s saying that Democrats want to push the U.S. toward outright socialism.

Last year, Republican Jay Ruais, the mayor of the district’s largest city of Manchester, was reelected with around 59% of the vote.

Republicans are also looking for a boost from the Senate race. No Going Back Pac has pledged \$10 million to back Sununu. The group is associated with MAGA Inc., Trump’s behemoth campaign war chest that had more than \$400 million in the bank at the end of July.

Top of the ticket could spill also into Long Island race

First-term Democratic Rep. Laura Gillen is facing Republican Jeanine Driscoll, a tax receiver in Hempstead

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in New York's fourth district, which includes Nassau County and runs east of Manhattan, hugging Long Island's south shore.

Republican gubernatorial candidate Bruce Blakeman is considered an underdog against incumbent Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul in a statewide race in reliably blue New York. But Blakeman is the Nassau County executive, meaning he may see strong turnout on his home turf and potentially affect Driscoll's chances against Gillen.

In 2024, Trump nearly carried the district after losing it by well over 10 points in 2020.

While Gillen has stressed sometimes working with Republicans to address key issues like the rising cost of living, Driscoll has championed Trump's immigration policies while promising to better shield suburban Long Island from regional and statewide policies she criticizes as government overreach.

Landsman defends redder Ohio territory

Democratic Rep. Greg Landsman's first district on the westside of Cincinnati backed Vice President Kamala Harris in 2024 but was redrawn to make it more Republican-leaning ahead of November.

The new boundaries encompass Clinton County and rural western Hamilton County, while reducing the more Democratic-friendly Cincinnati suburbs. It's one of several places with new maps after Trump urged an unusual round of redistricting around the country to help his party keep control of the House.

Landsman, who was first elected to Congress in 2022, is squaring off against Republican former Air Force veteran and CIA officer Eric Conroy.

Like Trump, Conroy spent months suggesting that the war in Iran would reach a swift conclusion. The president now says that won't happen until at least after the midterms.

Landsman has focused on pocketbook issues, including rising utility rates. He's also raised more money than his challenger in recent quarters, which could be an indicator of where the race is headed.

Tax policy spotlighted in a Las Vegas district

Looking to unseat Democratic incumbent Rep. Susie Lee in Nevada's third district is Marty O'Donnell, the composer behind music featured in the wildly popular Halo video game series and the 1990s jingle for Flintstones vitamins: "We are Flintstones kids, 10 million strong and growing."

O'Donnell even led the crowd in singing a rendition during the midterm convention that Trump led in Dallas.

Lee first won her seat during a Democratic wave in 2018 and survived in 2024 even though her district backed Trump. Nevada relies heavily on the tourism and hospitality industries, and Republicans are touting Trump's legislation to cut taxes on tips and overtime.

Lee and other key Democrats counter that Trump hasn't kept campaign promises to lower costs — especially as the war with Iran has driven up gasoline and diesel prices and renewed fears about high inflation.

There could also be trickle-down effects from Nevada's governor's race. Republican incumbent Gov. Joe Lombardo is a former sheriff of Clark County, which includes Las Vegas. He's in what's likely to be a close race with Nevada's attorney general, Democrat Aaron Ford, who previously represented a Las Vegas-area district in the state senate.

Testing immigration messaging in southern New Mexico

Democratic Rep. Gabe Vasquez narrowly won his seat in 2022. And he narrowly won reelection in 2024 even as Trump carried the district, which stretches from southern and western Albuquerque to encompass the state's entire southern half — including around 180 miles (290 kilometers) of U.S.-Mexico border.

Vasquez has built a political identity around being the son of Mexican immigrants and the first in his family to be born in the U.S. His Republican opponent, Greg Cunningham, is a Marine veteran and one-time undercover police officer, spoke at Trump's midterm convention and has focused on calls for stricter border security and law and order.

Hispanic voters shifted toward Trump in 2024, though a majority still backed Harris. According to AP VoteCast, 43% of Hispanic voters nationally supported Trump, up from 35% in 2020. Vasquez's race with Cunningham may test Trump's continued appeal with Hispanics and whether some voters have become disillusioned with the president's tougher immigration policies in addition to his handling of the economy.

FDA says its safety review of abortion pill will continue into next year

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Food and Drug Administration says its ongoing safety review of the nation's main abortion pill will continue into next year, a timeline that was quickly condemned by abortion opponents hoping to see the drug's use curtailed.

The FDA gave a court-ordered update on its progress in a legal filing late Wednesday, providing the first substantive information about the controversial reevaluation ordered by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Mifepristone was first approved by the FDA in 2000. The agency has repeatedly reaffirmed the pill's safety and effectiveness over the years, in addition to easing a number of restrictions on the drug, including dropping a requirement that it be dispensed in person.

But since President Donald Trump returned to the White House, anti-abortion groups and their allies in Congress have pushed the administration to revisit the pill, in the hopes of restricting its use.

The FDA said in its filing that it expects to complete a safety study of the pill by mid-December this year. A report on the findings is expected "no later than March 2027," after which the agency will decide whether to impose new restrictions or other changes on the drug's use.

Gavin Oxley of Americans United for Life, an anti-abortion group, criticized the move as a lack of "true leadership" by Trump administration officials.

"The administration continues to find itself on the wrong side of women's health, clearly uninterested in mitigating the ongoing harms caused by the abortion pill," Oxley said.

The two-drug regimen of mifepristone, combined with a second drug misoprostol, is the most common form of abortion in the U.S.

The FDA was directed to provide the latest update by a federal judge in a case brought by the state of Louisiana alleging that mail-delivery of mifepristone undermines the state's abortion ban. It's one of several state lawsuits related to mifepristone winding their way through the courts.

Last month a three-judge panel for the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals questioned the merits of Louisiana's case, including whether the state had the legal standing to challenge FDA's oversight of mifepristone.

Any ruling from the 5th Circuit on the Louisiana case would not immediately change the landscape because the Supreme Court has blocked changes to the drug until it sees the case again.

The FDA said Wednesday it is using a "statistical data mining method" to discover "unknown safety concerns," that may exist with the drug. The data comes from an electronic database that collects reports of medical injuries and drug side effects from major health networks and insurers.

In addition to the safety study, the agency said it is considering a number of petitions proposing changes to how mifepristone is prescribed and distributed.

Abortion opponents have focused most of their efforts on a 2021 decision allowing doctors to prescribe the drug online and send it through the mail during COVID-19. That decision, made permanent under President Joe Biden in 2023, had the effect of undermining a number of state abortion bans, since women can receive the drug through the mail.

Cornell gang-rape accuser was 'misled' about criminal investigation, her lawyer says

By MICHAEL R. SISK and LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

ITHACA, N.Y. (AP) — The woman accusing several men of raping her at a Cornell University fraternity party was "misled" about the status of the criminal investigation in the weeks after she went to police, her lawyer said Wednesday.

Even as she took her allegations about a 2024 gang rape at the Chi Phi fraternity house through Cornell's

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internal disciplinary process, the university's police department gave her the impression that a criminal investigation was continuing, lawyer Thomas Giuffra told The Associated Press.

In fact, the criminal inquiry ended almost as soon as it began.

Tompkins County District Attorney Matthew Van Houten, the local prosecutor, made the decision not to go forward with a criminal case within days of the woman giving her first substantial interviews to police.

Van Houten has said that he asked Cornell's police department to convey the decision to the woman, who is referred to in court documents as Jane Doe, but never spoke personally to her or her lawyer.

Giuffra said the woman was told that the criminal investigation was ongoing.

