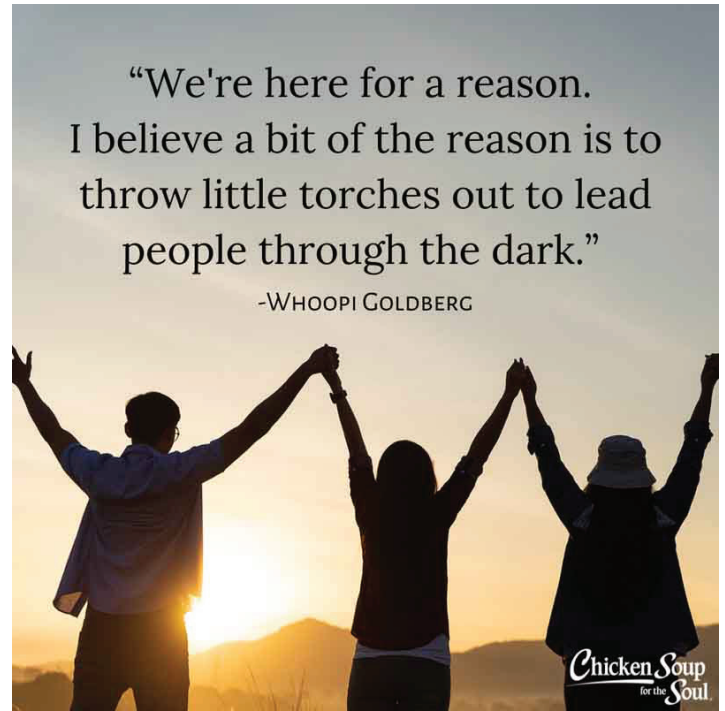


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- [2- 4-Hit Day For Flihs Earns Groton Jr. Teeners Victory Over Webster VFW POST 4690 14U](#)
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Attn Jr. Teener Parents:

The game next Saturday in Mobridge has been move from 3:00 to 1:00

June 4 Schedule (confirmed)

- U12 @ Warner 6:00 (2)
- U10 vs Clark 6:00 (2)
- U12 SB @ Sisseton 6:00 (2)
- U10 SB @ Sisseton 6:00 (2)



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

4-Hit Day For Flihs Earns Groton Jr. Teeners Victory Over Webster VFW POST 4690 14U

Brevin Flihs was dialed in at the plate on Thursday, tallying four hits and leading Groton Jr. Teeners to a 17-3 win over Webster VFW POST 4690 14U. Flihs singled in the first, tripled in the second, singled in the third, and singled in the third.

Groton Jr. Teeners secured the victory thanks to 13 runs in the third inning. The offensive onslaught came from walks by Gavin Englund, Braxton Imrie, Carter Simon, Englund, and Jarrett Erdmann, singles by Caden Mcinerney, Flihs, and Flihs, a fielder's choice by Korbin Kucker, and a double by Kucker.

Groton Jr. Teeners put up 13 runs in the third inning. Kucker, Mcinerney, Englund, Flihs, Imrie, and Kucker each had RBIs in the big inning.

Kellen Antonsen was credited with the victory for Groton Jr. Teeners. The bulldog allowed one hit and three runs over three innings, striking out three.

Matthew Mount took the loss for Webster VFW POST 4690 14U. The righty allowed six hits and ten runs over two innings, striking out five.

Groton Jr. Teeners scattered nine hits in the game. Flihs, Kucker, and Teylor Diegel each had multiple hits for Groton Jr. Teeners. Flihs went 4-for-4 at the plate to lead Groton Jr. Teeners in hits.

Mount led Webster VFW POST 4690 14U with one hit in one at bats. Carter Williams led Webster VFW POST 4690 14U with three stolen bases, as they ran wild on the base paths with five stolen bases.

Webster won the second game, 21-8 in four innings.



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or
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discounted rate**

Tuesday-Friday this week.

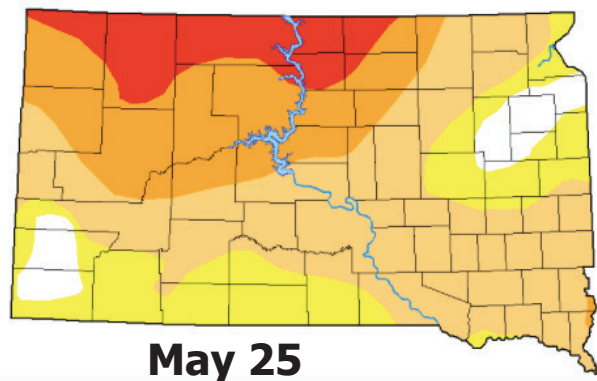
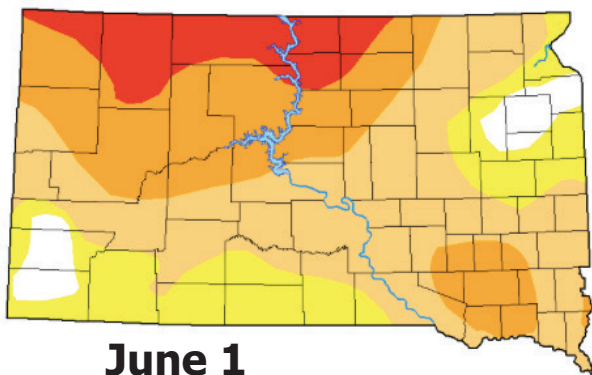
**Exclusions do apply (no planters, trees, shrubs, or perennials)
We will be closing Friday June 4th at 4:30 for the year.**

Weber Landscaping Greenhouse
West Third Avenue, Groton

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Drought Classification



High Plains

Temperatures were 4-6 degrees below normal, with even greater departures in the Dakotas where some areas were 8-10 degrees below normal for the week. Much of eastern Colorado, southern Nebraska, Kansas and northwest South Dakota into southwest North Dakota received well over 150% of normal precipitation for the week. In Nebraska, abnormally dry conditions were improved over the north central, southwest and extreme southeast portions of the state while moderate drought expanded over northeast Nebraska. Severe drought was introduced over southeast South Dakota, with an expansion of moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions too. Southern Kansas and eastern Colorado had improvements to abnormally dry and moderate drought conditions while Wyoming had a mix of improvements and degradations to moderate and severe drought in the state.

Groton Transit

FUNDRAISER

Thursday, June 17, 2021

4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Groton Community Transit

Downtown Groton

Tables will be set up outside

as in previous years!

We will be offering DRIVE-THRU

Service again on the

south side of the transit.