"I think she was misled. She was told it was still — they weren't going to prosecute, but they were still investigating," Giuffra said. "I was involved with this case early on. I thought they were still investigating. It was news to me that they weren't doing anything."

Giuffra added that at the time, he assumed investigators just needed more time to speak with witnesses and build a case.

"But nothing was being done, and we didn't know that," Giuffra said.

A message seeking comment was left for Van Houten. Cornell's media relations office, citing pending litigation, declined to comment on behalf of the university's police department.

The district attorney said in a statement last week that he was confident that no further investigation was necessary after prosecutors and criminal investigators from his office reviewed a six-page summary of the woman's account, written by a police officer.

Summary left out key details, lawyer says

Based on that summary, Van Houten said he believed no crime had been committed, and that the woman's participation in drug use and sex was "voluntary, conscious and consensual."

That description differs sharply with what the woman told police and university investigators, and with what she alleged in a lawsuit filed against seven Chi Phi fraternity members, Cornell and others last month.

Among other things, Giuffra said, the six-page report omitted the woman telling investigators, "I can say with 100% confidence I was raped," that she was subjected to physical violence, and that a fraternity brother had sent a message to a group chat using a vulgar term to advertise that a woman's body was freely available.

Last week, citing investigative records it obtained, The New York Times reported that a Cornell police investigator tried to get Van Houten's office to consider additional evidence in the weeks after the alleged rape, but was rebuffed.

"At first I thought these police were incompetent," Giuffra said. "It sounds like they were doing the right thing. And they just got shut down."

Giuffra said that while he and Jane Doe have received death threats, he has been heartened by an outpouring of support, including rallies and protests on the Cornell campus and more than 1,000 women who have emailed him to share anger, frustration, solidarity and stories of their own assaults.

Students rally against sexual violence

Some Cornell students staged a sit-in at a dining hall and vowed not to spend money on campus Wednesday to protest sexual violence and how the university has handled complaints, in the latest expression of outrage over an alleged 2024 gang rape at a fraternity house.

A handwritten sign reading "Justice for Jane Doe" — the name under which the accuser is suing — was propped on an empty table in the dining hall in the afternoon. Some students sat around the room without eating, while others lunched. Another small group sat outside holding signs with messages such as "we are Jane Doe."

The demonstrations were meant to spotlight complaints that the university is slow to respond to reports of sexual assault while quick to protect its reputation. Among other demands, the groups want the university to retool disciplinary procedures for addressing complaints and expel or revoke the degrees of anyone involved in the alleged October 2024 sexual assault.

Jane Doe, who was a student then, alleges that Chi Phi members plied her with alcohol and drugs and

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several sexually assaulted her. One man sent others a message inviting them to participate, according to a lawsuit she filed last month.

Lawyers for two of the men have denied they participated in a sexual assault. Attempts by The Associated Press to reach the others or their representatives have been unsuccessful. Some of the men who underwent a university disciplinary hearing in 2024 told investigators that the sexual activity was consensual or said they were not involved.

Man in lawsuit wants attorney general removed

The woman went to Cornell police in November 2024, though no criminal charges resulted. In the wake of her lawsuit, Van Houten said he was reopening the investigation. Days later, Gov. Kathy Hochul took the case away from him and appointed the state's attorney general, Letitia James, as a special prosecutor.

Giuffra applauded the move, saying he was troubled by Van Houten's plan for conducting the reopened investigation and "didn't think he was up to the task." Giuffra said the district attorney wanted to take the case to a grand jury and have Jane Doe testify before the panel within two weeks.

That timeline, leaving little time to review evidence or interview witnesses, suggested that Van Houten may have been trying "to go take a dive and not really give it his best effort and not do any investigation," Giuffra said.

James hasn't said how long her investigation might take, but she suggested it would take months.

On Wednesday, one of the men named in Jane Doe's lawsuit filed a court petition seeking James' removal from the case, arguing she showed bias by posting on social media a few days before her appointment: "What this young woman has been forced to endure is horrific and unacceptable."

A spokesperson for James declined to comment.

Cornell closed down the Chi Phi campus chapter in 2024 and says it expelled some students and suspended others after an investigation under the federal Title IX law.

This week Cornell trustees brought in former U.S. Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates to review how the school investigates sexual assault and sexual harassment, how the disciplinary process works, the campus police response and more.

Two lawsuits challenge Trump's taxpayer-funded ads, alleging they violate propaganda law

By ALI SWENSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two lawsuits filed Wednesday challenged President Donald Trump's recent series of federally funded television advertisements, which promote his political message while costing taxpayers millions of dollars.

The Democratic National Committee was first to sue the Republican administration, alleging the ads are illegal government-sponsored propaganda and accusing Trump of personally directing them. Later Wednesday, a coalition including the nonpartisan watchdog Common Cause filed a separate lawsuit, also alleging an illegal misuse of funds.

Both complaints asked federal judges to stop the use of federal funds to pay for the ads. The lawsuits represented the first legal challenges to the TV spots, which have faced bipartisan backlash for glorifying Trump and promoting his campaign message with November's midterm elections less than a month away.

The ads, which began airing in September, already have cost more than \$12 million to run, according to the media tracking firm AdImpact. The Department of Homeland Security awarded a \$20 million contract for the campaign.

Responding Monday to the criticism, Trump defended them as "positive promotion for our Great U.S.A." but said he'd start paying for them using his MAGA Inc. super PAC going forward.

But on Tuesday, a fifth ad began airing with a notice it was paid for by the U.S. government. It promoted Trump's military actions to capture Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela earlier this year. The same day, Trump made it clear he hasn't committed to reimbursing any money that has already been spent, telling reporters "we'll decide."

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DNC Chair Ken Martin said in a statement that Trump is misusing taxpayer dollars in "a last-ditch attempt to save Republicans in November."

"Americans deserve better than to have their hard-earned tax dollars used for Trump's illegal schemes," he added.

A person familiar with the ad campaign who was not authorized to speak publicly said the ad buys placed prior to Trump's pledge to start paying for them with his super PAC will end this week. Outside groups will begin to pay at that point, the person said.

The second lawsuit was filed by the legal advocacy group Democracy Forward on behalf of Common Cause, a New York public employee union and a Democratic state legislative candidate in Alabama.

Taxpayers "shouldn't have to foot the bill for the president's politics," said Skye Perryman, who leads Democracy Forward.

Omar Nouredin, senior vice president of policy and litigation at Common Cause, said his organization doesn't trust that Trump will stick to outside money for future ads. He cited Tuesday's new ad as proof that the government-sponsored ads were still being scheduled.

"Even if he said that moving forward, he plans to have his super PAC pay for this, that's not enough for us," Nouredin said. "We are not going to take the president's word for it."

Legal experts have suggested the ads run afoul of a federal statute against congressionally appropriated money being used for "publicity or propaganda," and potentially other federal laws. The Homeland Security money tapped for the ads comes from a \$175 million package Congress gave to the department as part of Trump's immigration enforcement agenda.

The White House has defended the ads as public service announcements akin to what past administrations have done to promote various policies. But the recent ads differ from many past public service announcements because they aren't aimed at helping members of the public benefit from specific government programs. One of the ads is a near replica of a 2024 ad that Trump ran during his presidential reelection campaign.

Maricarmen, the 87-year-old woman whose eviction shook Spain, has died in hospital

By JOSEPH WILSON and ALICIA LEÓN Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — María del Carmen Abascal, the 87-year-old woman whose eviction from her longtime Madrid home sparked nationwide protests across Spain and unleashed a political crisis, died on Wednesday while hospitalized.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez led the way on social media offering his condolences after housing activists and Abascal's lawyer announced her death. Known widely as "Maricarmen," she had become a symbol for renters struggling with Spain's housing affordability crisis.

"All my love to Maricarmen's family and loved ones," Sánchez said in a post on X. "A hug as well to all of us who feel this loss as our own today. Rest in peace."

The emotions ran into anger on the street among the protesters gathered near Spain's Parliament who chanted "Maricarmen lives, the fight goes on!"

Iciar López, a 32-year-old psychologist, shared her feelings with The Associated Press at the protest in Madrid.

"A great deal of sorrow. And above all, the thought that she is the cause, the head of this whole revolution that has happened, and that she can't see it," she said. "It makes me very sad that she can't see if anything comes of it ... That's what angers me the most, honestly."

A case that captured media attention and traveled around the world

Spaniards increasingly frustrated by housing costs periodically march in major cities demanding action from lawmakers. But a fresh wave of indignation has swept Spain since Sept. 23, when Maricarmen, who used a wheelchair, was carried on a stretcher from her home of seven decades after police cordoned off

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the street and removed protesters. She was taken to a hospital because of her fragile health.

Televised images of the eviction prompted thousands of people to protest in Madrid and other cities across the country.

Maricarmen's lawyer, Beatriz Duro, did not disclose the cause of death when she confirmed it to Cadena Ser radio. Duro said that she and the activists were all devastated.

"Maricarmen's case, which captured media attention and traveled around the world, leaves us the image of the shameful violence of these types of evictions and the impact they can have on people's health," Duro said.

She had been expected to return home after leaving the hospital. The real estate company that evicted her in order to rent the property at a much higher price eventually caved in under immense public pressure and agreed to let her return to the apartment.

"Although a historic agreement was reached that would have allowed her to return home, this solution came too late," the Madrid Tenants' Union said in a statement Wednesday. "It was an entirely avoidable situation following a harrowing ordeal."

Maricarmen's plight galvanized a social movement

The average rent for Spain has almost doubled in the last 10 years, according to the real estate website Idealista. Spain's government said that 26% of Spaniards who rent housing spend an average of 40% of their income on rent and utilities, compared with the European Union average of 18% of renters who do so.

Protesters camped in Madrid's central Puerta del Sol square held a minute of silence after learning of her death.

Maricarmen spent almost her entire life in her apartment, where she first lived with her parents and brother. She later worked as a secretary for the board of a pharmaceutical company, Spanish daily El País reported. She said both her parents died in the apartment.

After retiring in 1998, she spent her days walking around the neighborhood, doing errands and taking care of the precious items in her home. The paper reported that black-and-white family photographs were among the only things she had brought with her to the hospital.

"Maricarmen only wanted to die in her home. She wasn't asking for anything else," Eugenio Melchor, 22, said at the protest in Madrid. "She was dying in her home and she almost did. They have killed her. I mean, there's no other word for it, and I hope those responsible for this pay and go to trial."

Maricarmen's plight galvanized a social movement, prompted Spain's unions to announce a general strike next month and intensified pressure on political leaders. Sánchez called an early election Monday after his government failed last week to push emergency housing measures through Parliament. He now hopes the issue will reinvigorate his Socialist Party and help him form a new government after the Nov. 29 election.

Housing Minister Isabel Rodríguez also expressed condolences, writing on X: "I deeply lament the death of Maricarmen. My condolences to those who accompanied her and fought by her side until the end."

Conservative opposition leader Alberto Núñez Feijóo, who hopes to unseat Sánchez and his left-wing coalition, also offered condolences.

"I want to express my condolences to Maricarmen's family and loved ones. No campaign, no party, no use for political advantage," the Popular Party leader wrote. "When faced with the death of a person, we must only show respect."

What to know about Kenya's first Ebola case and how officials are responding

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Kenya's first Ebola case, a patient who travelled for weeks by road and air through three countries without being detected until he arrived in Nairobi, has raised questions about border control and how to trace the virus across countries.

The patient, a Kenyan man, had been living in Congo for seven years and started feeling ill a month ago.

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He had traveled by road to Uganda, before boarding a flight to the Kenyan capital on Saturday. There, he tested positive for the Ebola virus in a hospital and died Monday.

The Africa CDC Director-General, Jean Kaseya, told The Associated Press in an interview on Tuesday that all stakeholders need to ask themselves how one case could have driven and flown to so many places without anyone noticing.

"We need to ensure that at point of entry, we have a strong surveillance system in place," he said.

Ebola is highly contagious and spreads in the human population through contact with bodily fluids such as vomit, blood or semen, and with contaminated surfaces and materials such as bedding and clothing.

Officials are trying to trace all who came into contact with the patient

The Kenyan man drove for hours by road within Congo and across the border into Uganda. He boarded a local flight while in Congo, and it is unclear if he used any other forms of public transport.

Authorities have looked at the flight manifest of the other flight he took from Kampala, Uganda, to Nairobi, and passengers and crew onboard have been added to the contact list.

They're also looking to trace workers who cleaned the plane after it landed, as well as passengers who traveled on the same plane subsequently.

Health Minister Aden Duale told journalists on Wednesday that contact tracing was ongoing and that the number of contacts had risen to 57, with 10 already quarantined.

"Even the people who cleaned that aircraft after it landed on Saturday, they are part of the people we are tracing. The immigration and the customs officials who served that patient will also be part of the contact tracing," he said.

Africa CDC's Kaseya acknowledged it is a challenge. He said that the Kenyan man had not come up in existing contact lists in Congo.

"Before saying that the outbreak is under control, you need to ensure that you have a contact list where all cases are coming from," he said.

Questions raised about how the patient traveled through Uganda

It's also unclear how the patient was able to cross into Uganda, which has closed its border with Congo because of the Ebola outbreak.

Alan Kasujja, executive director of the Ugandan government's media center, dismissed the question, saying only that journalists should instead ask Kenya how the man was able to bypass surveillance at its airport.

"Leave Uganda out of this conversation. We don't have Ebola here," he wrote on X.

Two of the man's journeys were by air, while the rest were by road, covering long distances and passing through various towns and cities. On arrival in Nairobi, the patient underwent port health screening but his symptoms were not detected. He then boarded a private vehicle to Nairobi Hospital, where he was isolated and later tested positive for Ebola.

When asked how the patient was able to travel through three countries undetected, Kenya's Director-General for Health, Patrick Amoth, said on Wednesday that a meeting was scheduled with officials from Congo and Uganda and the Africa CDC to investigate what transpired during the patient's journey.

Kenya has been boosting its border controls

Kenya's Health Ministry has heightened surveillance at border entry points and created an Ebola hotline for citizens to report symptoms related to Ebola.

The country has also designated five health facilities with a total of 241 isolation beds to manage patients, and is working to increase this capacity.

The ministry said the country has enough supplies, including personal protective equipment, and has mobilized resources since the outbreak started in May in Congo.

The ministry added that it had designated a specific gate at the country's main airport for passengers travelling from 10 countries located within the outbreak's epicenter.

Attacks on Saudi airports claimed by Houthi rebels kill 3 people, officials say

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Two attacks on airports in Saudi Arabia claimed by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in neighboring Yemen killed three people Wednesday, Saudi officials said, as the kingdom was pulled deeper into the latest front in the Iran war.

The Saudi General Authority for Civil Aviation did not blame any party for the attacks at Abha and Riyadh's King Khalid international airports, but Houthi rebels took credit earlier for the airport strikes.