*Please join us and help
support Groton Transit!*

FREE WILL OFFERING!

*** Food * Fun * Door Prizes ***

Unemployment Claims Filed for Week Ending May 29

PIERRE, S.D. – During the week of May 23-29, a total of 232 initial weekly claims for state unemployment benefits were processed by the Department of Labor and Regulation. This is the same number of claims from the prior week's total of 232.

The latest number of continued state claims is 2,141 for the week ending May 22, a decrease of 342 from the prior week's total of 2,483. This indicates the number of unemployed workers eligible for and receiving benefits after their initial claim.

For the week ending May 29, a total of \$348,000 was paid out in state benefits, in addition to \$786,000 in Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC), \$91,000 in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and \$299,000 in Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) benefits.

The Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund balance was \$161.1 million on May 30.

Benefits paid since March 16, 2020:

- Regular State = \$114.2 million
- FPUC = \$235.8 million
- PUA = \$20.6 million
- PEUC = \$10.2 million

Total = Approximately \$380.9 million



Day shift
and night
shift
assemblers!

**Competitive starting wage
with monthly tier increases!
Full benefit package!**

**To apply:
www.uslbm.com/careers or
call Diane at 605-448-2929**

Britton



Help Wanted at Groton Area

The Groton Area School District is seeking qualified and motivated individuals for the following position for the 2021-2022 school year.

Transportation Director. The Groton Area School District has an opening for the position of Transportation Director. This position is full-time year round with a comprehensive benefits package and salary dependent on education and experience. Criminal background check and pre-employment drug test required. Applicant must hold valid South Dakota Commercial Driver License with School Bus and Passengers endorsements and clean driving record. Interested parties should complete and submit the auxiliary staff application form. Open until filled.

Elementary Special Education Paraprofessional. The Groton Area School District is seeking applicants for the position of Special Education Paraprofessional. Starting salary is \$12.10/hour and position includes comprehensive benefits package. Criminal background check required. Interested parties should complete and submit the auxiliary staff application form. Open until filled.

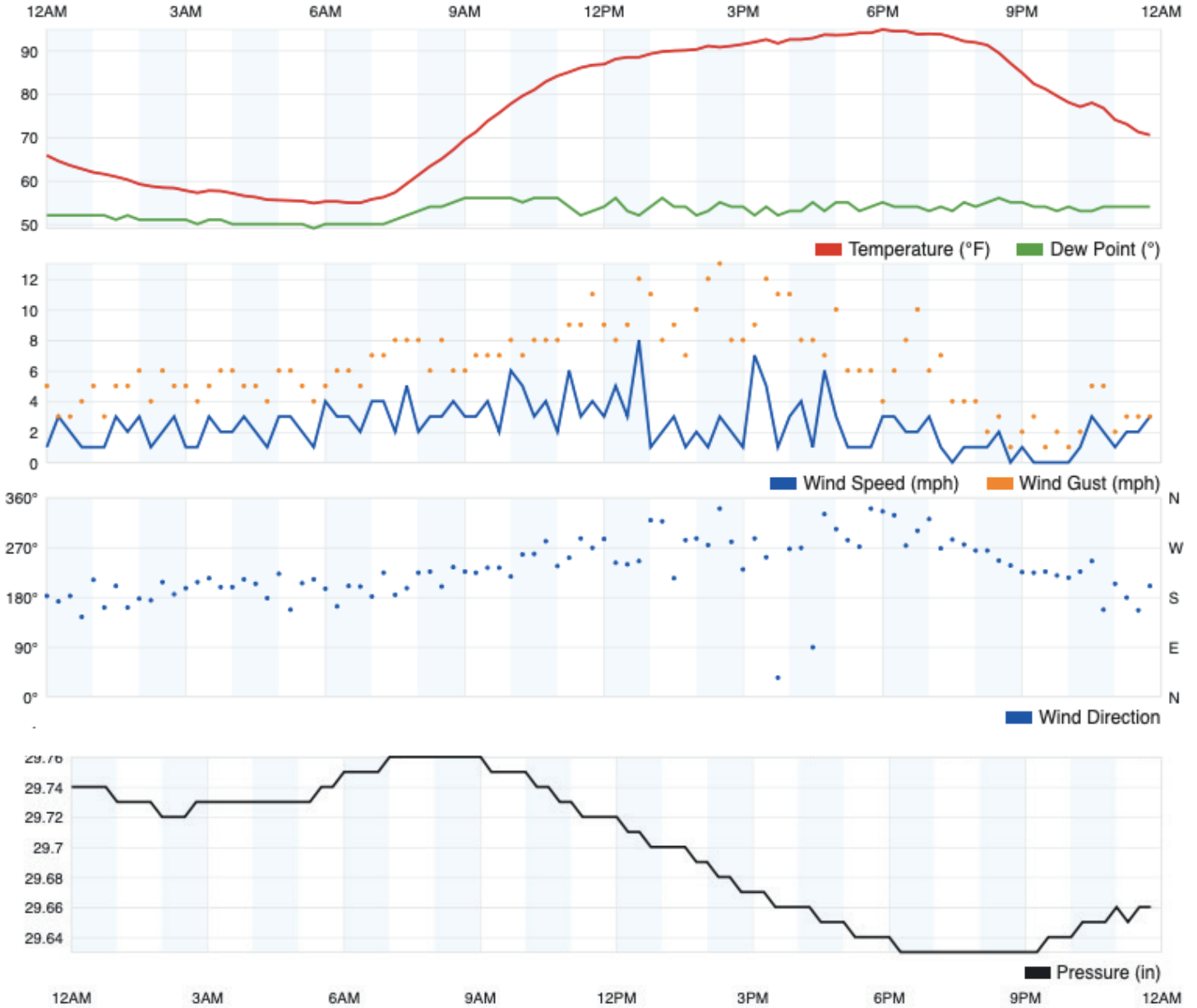
MS/HS Special Education Paraprofessional. The Groton Area School District is seeking applicants for the position of Special Education Paraprofessional. Starting salary is \$12.10/hour and position includes comprehensive benefits package. Criminal background check required. Interested parties should complete and submit the auxiliary staff application form. Open until filled.