The attack on Abha airport killed Moroccan and Algerian residents and wounded 28 other people, while the attack on King Khalid airport killed a Sudanese national and wounded eight other people, officials said.

As Riyadh has been targeted over the past week, new cage-like fences have been erected around fuel tanks and other equipment of the Saudi state-run Aramco oil company near the capital's airport. The kingdom, the world's top oil exporter, has seen oil and military assets targeted in recent days, posing a threat to crucial shipping alternative to the Strait of Hormuz, where traffic has been curtailed due to the Iran war.

The spokesperson for the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Houthis, Maj. Gen. Turki al-Malki, said forces intercepted a ballistic missile north of Riyadh and destroyed a platform in Yemen's capital of Sana that had been used to launch attacks on the Saudi capital. The AP could not independently verify these claims.

Saudi Arabia and allied Yemeni forces launched a major ground and air offensive aimed at retaking territory that the rebels seized a month ago along Yemen's western Red Sea coast and on the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

Those positions gave the Houthis better surveillance as they pursue a blockade of Saudi-linked shipping. On Monday, officials said forces of the Saudi-led coalition recaptured several key areas around the strait, through which about 12% of global trade transits.

Houthis push for strategic areas in Yemen

"The Houthis believe that they can maximize Saudi economic costs and compel Saudi Arabia to surrender to Houthi demands by striking civilian infrastructure, such as oil facilities and airports," the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, wrote in an analysis.

Inside Yemen, fighting has centered in and around the crucial town of Dhubab, some 54 kilometers (33.5 miles) south of the port city of Mokha that the rebels seized last month, according to both the Houthis and Yemen's internationally recognized government.

Two Houthi officials said Wednesday that the rebels had regained control of key areas of Yemen's south-western coast, including Dhubab and the nearby village of Al-Jadid, as well as the Bab el-Mandeb strait, after intensified fighting with Saudi-backed coalition forces.

A government official denied the claims, which The Associated Press could not independently verify.

The Houthis also claimed that Saudi forces had targeted "civilian assets" over the past 24 hours in Yemen's capital, Sanaa, as well as Taiz, Jawf and other active fronts, including Saada and Marib.

Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree said, without providing evidence, that fighter jets used in the attacks had taken off from Khamis Mushait and Taif in Saudi Arabia, while missiles had been launched from Najran and Jizan. The rebels have repeatedly claimed attacks on those Saudi cities in recent weeks.

Saudi-led coalition vows full support to Yemen government

Al-Malki has vowed "full operational support" to Yemeni government forces until the Houthis are "eliminated." The coalition has said 100 fighter jets were providing support. Another aim is to liberate Sanaa, Yemen's rebel-controlled capital.

Houthi leader Abdul Malik al-Houthi criticized Saudi Arabia over support for Yemen's government forces in the latest escalation with the Houthis, which has shattered a truce reached four years ago.

Rebels are ready to support Palestinians in every way they can in case of "any new round of escalation" with Israel, al-Houthi said in a speech Wednesday expressing solidarity with Gaza on the third anniversary of Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel.

The offensive began after the rebels seized Turbah town on a main road linking the provincial capital of

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Taiz, Yemen's third-largest city, with Aden, the seat of the internationally recognized government. Officials have said U.S. support has included intelligence sharing, target identification and planning.

The escalation has revived Yemen's civil war after a four-year ceasefire. Almost 1,000 people have been killed in the latest fighting, with over 200,000 displaced, according to the United Nations. Cholera and malnutrition cases are increasing, access to trauma care is more difficult and some hospitals have shortages of surgical and other supplies, the World Health Organization said this week.

Houthi missiles target Aden's airport

The Houthis also said they launched a missile strike early Wednesday against Aden. Explosions were heard by an AP journalist around 2 a.m.

The rebels hit a military camp close to the city's airport with ballistic missiles, Saree said. Security authorities in Aden said the Houthis targeted the airport with two missiles, with no casualties. The airport is close to the seat of government.

One missile hit close to the runway just before the scheduled landing of a flight from Cairo, the Human Rights Ministry said. Flight 603, operated by Yemen's flagship airline, landed safely in Aden at 3:30 a.m., according to the flight tracking platform FlightAware.

The ministry said the missile hit as other passengers were waiting to board their flight to the Saudi coastal city of Jeddah.

FBI says it stopped a Mall of America terror attack by a teen after agents sold him an assault rifle

By ELLEN SCHMIDT and GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — FBI agents thwarted a terror attack by a teenager on the Mall of America after monitoring him for nearly two years and ultimately supplying him with the AK-47 he planned to use, authorities said Wednesday.

The 18-year-old had been on the FBI's radar since December 2024, when he began trading messages with a confidential informant. A criminal complaint says he initially expressed an interest in traveling to Somalia to fight for al-Shabab militants. As his plans to instead attack the mall solidified, the complaint says, agents sold him the gun and ammunition on Tuesday and arrested him on the spot.

"This was a radicalized young man who needed to be watched," U.S. Attorney Daniel Rosen said. Agents "were able to detect a threat, and disrupt it, before the defendant carried out his intention to kill, in his words, maybe 30 to 60 people."

Sheikhdoon Abdullahi Mohamud was arrested Tuesday in a public park in Richfield, several miles northwest of the Mall of America, after he paid \$600 to an undercover FBI employee posing as a member of the Islamic State group for the rifle and 200 rounds of ammunition, the agency said.

Mohamud appeared in a yellow jail uniform for his initial appearance Wednesday in federal court in St. Paul. He told the judge he did not have a job, own a house or a car, or have any money in the bank. He was represented by Siri Carlson McDowell, a federal public defender. Carlson McDowell and relatives of Mohamud declined to comment after the hearing.

Rosen said Mohamud is an American-born U.S. citizen of Somali descent.

According to an FBI agent's sworn complaint, Mohamud repeatedly affirmed in chat messages to the informant that he intended to attack and kill non-Muslims at the mall on Oct. 24, the date of a scheduled arts celebration by the Hmong community, Minnesota's largest Asian ethnic group.

When the informant asked if he was serious about committing the attack, Mohamud replied, "yes i am 100% sure," the complaint said, and added: "I would have backed out by now if I wasn't sure."

The agent wrote that Mohamud's messages expressed admiration for recent terror attacks as well as an interest in traveling to fight in Somalia, ultimately for the Islamic State group. He later decided he couldn't afford to travel there and would attack the mall instead, the complaint said.

The teen first came to the FBI's attention in December 2024, the same month the source began exchanging messages with him, the complaint said. By May 2025, agents were concerned enough that they went to

his home. His mother told them he wasn't home from school yet and called the boy's father, who declined to speak with them and said he would give their contact information to his lawyer, the complaint said.

"What I would say to parents all over Minnesota, and all over America: If you get any indication — especially if you hear from federal law enforcement — that your son or daughter is being radicalized, to the point where federal law enforcement wants to come and give you that warning, those are warnings that ought to be heeded," Rosen said.

Tens of thousands of people of Somali descent live in Minnesota, dating back to when refugees began arriving in the 1990s. Over the years several have been charged with attempting to join militant groups.

UN health agency wants more details from Russia on suspected pneumonic plague case

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — A top official with the World Health Organization said Wednesday it doesn't know how a lab worker in Siberia died, and she urged Russia to provide more information about a case that prompted global concerns about suspected pneumonic plague.

Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO director of Epidemic and Pandemic Management, said the U.N. health agency doesn't know what the "causative agent" was behind the woman's Oct. 2 death, which unconfirmed reports in Russia blamed on pneumonic plague — a less common but severe form of plague that can spread from person to person.

In its tersely worded statements, Russia's public health watchdog, Rospotrebnadzor, does not link the case to pneumonic plague, saying only that the lab worker had contracted pneumonia of "unknown" origin and that "extensive" testing found no evidence her illness was caused by any of the pathogens she worked with at the Irkutsk Anti-Plague Research Institute of Siberia and the Far East.

"We don't understand how she was infected," Van Kerkhove said. "We need information in a timely way. We need regular information. We need answers to the follow-up of the questions that we have asked."

"We have posed these questions to our colleagues in the Russian Federation. In fairness, they have responded. We've gone back with more questions," she said.

The comments suggested the U.N. health agency has more questions than answers about the situation at the lab, which focuses on plague and was founded about a century ago to study the disease in Siberia, where it occurs naturally in wild animals.

Russia has released little information about the case

Russian authorities have kept a tight lid on information about the case, which has been surrounded by secrecy.

While it has raised global concerns, Russian state TV and other national state-controlled media have largely steered clear of the subject. Some news outlets withdrew earlier reports about the case.

Rospotrebnadzor said Sunday the lab worker was diagnosed with "pneumonia of unknown etiology," meaning its origin was not known.

A state TV station in Irkutsk reported she died Oct. 2 in a hospital in Shelekhov, a town just outside Irkutsk. Officials have quarantined that hospital and were monitoring the worker's contacts.

Russia has said the pneumonia initially presented as a "typical" acute respiratory viral infection, the WHO has said, acknowledging that pneumonia is commonplace.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Russian authorities had indicated that no case of plague had recently been reported in the Irkutsk region, and that they had placed about 200 contacts in quarantine.

Russia says preventive measures are underway

U.S. President Donald Trump said he would discuss the issue during a call with Russian President Vladimir Putin because Wednesday is the Kremlin leader's 74th birthday.

"They're sharing it a little bit with our people. We expect them to share it a lot with our people," Trump said.

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Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said earlier Wednesday that a Putin-Trump call hasn't been set yet but could be organized quickly.

Asked if the incident was a sign that plague might be developed as a bioweapon, Trump said, "We don't think so. We're going to find out soon enough, but we don't think so."

When asked if the situation was similar to dealing with China on COVID-19 in his first term, Trump suggested Russia was staying relatively quiet, just as China did before the virus turned into a pandemic. "China didn't say much and Russia is not saying much either, but they do say they have it very much under control," he said.

Dr. Erica Schwartz, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said the threat to the U.S. "is extremely low." She travel from that area of Russia to the U.S. each year is limited — and mostly comes through New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport.

Government agencies are working "to make sure that we know exactly if anyone from that area comes into the United States," Schwartz said during a Wall Street Journal health forum Wednesday.

Russian health authorities reported a full range of preventive measures had been carried out — including tracing the dead woman's contacts, medical monitoring and lab tests, the WHO said.

The Geneva-based organization cited media reports that a second employee had pneumonia of undetermined cause.

Health experts urge more Russian openness

Peskov referred all questions to Rospotrebnadzor, which does not mention suspected plague in its reports and has not responded to a request for comment.

In its latest statement Tuesday, the agency said "the sanitary and epidemiological situation in the Irkutsk region, the cities of Irkutsk and Shelekhov is calm." Authorities were completing a "complex of prophylactic measures and medical observation over contacts," it said, adding that so far they have found two cases of COVID-19 and two cases of rhinovirus.

"No other infectious pathogens have been found among contacts," it said.

Judy Twigg, professor of political science at Virginia Commonwealth University, noted that while the measures taken by Russian health authorities "have been swift and serious," officials sought to play down the situation and "any statements that strayed from that party line ... were edited or deleted within hours."

"What we are watching is less a failure to respond than a failure of candor," Twigg said in written comments.

Vasily Vlassov, professor at the department of healthcare administration and economics at Russia's Higher School of Economics, said the measures taken appeared "sensible," focusing on treating the sick, isolating them and their contacts, looking for new cases and carrying out disinfection.

He said it wasn't clear whether more transparency was possible if those dealing with the situation didn't have enough certainty, and "maybe, they still don't." Deceiving the public, however, "always turns out to be harmful," he said.

Distrust of Russia's official narrative is "natural" and "almost inevitable," Vlassov said.

In the Soviet era, dangerous outbreaks of infection had "a thick veil of secrecy — people were told nothing."

The lab worker who died was described as highly diligent

The news outlet Lyudi Baikal — or "People of Baikal" — identified the dead lab worker as Darya Shipilova, 28, and said she first was hospitalized with cold symptoms Sept. 29 and died three days later.

It quoted colleagues as saying she was a highly qualified and diligent researcher. They also emphasized that security rules at the facility are extremely strict.

The report quoted Shipilova's neighbors as saying disinfection experts did several cleanups of her apartment, leaving a strong antiseptic smell.

Shipilova's mother, who worked as a doctor in the past, described her daughter as hard-working and dedicated, according to independent Russian news outlet Glubina, adding that she had not gotten official documents describing the cause of death.

Twigg noted that Russia criminalized "false information" about threats to public safety in 2020 amid the

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COVID-19 pandemic, "so silence is the one safe move for everyone below the top."

"Personalist regimes without electoral accountability tend to treat bad news as a loyalty problem rather than focusing on the actual problem to be addressed," she said.

She warned that "the public's understandable reaction to the lack of information carries real dangers."

"A government that is not believed when it says 'there is no outbreak' will not be believed when it must actually say 'there is one; do the following.' We saw this with COVID," she said.

Pneumonic plague and the more well-known bubonic plague — also called the Black Death — are caused by the same bacteria, said Simon Clarke of the University of Reading in the U.K. Pneumonic plague results from breathing in the bacteria, causing an infection in the lungs.

The bacterium, called *Yersinia pestis*, has not been eliminated, but it is not spread very easily and it is treatable with antibiotics.

Ex-Marine to face death penalty in 2025 mass shooting at North Carolina bar

BOLIVIA, N.C. (AP) — A prosecutor announced Wednesday that he would seek the death penalty against a former Marine charged in a mass shooting last year that left three people dead and several others wounded.

"We are not blind to who this defendant is," Brunswick County District Attorney Jon David said of defendant Nigel Max Edge. "He served this country in Iraq as a Marine, suffered a traumatic brain injury, and has struggled with serious mental illness. Those facts are important and they were weighed, but must be balanced against the circumstances of the crime."

Authorities allege Edge piloted a small motorboat up to a dockside cocktail bar in Southport on Sept. 27, 2025, and opened fire with a short-barreled semiautomatic rifle. He faces three counts of first-degree murder, as well as multiple attempted murder and weapons charges.

In April, Superior Court Judge Jason Disbrow ordered Edge to undergo psychiatric treatment after it was determined he was unable to understand his legal proceedings enough to help his lawyers.

Defense attorney Matthew Geoffrion filed a motion to continue Wednesday's hearing, arguing that the extent of Edge's brain injury will likely make it impossible for him to stand trial. Edge was shot multiple times during a firefight in Iraq, including once in the head.

"The chances of capacity restoration in this case appear low," Geoffrion said in his motion.

David countered that experts at the state hospital where Edge is being treated "have concluded he is likely to be restored." But he added that the decision to proceed with a capital punishment case was not final.

"A capital designation guarantees the defendant the highest level of protection our system offers, including the appointment of a second qualified attorney and the most rigorous scrutiny our courts provide," David said. "If evidence emerges bearing on Mr. Edge's sanity at the time of the offense, we will reassess. If he is never restored to capacity, the death penalty would not be a lawful sentence and would be removed from consideration."