Applications are available at www.grotonarea.com or at the district office – 502 N 2nd Street, Groton.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Hot

High: 99 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 62 °F

Saturday



Hot

High: 101 °F

Saturday
Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 71 °F

Sunday



Hot

High: 92 °F



ISSUED: 5:31 AM - Friday,
June 04, 2021

Potential Record Heat Today

Highs Around 20 Degrees Above Average

	Friday, June 4 th Forecast	Record	Last Time 100° Was Reached in June
Aberdeen	100	101 /1933	101° 5 th , 2018
Watertown	94	92 /1933	105° 24 th , 1988
Pierre	97	94 /1939	100° 29 th , 2019
Mobridge	100	95 /2017	103° 9 th , 2017
Sisseton	100	95 /1934	104° 24 th , 1988



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Aberdeen South Dakota

Hot and dry conditions will continue today, with highs reaching the 90s to around 100 degrees. Record to near record highs will be possible. Some areas have not seen 100 degrees in June since 1988.

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HEAT EXHAUSTION	OR	HEAT STROKE
Faint or dizzy		Throbbing headache
Excessive sweating		No sweating
Cool, pale, clammy skin		Body temperature above 103° Red, hot, dry skin
Nausea or vomiting		Nausea or vomiting
Rapid, weak pulse		Rapid, strong pulse
Muscle cramps		May lose consciousness

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get to a cooler, air conditioned place• Drink water if fully conscious• Take a cool shower or use cold compresses	CALL 9-1-1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take immediate action to cool the person until help arrives
---	---

Do you know the difference between Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke? Here's a helpful reminder. Stay safe in the afternoon heat!

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Today in Weather History

June 4, 1984: Heavy rains of up to seven inches caused the Bad River to rise over 23 feet in six hours at Fort Pierre. Flash flooding resulted as a dam, 17 miles west of Fort Pierre gave way, and an irrigation dam near town was damaged. Water covered some roads and bridges. Many homes had water damage. Strong thunderstorm winds gusting up to 60 mph downed numerous branches and several signs in Faulk, Edmunds, McPherson, and Brown Counties.

June 4, 1991: Heavy rains of 2 to 5 inches caused street flooding in Harrold. Several county roads in Stanley, Sully, Hughes, and Lyman Counties were closed due to flooding. Some rainfall amounts include 1.83 inches at Oahe Dam; 1.96 inches, 12 miles SSW of Harrold; and 3.20 inches, two miles North of Onaka.

June 4, 1993: An earthquake measuring 4.1 on the Richter scale shook a portion of northeast South Dakota but caused no real damage or injuries. The epicenter of the quake was 22 miles northwest of Morris, Minnesota or 38 miles east of Sisseton and was felt in most of Roberts, Grant, and Deuel Counties. The quake was the first in the area since 1975.

1825: A severe storm of tropical origin swept up the Atlantic Coast during the first week of June 1825 with reports of significant damage from Florida to New York City. Shipping logs told of a disturbance at Santo Domingo on May 28th and Cuba on June 1st. Gales were reported at St. Augustine, Florida on the 2nd. The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald reported "undiminished violence" from the gale force winds for 27 hours, ending on June 4th. The effect of the storm reached well inland. Washington had cold, heavy rain all day on the 4th with high winds laying the crops in the vicinity. The wind also tore up trees by the roots in front of the State House in Philadelphia. This storm impacted the New Jersey Coast and the Long Island area as well with high winds and a two-foot storm surge. A Columbian frigate was driven ashore as were many smaller boats. The largest loss of life occurred along the Long Island shore when a schooner capsized. The entire crew of seven was lost.

1860 - Iowa's Commanche Tornado , with wind speeds estimated in excess of 300 mph, was unquestionably one of the worst experienced by early settlers, with nearly a million dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)

1877: A tornado of estimated F4 intensity touched down just west of Mt. Carmel, Illinois and moved east-northeast, devastating the town. 20 businesses and 100 homes were damaged or destroyed. At least 16 people and as many as 30 were killed, with 100 others injured.

1982 - A four day storm began over New England which produced up to 14 inches of rain in southern Connecticut breaching twenty-three dams and breaking two others. Damage was estimated at more than 276 million dollars. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Early morning thunderstorms in south Texas produced 6.5 inches of rain at Hockheim, and five inches at Hallettsville, in just a few hours. Afternoon thunderstorms in Virginia deluged northern Halifax County with 5.5 inches of rain in two hours. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 76 mph at Dusty WA, and wind gusts to 88 mph at Swanquarter NC. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A dozen cities in the eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Atlantic City NJ with a reading of 40 degrees. Fifteen cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Glasgow MT and Havre MT with readings of 102 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Southern Plains Region and the Lower Mississippi Valley to the Southern Atlantic Coast Region during the day and into the night. Just four tornadoes were reported, but there were 87 reports of large hail and damaging winds. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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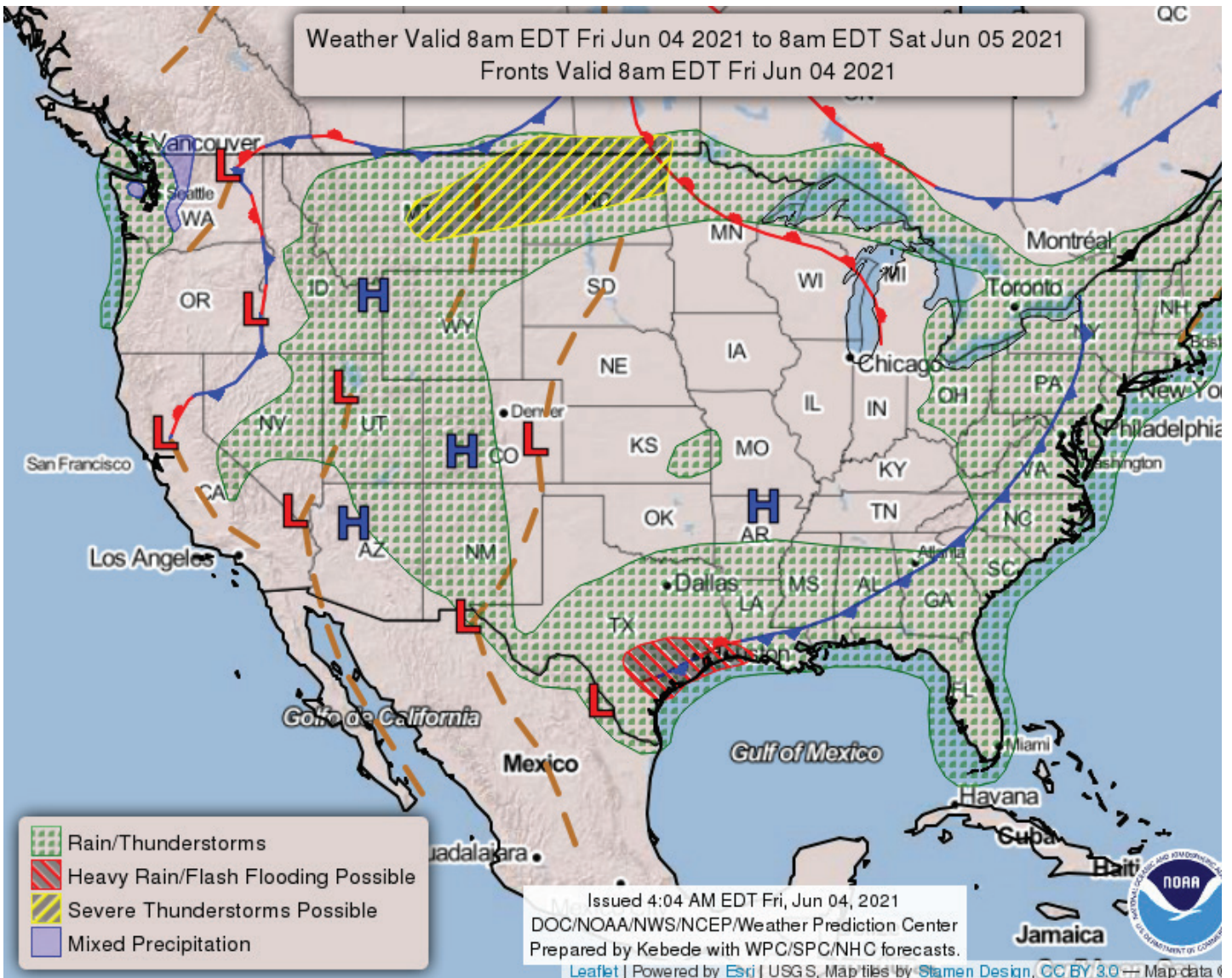
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 94.8 °F
Low Temp: 54.8 °F
Wind: 13 mph
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 101° in 1933
Record Low: 34° in 1954
Average High: 77°F
Average Low: 52°F
Average Precip in June.: 0.32
Precip to date in June.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 7.57
Precip Year to Date: 3.97
Sunset Tonight: 9:18 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:47 a.m.



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ALONE AND ABANDONED

It's not a popular topic to talk about but it is a common feeling we all have at one time or another. No matter how great our achievements or how powerful we become, no one seems to escape feelings of defeat that come our way as we journey through life.

It started in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve rejected the guidance of God. They decided to go their own way and do their own thing and leave God out of their lives. It is impossible to imagine the beauty they enjoyed or the tranquility they were given. Sadly, they were not satisfied with God's plan and chose to reject it.

We read in God's Word that when Israel was faithful to God, God was faithful to Israel. When the army was triumphant, the people prospered. And when the people were disobedient, discontent, and doubting, they were defeated, and at times, nearly destroyed.

What was true then is equally true today. God cannot and will not bless any one or any nation that defies Him or His teachings. He will only bless those who follow His teachings and obey His laws. His nature demands righteousness, and if we are faithful to Him, we can count on His being faithful to us, giving us His best blessings individually and as a nation.

David experienced the rejection of God because of His disobedience. He could not restore his soul or the souls of his people. Only God could restore him when he repented. He knew this and prayed, "You have rejected us...You have been angry...now restore us!"

Prayer: May we realize, Father, it is not You who rejects us, but we who too often reject You. May we recognize our sins, repent, and be restored, we pray. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: You have rejected us, God, and burst upon us; you have been angry—now restore us! Psalm 60:1

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2021 Community Events

- Cancelled** Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
03/27/2021 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
04/10/2021 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
04/24/2021 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/25/2021 Princess Prom (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/01/2021 Lions Club Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
05/31/2021 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
6/7-9/2021 St. John's Lutheran Church VBS
06/17/2021 Groton Transit Fundraiser, 4-7 p.m.
06/18/2021 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
06/19/2021 U8 Baseball Tournament
06/19/2021 Lions Crazy Golf Fest at Olive Grove Golf Course, Noon
06/26/2021 U10 Baseball Tournament
06/27/2021 U12 Baseball Tournament
07/04/2021 Firecracker Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
07/11/2021 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 10am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
07/22/2021 Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/30/2021-08/03/2021 State "B" American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
08/06/2021 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course
09/11/2021 Lions Club Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
09/12/2021 Sunflower Classic Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
09/18-19 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
10/08/2021 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
10/09/2021 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm (Saturday before Columbus Day)
10/29/2021 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
10/31/2021 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
11/13/2021 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
11/25/2021 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon

News from the Associated Press

Hot Rod Charlie being run in Belmont in memory of Jake Panus

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Jake Panus wanted to help Native American children and walk on to play football at South Carolina.

His death in August in a car crash stopped all that at age 16.

After his father, Stephen, fought through the first wave of grief, good friend and trainer Doug O'Neill called to offer any help he could for the family. Turns out it came in the form of 3-year-old colt Hot Rod Charlie, co-owned by nephew Patrick and now running in the Belmont Stakes in memory of Jake Panus.

"There aren't really proper words to describe the gratitude that we have for Doug and Patrick, their selflessness in allowing my family and Jake's story to kind of become part of Hot Rod Charlie's journey on the Triple Crown this year," Stephen Panus said Thursday. "It's remarkable."

O'Neill, himself with a son around Jake's age, couldn't believe what Panus was going through and the willingness to spearhead this cause through the pain.

"He's done it in a brave way because I'd be in a fetal position and not wanting to come out," O'Neill said.

Neither Doug nor Patrick O'Neill ever met Jake Panus but heard all about him from Stephen, a horse racing executive with The Jockey Club and America's Best Racing. They learned even more about him over the past few months, while Hot Rod Charlie was winning the Louisiana Derby and went into the Kentucky Derby as a top contender.

"Everyone around him was just drawn to him in a way that has that almost natural leadership," Patrick O'Neill said. "That guy whenever he enters the room, it's smiles, it's laughs and he just has this aura to him. Talking to Stephen or talking to some of the people that run this foundation — it sounds like that's kind of who Jake was."

Hot Rod Charlie's saddlecloth bears Jake's initials and symbols of his life and goals, and his Triple Crown season is dedicated to raising awareness for scholarships in Jake's name. One such symbol is a pendant Jake wore around his neck of a bear, which represents courage, confidence, healing and protection among some Native American tribes, and the other is the South Carolina Gamecocks logo to symbolize his desire to follow his father in playing football there.

Memorial scholarships were set up to help Oglala Sioux students from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota go to college and pay for a South Carolina walk-on football player who earns a scholarship. Over \$100,000 has been raised for the Jake Panus Walk-on Football Endowed Scholarship since just before the Kentucky Derby, in which Hot Rod Charlie finished third.