Edge's next hearing is scheduled for Dec. 7.

Wall Street retreats from its record as stocks fall worldwide

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks pulled back from their record on Wednesday.

The S&P 500 slipped 0.2%, a day after topping its prior all-time high set in August. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 341 points, or 0.7%, while the Nasdaq composite fell 0.2% from its own record.

Stocks felt pressure as yields swung in the bond market. The yield on the 10-year Treasury climbed as high as 5.36% in the morning, up from 5.27% late Tuesday and near its highest level since 2002.

Higher yields put downward pressure on prices for stocks and other investments. They can also slow the economy by making it more expensive for everyone to borrow money. But the 10-year yield eased back to 5.28% later in the day after the U.S. Treasury sold \$39 billion of 10-year Treasury notes at an auction,

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where the median yield was less than 5.26%.

Yields also swung with oil prices, which continue to yo-yo amid uncertainty about when the war with Iran will allow the industry to return to normal.

The price for a barrel of Brent crude, the international standard, topped \$102 in the morning before falling back later in the day and eventually settling at \$100.20, down 0.4%. That's below the nearly \$110 it cost last month, but it remains well above its \$72 price from before the war began.

The International Energy Agency said Wednesday that its members supported accelerating the release of oil from inventories that they announced earlier this year, with a particular emphasis on diesel fuel.

Also pushing up on bond yields are worries about how much debt the U.S. government and others worldwide have racked up, plus how much more they add to it by the day.

The head of the International Monetary Fund said Wednesday that record levels of debt for governments is one of the three major crosscurrents driving where the global economy is heading, along with artificial-intelligence technology and high energy prices.

"Some very tough political choices stare us in the face," IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said in a speech in Singapore.

She pointed in particular to France and Italy, among other European countries with high debt.

France's CAC 40 stock index dropped 1.2% for one of the world's biggest losses after yields for French bonds got back to jumping amid worries about the government's debt and strained budget. Protests across France have raised pressure on the government to increase spending, which could add further to its debt.

On Wall Street, Worthington Steel fell 6.9% after the metals processing and manufacturing company reported weaker results for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

The pressure is on companies to deliver big growth in profits. Such strength would help to support stock prices when the other big lever that affects stock prices, interest rates, is pushing downward.

Analysts have high expectations for this upcoming earnings reporting season. They're forecasting growth in earnings per share of nearly 30%, according to FactSet. If companies fall short of that bar, stock prices could easily fall further from their record heights.

Constellation Brands added 2.4% after the seller of Modelo beer and Robert Mondavi wine reported a stronger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected. But its gain was restrained after it also gave a forecasted range for profit over its full fiscal year whose midpoint was below what analysts expected.

All told, the S&P 500 slipped 17.16 points to 7,801.77. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 341.41 to 51,179.87, and the Nasdaq composite gave back 61.20 to 27,538.69.

In stock markets abroad, indexes fell across much of Europe and Asia.

South Korea's Kospi sank 2% for one of the world's largest losses following a sharp drop for SK Hynix, one of its two dominant stocks.

Trump's \$90 Medicare rebate rolls out, but millions aren't eligible. Critics see a political stunt

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump says his administration will make one-time payments of \$90 per person to help more than 20 million Medicare enrollees pay for their Part B premiums. It will cost about \$2 billion.

Less than one-third of all Medicare recipients are eligible for the payments, which are expected to be sent out this week. Not eligible are roughly 35 million Medicare Advantage enrollees, millions of other people with disabilities and low-income Medicare recipients.

The election-year promise that the Republican president made over the weekend comes as the Nov. 3 midterms are fast approaching, with the cost of living and healthcare expenses among the top issues for voters.

Some questions and answers about the payouts:

Who will benefit?

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Some 20.8 million people in the original Medicare Part B who are living in the United States, not receiving premium assistance from Medicaid or not paying an income-related monthly adjusted amount.

Medicare Advantage enrollees, who make up more than half of the eligible 64.2 million Medicare beneficiaries, will not receive a payment, according to KFF, a healthcare research nonprofit. Nor will 12 million low-income older adults and people with disabilities who get premium assistance.

The Part B program covers expenses such as doctor's visits, ambulance services and lab tests. Total monthly costs generally start at about \$200 and vary with income.

Allison Schuster, a White House spokeswoman, said in a statement that the administration "is enabling Americans to take control of their health by putting money directly back in the hands of Medicare patients."

When will the payments go out and how will they be disbursed?

According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services website, eligible beneficiaries will receive one \$90 rebate this month, with most getting a direct deposit on or around Friday. Others will receive a paper check from the Treasury Department later in October.

Juliette Cubanski, director of KFF's program on Medicare policy, said the payment will be automatic.

"As far as a benefit goes, people don't have to call or sign up — it's just money they receive directly, but not everybody on Medicare will receive this money."

A White House fact sheet says people can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to check on their eligibility for the premium rebate. To check on payment status, people should call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213.

What is the source of the money?

Payments will come out of the Medicare Improvement Fund created by Congress in 2008 and intended to make improvements to the Medicare fee-for-service program.

The fund was created to improve program management and conduct oversight of contracts and contractors, according to the Congressional Budget Office, but its purpose has expanded after various legislative changes.

This is not the first time the fund has been used.

Democratic President Barack Obama's administration, along with Congress, redirected \$20 billion to expand healthcare coverage through the Affordable Care Act.

But under Trump, it is the first time that the fund has been used to directly pay recipients.

What are critics of the plan saying?

Critics of Trump's promise characterize the \$90 payments as a preelection stunt designed to sway voters rather than address structural problems in healthcare costs and administration.

The top Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, said in a statement that "this is another desperate attempt by a failed president to escape Americans' revulsion with his failed agenda, amounting to one tank of Trump-inflated gas."

Trump recently promised \$500 rebate checks to an estimated 1 million Obamacare enrollees across 30 states whom the White House alleged were overcharged by the Biden administration for some fees.

Cubanski said the Medicare rebate payments were being doled out when Americans were feeling the bite of higher food, energy and gas prices. Surging healthcare costs are only compounding those pressure, she said.

"This might be helpful for people but it might not go very far."

Trump administration proposes a \$70,000 fee for international students to work in the US

By ANNIE MA and HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH AP Education Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Department of Homeland Security on Wednesday proposed a \$70,000 fee for international students seeking to work in the United States, the latest effort from the Trump administration to crack down on foreign enrollment.

A proposed rule would require schools to pay the fee for every student who participates in the optional

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practice training program, known as OPT, which allows students to work in jobs related to their major during or after their time in school. Students are generally eligible for one year of work post-graduation, though certain science, technology, engineering and math majors are eligible for an additional two years.

Schools would be required to pay the \$70,000 for each new student's initial application to the program, and a \$30,000 fee for each renewal.

Change would be a blow to higher education and some businesses

American colleges and universities heavily recruit students from overseas as a source of tuition revenue. Tech companies and other industries also hire many international students for technical roles.

The OPT program allows international students to gain hands-on experience and fill labor shortages in high-demand STEM fields, said Fanta Aw, CEO of NAFSA, an association that represents international education.

"Driving away the talents, perspectives, and aspirations of international students will only hurt American innovation, economic growth, workforce development, and global leadership," Aw said in a written statement.

In a statement, DHS described the fee as a response to fraud and abuse of the visa program, which it called a "pipeline for cheap foreign labor."