"Him wanting to walk on to South Carolina's football team: How do you not root for that?" Doug O'Neill said. "I just think it's a great way to keep Jake alive with us and I hope to be a small part of it for a long time to come."

The Belmont is the next step in that. Hot Rod Charlie — known as "Chuck" to Patrick O'Neill and his Boat Racing LLC co-owners — already brought 250 people together at the Kentucky Derby, and a victory in the third leg of the Triple Crown would only shine a brighter light on Jake Panus and his story.

"It would be emotional," Doug O'Neill said. "It's heartbreaking. He was such a courageous kid, such a caring kid. I'm a very small part of trying to get the word out there to keep the legend of Jake Panus alive."

Bond set for mother accused of abducting children

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Bond has been set for a Rapid City mother who does not have custody of her two children and was accused abducting them from a Custer day care setting.

A federal magistrate judge set bond at \$50,000 cash or surety Wednesday for 37-year-old Katrina Joy Seay, who is charged with two counts of first-degree kidnapping in last week's disappearance of the children, ages 6 and 9.

An Amber Alert was issued May 29 before law enforcement officials caught up with Seay several hundred miles away in Mitchell. The children, who had been in foster care, were turned over to the state Department of Social Services, KOTA-TV reported.

A day care co-owner told investigators the children were last seen by a playmate in the back yard.

The day care operator then began to search the yard and nearby outbuildings and notified authorities about 40 minutes later, according to court records.

It was not clear whether Seay has an attorney who could speak on her behalf.

24/7 Sobriety Participants are Now Visiting Automated Kiosks for Their Twice-Daily Breathalyzer Tests

MINNEAPOLIS--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jun 3, 2021--

Minneapolis-based Precision Kiosk Technologies today announced that three additional counties in the Dakotas have begun using its AB Kiosk® system to conduct 24/7 Sobriety monitoring: Lawrence and Yankton counties in South Dakota, and Stark County in North Dakota. In the past year, seven 24/7 Sobriety Programs have made the switch to this fully automated breathalyzer system, which now conducts more than 550 alcohol screening tests a day in the Dakotas.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210603005069/en/>

This AB Kiosk system in the Stark County Law Enforcement Center screens 50 DUI offenders each day for alcohol use. (Photo: Business Wire)

North and South Dakota are 24/7 Sobriety Program states that require participants to submit to court-mandated breathalyzer tests as a condition of their sentences for DUI offenses. In the past, these tests have been administered by sheriff deputies or jail administrators using handheld breathalyzers – a time-consuming process for both staff and participants. By automating the entire process, the AB Kiosk system eliminates the need for any face-to-face interactions. The System coordinates the schedules for each test, verifies the individual's identity through biometric authentication, captures still images and video as it administers each test, and automatically uploads the results to the client's file. The kiosk can test up to 40 individuals per hour, and law enforcement staff can access testing data from any computer or smartphone. This automated process frees up staff for higher-value work and reduces the administrative costs of 24/7 Sobriety Programs. Thirty-eight jurisdictions across the US now use the AB Kiosk system for alcohol monitoring, pre-trial services, and probation check-ins.

US taps groups to pick asylum-seekers to allow into country

By ELLIOT SPAGAT and JULIE WATSON Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The Biden administration has quietly tasked six humanitarian groups with recommending which migrants should be allowed to stay in the U.S. instead of being rapidly expelled from the country under federal pandemic-related powers that block people from seeking asylum.

The groups will determine who is most vulnerable in Mexico, and their criteria has not been made public. It comes as large numbers of people are crossing the southern border and as the government faces intensifying pressure to lift the public health powers instituted by former President Donald Trump and kept in place by President Joe Biden during the coronavirus pandemic.

Several members of the consortium spoke to The Associated Press about the criteria and provided details of the system that have not been previously reported. The government is aiming to admit to the country up to 250 asylum-seekers a day who are referred by the groups and is agreeing to that system only until July 31. By then, the consortium hopes the Biden administration will have lifted the public health rules, though the government has not committed to that.

So far, a total of nearly 800 asylum-seekers have been let in since May 3, and members of the consortium say there is already more demand than they can meet.

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The groups have not been publicly identified except for the International Rescue Committee, a global relief organization. The others are London-based Save the Children; two U.S.-based organizations, HIAS and Kids in Need of Defense; and two Mexico-based organizations, Asylum Access and the Institute for Women in Migration, according to two people with direct knowledge who spoke on condition of anonymity because the information was not intended for public release.

Asylum Access, which provides services to people seeking asylum in Mexico, characterized its role as minimal.

The effort started in El Paso, Texas, and is expanding to Nogales, Arizona.

A similar but separate mechanism led by the American Civil Liberties Union began in late March and allows 35 families a day into the United States at places along the border. It has no end date.

The twin tracks are described by participating organizations as an imperfect transition from so-called Title 42 authority, named for a section of an obscure 1944 public health law that Trump used in March 2020 to effectively end asylum at the Mexican border. With COVID-19 vaccination rates rising, Biden is finding it increasingly difficult to justify the expulsions on public health grounds and faces demands to end it from the U.N. refugee agency and members of his own party and administration.

"As the United States continues to enforce the CDC Order under its Title 42 public health authority, we are working to streamline a system for identifying and lawfully processing particularly vulnerable individuals who warrant humanitarian exceptions under the order," a U.S. Department of Homeland Security spokesperson said. "This humanitarian exception process involves close coordination with international and non-governmental organizations in Mexico."

Critics of the new selection processes say too much power is vested in a small number of organizations and that the effort is shrouded in secrecy without a clear explanation of how the groups were chosen. Critics also say there are no assurances that the most vulnerable or deserving migrants will be chosen to seek asylum.

Some consortium members are concerned that going public may cause their offices in Mexico to be mobbed by asylum-seekers, overwhelming their tiny staffs and exposing them to potential threats and physical attacks from extortionists and other criminals.

The consortium was formed after the U.S. government asked the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees' office in Mexico for the names of organizations with deep experience and capacity in Mexico, said Sibylla Brodzinsky, a spokeswoman for the U.N. office.

"We've had long relationships with them and they're trusted partners," she said.

The groups say they are merely streamlining the process but that the vulnerable migrants' cases can come from anywhere.

In Nogales, Arizona, the International Rescue Committee is connecting to migrants via social media and smartphones to find candidates. It plans to refer up to 600 people a month to U.S. officials, said Raymundo Tamayo, the group's director in Mexico.