The public has 60 days to comment on the proposal before DHS can finalize it and put it into effect. The proposal also could face legal challenges from higher education groups or business associations that could delay it.

Trump administration puts pressure on international students

The proposed rule is part of its wider efforts to crack down on immigration and reshape higher education. Last year, the Republican administration began suddenly terminating the legal status of thousands of international students, detaining and deporting many of them.

This summer, the administration finalized a rule that sought to prevent international students from staying in the U.S. for more than four years without approval from the federal government. The move drew swift backlash from higher education leaders who said it would increase the burden on schools and noted that many programs are longer than four years by design. A federal court prevented the rule from taking effect in September.

Doug Rand, a former senior adviser at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services during the Biden administration, predicted that the fee would be struck down in the courts, as was a \$100,000 fee for the H-1B work visas that many tech companies and universities rely on to fill openings for skilled jobs.

The Trump administration is now trying a different way to raise the fee for the visas to more than \$100,000. Rand said fees are not the answer.

"When we educate international students at our universities, and they want to work and apply their talents here after graduating, of course we should embrace them -- not use an exorbitant fee as a pretext to send them packing," Rand said in an email.

Enrollment concerns mount among education groups

Sarah Spreitzer, vice president at the American Council on Education, which represents college and university presidents, said international enrollment has suffered.

Last fall, the number of new students entering the United States for the first time fell by 17%, the sharpest decrease since the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall numbers for this fall are not yet available, but Spreitzer said some individual colleges are reporting drops of 30% to 40%.

She said the new Trump plan will not help.

"We know that OPT is one of the reasons that international students choose to study in the United States because they're able to have that post-graduation work experience," she added.

A similar program that allowed international students to participate in internships and practicums also has faced scrutiny from the Trump administration. New guidance from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement that the program, Curricular Practical Training, should only be authorized when the work experience is a degree requirement led to a lawsuit Monday.

Education groups, including the Association of American Universities and NAFSA, said that in the past

that program was allowed if it was "directly related to the student's major area of study." The groups also said ICE was threatening college university officials with criminal prosecution if they did not comply.

"We know the administration has been trying to hinder legal employment-based immigration through numerous means," said Steven Brown, a Houston-based immigration lawyer. "I think this is the next level of attack, and I think it's a design to kill the program without killing the program. I don't see too many schools wanting to pay \$70,000 for a student to get OPT."

What to know about the fears of pneumonic plague in Russia

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The death of a pathogen researcher in Siberia has raised concerns about the pneumonic plague, as Russian authorities provide little information publicly.

The severe disease is less common than the better-known bubonic plague linked to the Black Death in the Middle Ages. Pneumonic plague spreads from person to person, causing a severe form of pneumonia, but recovery rates are high if it is detected and treated in time.

The World Health Organization says it has yet to determine the cause of death for the 28-year-old woman, who worked at an anti-plague research institute, and has asked Russia to provide more information. The U.N. health agency has cited initial, unconfirmed reports suggesting pneumonic plague.

Russian authorities say the lab worker died of what initially presented as a "typical" acute respiratory viral infection and that no recent cases of plague have been detected, according to the WHO. A local mayor said the hospital where the woman died was placed under quarantine.

The case has revived memories of the COVID-19 pandemic and allegations the coronavirus may have emerged at a Chinese lab. The WHO has not provided a definitive answer to how the pandemic began.

The disease behind the Black Death is much more treatable nowadays

Pneumonic plague and bubonic plague are caused by the same bacteria. The former is spread by respiratory particles while the latter is spread through bites from fleas that have jumped from infected rodents. Bubonic plague causes pus-filled sores.

The bacteria, called *Yersinia pestis*, caused the Black Death in the 14th century. The single deadliest event in recorded human history spread throughout Europe, the Middle East and northern Africa, wiping out up to 30% to 50% of the population.

It was never eliminated, but it is treatable with antibiotics.

Symptoms of pneumonic plague include shortness of breath and coughing up blood, and they can occur in as little as 24 hours after exposure, according to the WHO. If untreated, the illness can be fatal.

Russian officials are saying little

Through an international health alert system, Russian health officials on Tuesday said a full range of preventive measures had been carried out — including tracing of the deceased woman's contacts, medical monitoring and lab tests.

"Test results showed no presence of dangerous infectious disease pathogens in any of the contacts," said the note from Russian authorities, which was relayed to The Associated Press by the WHO.

"Medical monitoring for 100% of the contacts has now been concluded," it said. "The epidemiological situation is stable and remains under monitoring."

The woman worked at an anti-plague research institute in the city of Irkutsk in Siberia, where the plague occurs naturally in wild animals. She died at a hospital in nearby Shelekhov that the mayor said had been placed under quarantine. Top Russian health officials have traveled to the region.

On Monday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov advised the public to follow official statements from the health watchdog agency, Rospotrebnadzor, rather than "rumors or speculation."

The WHO has mobilized its own experts

Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO director of epidemic and pandemic management, said Wednesday that the agency doesn't know what the "causative agent" was behind the woman's Oct. 2 death.

Initial reports indicated she contracted plague following "an alleged accidental laboratory exposure,"

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the WHO said earlier.

WHO officials said it needs information in a regular and timely way — and noted an “iterative” process of questions and answers in such cases.

“We have posed these questions to our colleagues in the Russian Federation. In fairness, they have responded. We’ve gone back with more questions,” Van Kerkhove said.

Russia has told the WHO that 200 contacts have been placed in quarantine, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director-general of the Geneva-based health agency, told reporters on Wednesday.

He said his agency has requested more information on lab tests conducted on the deceased woman, the health status of the contacts and about what prompted the public health measures. He said the agency was also looking into reports of a second employee at the research institute contracting pneumonia.

“We don’t yet have the full picture of this event, and we are not able to conduct a full risk assessment,” Ghebreyesus said.

The track record on global cooperation has been patchy

Many countries respect the International Health Regulations, the WHO’s rule book for global cooperation, but sometimes countries don’t follow its rules even though it is legally binding in theory. The agency has no power to force countries to act.

The WHO last year helped shepherd through passage of a draft pandemic treaty, but it’s still not fully operable because of disagreements over how much poorer countries will share pathogens and how much richer countries will share diagnostic tools, vaccines and treatments.

Russia repeatedly sought but failed to obtain WHO authorization for its Sputnik vaccine against the coronavirus.

Not all countries are willing to allow independent WHO experts to visit. China did allow in WHO teams during the COVID pandemic, but not as often or quickly as the agency would have liked.

Can \$1 billion power Republicans to victory in the midterms?

By STEVEN SLOAN and THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans are entering the final month of the midterm campaign increasingly anxious that the \$1 billion at their disposal may not be enough to fend off sweeping losses as the party reckons with President Donald Trump’s unpopularity, persistent cost concerns and the fallout from the war in Iran.

The cash advantage, spread out across a half-dozen groups, is driven largely by the Trump-aligned MAGA Inc., which had nearly \$416 million in cash on hand at the end of August and began stepping up its spending on critical races in September.

But that money may have come too late, forcing the president’s group to pay much higher rates because of the shrinking availability of air time. Four Republican Senate campaign officials said groups that reserved advertising time last spring paid much lower rates than MAGA Inc. and its affiliated groups.

Instead, by waiting until September, Trump-connected organizations are sometimes paying more than five times what they would have spent if they acted earlier.

A representative of MAGA Inc. familiar with the group’s strategy said its spending has allowed Republicans to keep races more competitive than they would have been otherwise. In some cases, the group has been the only one on the air criticizing Democratic candidates.

The MAGA Inc. representative and the Republican Senate campaign officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal strategy.