Special consideration is being given to people who have been in Mexico a long time, are in need of acute medical attention or who have disabilities, are members of the LGBTQ community or are non-Spanish speakers, though each case is being weighed on its unique circumstances, Tamayo said.

ACLU attorney Lee Gelernt said advocacy groups are in "a very difficult position because they need to essentially rank the desperation" of people, but he insisted it was temporary. The government, he said, "cannot farm out the asylum system."

Migration experts not involved in the process have questioned how the groups determine who is eligible.

"It has been murky," said Jessica Bolter, an analyst at the nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute who believes the administration is trying to quietly be humane without encouraging more people to come, a balancing act she doubts will succeed.

"Setting out clear and accurate information about how and who might get in might lead to fewer migrants making the trip, so there's not this game of chance that kind of seems to be in place right now," Bolter said.

U.S. border authorities recorded the highest number of encounters with migrants in more than 20 years

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in April, though many were repeat crossers who had previously been expelled from the country. The number of children crossing the border alone also is hovering at all-time highs.

Against that backdrop, some advocates are seeing the makings of the "humane" asylum system that Biden promised during his campaign. Details have been elusive, with administration officials saying they need time.

Susana Coreas, who fled El Salvador, was among those identified as vulnerable and allowed into the United States last month. Coreas spent more than a year in Ciudad Juarez waiting to apply for asylum but was barred by the public health order.

She and other transgender women refurbished an abandoned hotel to have a safe place to stay after they felt uncomfortable at a number of shelters in the rough Mexican city.

But they continued to have problems. One woman had a knife pointed at her. Another had a gun pulled on her.

"There was so much anxiety," Coreas said. "I now feel at peace."

Hong Kong vigil organizer arrested on Tiananmen anniversary

By ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Police arrested an organizer of Hong Kong's annual candlelight vigil remembering the deadly crackdown in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, warned people not to attend the banned event and cordoned off parts of the venue Friday as authorities mute China's last pro-democracy voices.

In past years, tens of thousands of people gathered in Hong Kong's Victoria Park to honor those who died when China's military put down student-led pro-democracy protests on June 4, 1989. Hundreds, if not thousands, were killed.

China's ruling Communist Party has never allowed public events on the mainland to mark the anniversary and security was increased at the Beijing square, with police checking pedestrians' IDs as tour buses shuttled Chinese tourists in and out.

Chinese officials say the country's rapid economic development in the years since what they call the "political turmoil" of 1989 proves that decisions made at the time were correct.

Efforts to suppress public memory of the Tiananmen events have lately turned to Hong Kong. A temporary June 4 museum closed after a visit from authorities earlier this week and police then detained the vice chair of the Hong Kong Alliance, a group that organizes both the museum and the vigil, on Friday morning.

The nighttime event in Victoria Park has been banned for a second year under coronavirus pandemic restrictions, although the city has had no local cases for over six weeks. The move came amid sweeping moves to quell dissent in the city, including a new national security law, election system changes and the arrest of many activists who participated in pro-democracy protests that swept Hong Kong in 2019.

Hong Kong police cordoned off parts of the park, including football fields and basketball courts, to try to prevent any gatherings. Police said they were aware of calls on social media urging people to turn up for the vigil.

"Police appeal to members of the public to refrain from participating in, advertising or publicizing any unauthorized assemblies and prohibited gatherings," a government statement said.

At the University of Hong Kong, students took part in an annual washing of the "Pillar of Shame" sculpture, which was erected to remember the victims of the Tiananmen crackdown. Charles Kwok, the president of the students' union, said the event was legal.

"In cleaning the Pillar of Shame, we shall learn how our predecessors defended the freedom of expression before, and we shall not easily give up," Kwok said.

Law Kwok-hoi, police senior superintendent, told reporters police arrested a 36-year-old woman from the Hong Kong Alliance, as well as a 20-year-old food delivery man, for advertising and publicizing an unauthorized assembly on their social media accounts even after the vigil was banned.

Taking part in an illegal gathering carries a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment, while promoting such an event can result in a year in jail.

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Police, following customary practice, did not name those arrested, but the Hong Kong Alliance confirmed that its vice chair, Chow Hang Tung, was the woman who had been picked up. After the ban was issued, Chow urged people to commemorate the event privately by lighting a candle wherever they are.

Last year, thousands went to Victoria Park despite the ban to light candles and sing songs. Police later charged more than 20 activists including Chow for participating in the event.

Two other key members of the Hong Kong Alliance — Lee Cheuk-yan and Albert Ho — are behind bars for joining unauthorized assemblies during the 2019 protests.

Chow, a lawyer, said in an earlier interview with The Associated Press that she expected to be jailed.

"I'm already being persecuted for participating and inciting last year's candlelight vigil," she said. "If I continue my activism in pushing for democracy in Hong Kong and China, surely they will come after me at some point, so it's sort of expected."

As Chinese authorities seek to curb remembrances, they seem confident the passage of time will erase memories of Tiananmen.

The government made no response to an appeal from Tiananmen Mothers, published on the Human Rights in China website, urging the party to release official records about the crackdown, provide compensation for those killed and injured, and hold those responsible to account.

Tiananmen Mothers said many young Chinese have "grown up in a false sense of prosperous jubilation and enforced glorification of the government (and) have no idea of or refuse to believe what happened on June 4, 1989."

The suppression of the Tiananmen commemorations has been accompanied in recent years by harsh repression of religious and ethnic minorities in Tibet, the northwestern region of Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia, along with the sharp curtailing of political rights in Hong Kong.

"China's authoritarian regime has used another kind of force — enforced amnesia — in its attempts to bury the truth of the brutal crimes it committed against its people," Human Rights in China said in a statement.

In self-governing Taiwan, activists who host an annual Tiananmen memorial moved mostly online as the island faces its worst outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. A temporary memorial pavilion was set up in Taipei for people in small groups to leave flowers and other mementoes.

The U.S. State Department issued a statement of support for those advocating for victims and pursuing the truth.

"We must never stop seeking transparency on the events of that day, including a full accounting of all those killed, detained, or missing," the statement said, adding that such demands echo the struggle for political rights in Hong Kong.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin denounced the statement as interference in China's internal affairs and said the U.S. should "first look at itself in a mirror and reflect on its own poor record in human rights."

"In what position can the U.S. lecture others on human rights?" he said, citing the 1921 massacre of Black residents in Tulsa, Oklahoma, discrimination against minorities and U.S. actions in the Middle East.

Lost limbs, rising anger as town is caught up in Tigray war

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA Associated Press

HAWZEN, Ethiopia (AP) — Shops remained shuttered, some government workers hadn't been paid and the town's main hospital was utterly laid to waste. But the Tigrayan fighters still claimed victory, swaggering through the streets of Hawzen with their guns.