The challenge is acute in places like Texas, where Trump will travel on Wednesday for the second time in a week to stump for Republican Ken Paxton’s Senate campaign. The state hasn’t elected a Democratic senator since 1988, yet MAGA Inc. has spent more than \$22 million in the past month, according to the ad tracking firm AdImpact.

Another group, Texas PAC, which is aligned with Senate Majority Leader John Thune, has spent more than \$83 million on advertising in the past month, an extraordinary amount to protect what’s normally a

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safe Republican seat.

One of those advertisements, which featured Paxton's estranged wife saying she's supporting the full Republican ticket, aired across the United States last weekend during a football game between the Dallas Cowboys and the Houston Texans.

Candidates are charged a lower advertising rate than outside groups, so the late infusion of super PAC cash has come at a steep price.

MAGA Inc., which is running ads primarily on streaming services, has been charged roughly \$894 per airing, according to AdImpact, while Texas PAC has been charged roughly \$809 for a mix of broadcast and streaming. That compares with about \$290 for Democratic nominee James Talarico's campaign, also on broadcast and streaming.

Those averages mask some of the more glaring disparities. For example, during a football game last month, Texas PAC was charged \$450,000 to air a single spot in the Austin market. Talarico's campaign paid \$50,000 for a spot during the same game in the same market, according to AdImpact.

Elections are a referendum on the power of money

The 2026 campaign is shaping up as a referendum on the power of money in American politics. Democrats freely acknowledge their disadvantage, relying instead on anti-Trump sentiment among voters and targeted messaging on issues like corruption. Some Republicans, meanwhile, are open about the challenge of trying to spend their way out of a tough campaign at this late stage.

Neil Newhouse, a longtime Republican pollster, echoed concerns that his party was deploying its cash too late.

"After the votes are counted, I think we're going to find the most effective advertising in terms of communicating message and moving voters and poll numbers, the most effective time was advertising that happened well before Labor Day, not after it," he said. "A million dollars of advertising in October is a drop in the bucket."

Thune's group began pulling back in North Carolina last week, a sign of the party's challenge in the Senate race there. The state's outgoing Sen. Thom Tillis has been increasingly vocal about his party's vulnerabilities and recently said that, even with a strong cash advantage, "in the last month, you pretty much have to place your bets."

"If we have endless resources, then we should spend endlessly in every state," he said. "Absent endless resources, you've got to make data-driven decisions about where you can win."

The midterms mark the first national election since the Supreme Court in June erased limits on how much political parties can spend in coordination with candidates for Congress and president, injecting even more money into a political system already awash in cash.

Money alone doesn't translate into victory

There's plenty of evidence that money alone doesn't translate into victory.

Democrat Kamala Harris entered the final stretch of the 2024 campaign with significantly more money than Trump but went on to lose every critical swing state and the White House. Elon Musk's \$25 million didn't lift his preferred candidate to a Wisconsin Supreme Court seat last year. And Tom Steyer didn't advance to the general election in the California governor's race despite pumping \$216 million of his own money into the campaign.

The \$1 billion that Republicans have amassed compares with roughly \$579 million held by a comparable collection of major Democratic groups.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said his party is facing an "obscene" amount of spending that could swamp them in the midterms.

"We're never going to have as much money as them," he said in an interview. "I sum up the election in this sentence: Can a massive Republican advantage in money beat a massive Democratic advantage in better candidates and political climate? I bet it can't."

In addition to Texas, Democrats have mounted competitive Senate campaigns in states like Ohio, Maine, Iowa and Michigan. A similar dynamic has emerged in governors' races from Florida and Georgia to Wisconsin, Ohio and Nevada.

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Former President Barack Obama is stepping up his involvement in the midterms and will headline a fundraiser for Senate candidates on Wednesday.

In the House, Democrats are growing so confident they can retake the majority that they're expanding their targets deeper into traditionally Republican districts in Arkansas and Tennessee. But a lack of money could limit their gains.

"We absolutely need to spend enough to get our message out," said Rep. Suzan DelBene of Washington, who chairs the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. "And district by district, we are."

Trump turns to his bond with supporters

From his earliest days as an unlikely political figure, Trump has consistently overcome expectations. Facing daunting prospects heading into the final weeks of his last midterm, he's betting he can again outwit political gravity, relying in large part on the deep bond he's built with supporters.

He has stepped up his campaign rallies in recent weeks, traveling to deep red territory to galvanize the party faithful. At events like the one this past weekend in Vandalia, Ohio, the crowd was enthusiastic and cheered at the lines that have become Trump staples over the years, particularly when he dips into profanity. The high school gymnasium that held the event was packed, though crowds began emptying out about halfway through the 90-minute rally.

In the closing minutes of a speech Monday in Grand Island, Nebraska, the president revived his plea that supporters who have stood so fervently by him pretend as if he is on the ballot one more time.

"In a true way, I am running," he said. "We have to keep it going."

Today in History: October 8, the Great Chicago Fire breaks out

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Thursday, Oct. 8, the 281st day of 2026. There are 84 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 8, 1871, the Great Chicago Fire began; more than 300 people died and more than 17,000 structures were destroyed during the three-day blaze.

Also on this date:

In 1862, Union forces beat back a Confederate offensive in the Battle of Perryville, Kentucky's biggest and bloodiest engagement of the Civil War, leading to hundreds of casualties but ensuring the state would remain under Northern control.

In 1956, Don Larsen pitched the only perfect game in a World Series as the New York Yankees beat the Brooklyn Dodgers in Game 5, 2-0.

In 1967, Bolivian forces wounded and captured guerrilla leader Ernesto "Che" Guevara, who was attempting to spark a revolution in the South American country. He was executed the next day.

In 1997, scientists reported that NASA's Mars Pathfinder had yielded what could be the strongest evidence yet that Mars might once have been hospitable to life.

In 2002, a federal judge approved President George W. Bush's request to reopen West Coast ports, ending a 10-day labor lockout that was costing the U.S. economy an estimated \$1 billion to \$2 billion a day.

In 2005, a magnitude 7.6 earthquake on the Pakistan-India border killed an estimated 86,000 people.

In 2016, Hurricane Matthew made landfall on the South Carolina coast, triggering heavy flooding and several deaths in the Carolinas only days after a devastating rampage through the Caribbean where it killed more than 500 people in Haiti alone and others elsewhere.

In 2022, an explosion caused the partial collapse of a bridge linking the Crimean Peninsula with Russia, damaging an important supply artery for the Kremlin's war effort in southern Ukraine.

In 2024, two pioneers of artificial intelligence — Canadian John Hopfield and American Geoffrey Hinton — won the Nobel Prize in physics for helping create the building blocks of machine learning that is revolutionizing the way people work and live.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Paul Hogan is 87. Comedian Chevy Chase is 83. Author R.L. Stine is 83. Actor Sigourney Weaver is 77. Musician Robert "Kool" Bell (Kool & the Gang) is 76. Producer-director Edward

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Zwick is 74. NASCAR Hall of Famer Bill Elliott is 71. Comedian Darrell Hammond is 71. Actor Kim Wayans is 65. Gospel singer CeCe Winans is 62. Olympic gold medal swimmer Matt Biondi is 61. Actor Karyn Parsons is 60. Singer-producer Teddy Riley is 59. Actor Matt Damon is 56. Actor-TV host Nick Cannon is 46. Singer-songwriter Bruno Mars is 41. Actor Angus T. Jones is 33. Actor-singer Bella Thorne is 29. Actor Gordon Cormier is 17.