It wouldn't last long.

Hawzen, a rural town in the ethnic Tigray region of northern Ethiopia, is a microcosm of the challenge facing Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed — and a warning that the war here is unlikely to end anytime soon. When The Associated Press arrived in May, Tigrayan fighters had recently retaken Hawzen from Ethiopian government troops, laying claim once again to land that has switched control multiple times since the war began in November.

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To the Ethiopian government, the fighters are terrorists who have defied the authority of Abiy in the federal capital, Addis Ababa. But almost everyone the AP spoke with in Hawzen supported them and the Tigray People's Liberation Front, or TPLF, the party of the region's ousted and now-fugitive leaders.

"The people elected us, so we are not terrorists," said fighter Nurhusein Abdulmajid, standing confidently in the middle of the road with a gun on his shoulder, as a crowd listened. "He (Abiy) is the one who is the terrorist. A terrorist is someone who massacres people."

This story was funded by a grant from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

The battle for Hawzen is part of a larger war in Tigray between the Ethiopian government and the Tigrayan rebels that has led to massacres, gang rapes and the flight of more than 2 million of the region's 6 million people. While the government now holds many urban centers, fierce fighting continues in remote rural towns like Hawzen. The AP was able to get through an Ethiopian military roadblock and cross the front line to get a rare look at a town held by Tigrayan fighters, who carried light weapons they said they had seized from opponents.

If anything, recent atrocities appear to have increased support for the TPLF. One 19-year-old said she was raped by an Ethiopian soldier and is now six months pregnant. After trying and failing to terminate the pregnancy herself, she is now desperately hoping someone in a local hospital will help her.

As soon as possible, she said, she wants to join the rebels.

"I want to go," she said, as she broke down in tears. "You will die if you stay home, and you will die if you go out there....I would rather die alongside the fighters."

The AP does not name victims of sexual abuse.

The TPLF was on top of a coalition that ruled Ethiopia for nearly three decades. That changed in 2018, when Abiy rose to power as a reformist. Abiy alienated the TPLF with efforts to make peace with its arch-enemy, Eritrea, and rid the federal government of corruption.

Tigray's leaders fought back. In 2020, after a national vote was suspended because of the pandemic, the TPLF went ahead with its own elections in the region.

Asserting that Tigrayan fighters had attacked a military base, Abiy sent federal troops into Tigray in November. Government forces are now allied with militias from the rival Amhara ethnic group as well as soldiers from neighboring Eritrea, who are blamed for many atrocities.

Abiy acknowledged recently that the highly mobile Tigrayan guerrillas were stretching the Ethiopian military, springing ambushes from the rugged highlands where they hide. And in April the International Crisis Group predicted that entrenched resistance on both sides meant "the conflict could evolve into a protracted war."

Abebe Gebrehiwot, an ethnic Tigrayan appointed by Abiy to serve as Tigray's deputy CEO, told the AP that he and others in the interim administration didn't feel trusted by the people, making their work more difficult.

"We are not getting as much public support as we expect," he said in his office in Mekele, the largely peaceful regional capital.

Representatives of the Ethiopian government didn't respond to requests for comment. But Billene Seyoum, a spokeswoman for Abiy's office, told reporters Thursday that "the suffering of Ethiopians who are victims of a situation that is not of their choosing is a source of pain." Efforts to alleviate the suffering of Tigrayans "have been marred by various challenges given the complexity of any armed engagement," she said.

Residents of Hawzen, a town of a few thousand people, said it had seen fighting four times since November. A Tigrayan sentry in military fatigues sat atop a hill leading into the town, on the lookout for trouble.

Yohanes Kidanemariam, a fighter in civilian clothes who held a gun between his legs, claimed they would eventually outlast their opponents.

"We don't have any doubt," he said. "We have extreme public support and we have a straight and clear objective: freedom."

Many here spoke disapprovingly of Abiy, saying they no longer trust him to keep them safe. Gebremed-

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hin Aregawi, a tour guide who helped manage civilian relations for the guerrillas, said the entry of federal troops into Mekele doesn't mean Abiy won.

"If he won, how is fighting still going on up to now?" Gebremedhin asked.

Gebremichael Welay, a civics teacher at a primary school in Hawzen, said it was "difficult to live" amid the waves of fighting and bombardment that have rocked his hometown. He flees to a nearby forest when Ethiopian and Eritrean troops are in charge.

"They do not discriminate," said the rheumy-eyed 40-year-old as he sat on a stool by the roadside. "If they find you, they kill you."

As the two sides fight, civilians, and especially children, are suffering heavily. More and more children are caught up in shelling in Hawzen and other nearby areas, with at least 32 admitted to the regional Ayder Hospital in Mekele for blast injuries from December to April. Thirteen left with an amputated limb, according to official records.

Haftom Gebru, a 12-year-old boy from Hawzen, was wounded by shrapnel in fighting during Orthodox Easter. An artillery shell hit a pile of stones in the family's compound that then ricocheted in the boy's direction. When his 60-year-old father, Gebru Welde Abrha, saw the wound in the boy's left hand, he knew it would have to be cut off.

"I am so sad I can't explain it," the father said in a hospital ward, as his son looked angrily into the distance. "I feel it deeply."

Haftom Gebretsadik, a 17-year-old from Freweini near Hawzen, also was wounded by an artillery round that struck his home in March. He quietly looked at the stump on his right arm and shook his head.

"I am very worried," he said. "How can I work?"

Some of the young victims of blast trauma may have kept their limbs if they had received first aid at the nearest health centers. But such facilities are shells right now — systematically looted, vandalized and turned upside down.

Eritrean soldiers set up camp in the Hawzen Primary Hospital, which once boasted of equipment ranging from X-ray machines to baby incubators. Now it is trashed and looted, and heaps of stones litter the compound where fighters had set up defensive positions.

"It's a bad feeling I have as a Tigrayan," said the now-jobless technician, 27-year-old Misigna Hagos. "This hospital used to serve thousands of people... Now it's destroyed."

Many Tigrayans from contested towns like Hawzen end up in camps for the internally displaced in Mekele, mostly women and children. Abriha Redae fled Hawzen in December along with a group of others. Her father had been killed in recent fighting in the town.

"In Hawzen every time the soldiers entered, we went out to go to other places and hide," she said. "Our life is changing and miserable now."

Asked if she supported the Tigrayan fighters, her voice quickened.

"It's a must to fight," she said.

And so the fight continues. The day after visiting Hawzen, AP journalists driving north were told by an officer at a military checkpoint in the town of Agula to turn back for their own safety. Explosions from shelling could be heard in the distance.

It was Hawzen. Government troops were taking it back.

After 2-year battle, House panel to interview Trump counsel

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House Judiciary Committee is poised to question former White House counsel Don McGahn behind closed doors on Friday, two years after House Democrats originally sought his testimony as part of investigations into former President Donald Trump.

The long-awaited interview is the result of an agreement reached last month in federal court. House Democrats — then investigating whether Trump tried to obstruct the Justice Department's probes into his presidential campaign's ties to Russia — originally sued after McGahn defied an April 2019 subpoena

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on Trump's orders.

That month, the Justice Department released a redacted version of special counsel Robert Mueller's report on the matter. In the report, Mueller pointedly did not exonerate Trump of obstruction of justice but also did not recommend prosecuting him, citing Justice Department policy against indicting a sitting president. Mueller's report quoted extensively from interviews with McGahn, who described the Republican president's efforts to stifle the investigation.

While the Judiciary panel eventually won its fight for McGahn's testimony, the court agreement almost guarantees its members won't learn anything new. The two sides agreed that McGahn will be questioned only about information attributed to him in publicly available portions of Mueller's report.

Still, House Democrats kept the case going, even past Trump's presidency, and are moving forward with the interview to make an example of the former White House counsel. House Judiciary Committee Chair Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., said the agreement for McGahn's testimony is a good-faith compromise that "satisfies our subpoena, protects the Committee's constitutional duty to conduct oversight in the future, and safeguards sensitive executive branch prerogatives."

It is unclear what House Democrats will do with the testimony, which they sought before twice impeaching Trump. The Senate acquitted Trump of impeachment charges both times.

As White House counsel, McGahn had an insider's view of many of the episodes Mueller and his team examined for potential obstruction of justice during the Russia investigation. McGahn proved a pivotal — and damning — witness against Trump, with his name mentioned hundreds of times in the text of the Mueller report and its footnotes.

McGahn described to investigators the president's repeated efforts to choke off the probe and directives he said he received from the president that unnerved him.

He recounted how Trump had demanded that he contact then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions to order him to unrecuse himself from the Russia investigation. McGahn also said Trump had implored him to tell the deputy attorney general at the time, Rod Rosenstein, to remove Mueller from his position because of perceived conflicts of interest — and, after that episode was reported in the media, to publicly and falsely deny that demand had ever been made.

McGahn also described the circumstances leading up to Trump's firing of James Comey as FBI director, including the president's insistence on including in the termination letter the fact that Comey had reassured Trump that he was not personally under investigation.

And he was present for a critical conversation early in the Trump administration, when Sally Yates, just before she was fired as acting attorney general as a holdover Obama appointee, relayed concerns to McGahn about new national security adviser Michael Flynn. She raised the possibility that Flynn's conversations with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak — and his subsequent interview by the FBI — left him vulnerable to blackmail.

Trump's Justice Department fought efforts to have McGahn testify, but U.S. District Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson in 2019 rejected Trump's arguments that his close advisers were immune from congressional subpoena.

President Joe Biden has nominated Jackson to the appeals court in Washington.

Protests as Austria grapples with violence against women

By EMILY SCHULTHEIS Associated Press

VIENNA (AP) — The 35-year-old woman was working at a tobacco shop in Vienna when authorities say her ex-boyfriend doused her in gasoline and set her ablaze in March. In April, another woman the same age was found shot to death in her home in the Austrian capital, also reportedly by her ex-partner.

They were the sixth and ninth women to be killed in Austria this year, and five more have followed in the weeks since. That has brought this year's total so far to 14 slain women, making the Alpine nation one of the few European Union countries where the number of women killed is higher than the number of men.

The recent high-profile cases have led to widespread protests, demands for government intervention

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and condemnations from Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz and President Alexander van der Bellen.

"Too little is being done to protect women from violence," van der Bellen said recently after meeting with representatives of women's shelters and violence prevention organizations.

Experts say a variety of factors have caused the long-standing problem. Those include a view of women as subservient by some in Austria's conservative Catholic — and more recently Muslim — populations. They also blame the normalization of sexist language by the far-right Freedom Party, which is now in opposition but has been part of two national coalition governments in Austria.

"We've seen that the language about and toward women has become more radical," said Maria Roesslhuber, who heads Austria's biggest network of women's shelters and has been sounding the alarm for years. "And when this kind of verbal violence is possible in a country, then the path to physical violence isn't far."

The financial crisis of 2008 magnified the problem, as financial insecurity stoked domestic violence. Women's advocates say the coronavirus pandemic is having a similar effect, with many people out of work and stay-at-home orders leaving many victims trapped with their abusers.

Roesslhuber hopes leading politicians have finally gotten the message and will commit to more funding for organizations like hers as well as better enforcement of existing laws on domestic violence.

"We have good laws, but they're not being enforced," Roesslhuber said. "If you truly want to guarantee the safety of women, or to improve the safety of women, you need to invest in it."

In the case of the 35-year-old woman killed at home in April in the capital's Brigittenau neighborhood, the main suspect had previously sent threatening, sexually explicit messages to a female politician from the Greens party in 2018. And in the weeks before the killing, he reportedly verbally threatened the victim and her family.

"He took out a pistol and said, 'You know what this is,'" the victim's father told Austrian television.

Austria's homicide rate is low at fewer than 1 per 100,000 people but its proportion of women killed versus men is high. Last year, 31 of the country's 43 total murder victims — 72% — were women, according to Roesslhuber's Autonomous Austrian Women's Shelters, a non-governmental organization that tracks the issue.

There are a handful of countries where the rate of femicides is slightly higher, including tiny Luxembourg, but Europe-wide about 75% of slayings are of men, according to the European Union's Eurostat statistical office.

In Austria, femicides almost doubled from 2014 to 2018, going from 23 cases to 44, according to Eurostat.

The victims in Austria came from all ages and backgrounds, but nearly all were killed by their current or former partners, the vast majority in their own homes.

These recent cases, and the rise in domestic violence since the start of the pandemic, "are no surprise to people working in this field," Laura Wiesboeck, a Vienna-based sociologist who focuses on the issue, told The Associated Press.

"Many experts ... predicted that there would be a rise in male violence against women, especially in the context of intimate partner relationships," she said. "But politically this hasn't been heard or prioritized."

Activists have organized a series of protests in Vienna in the wake of the recent murders and are exploring other ways to highlight the problem.

"This is a societal issue. It affects all of us," Vienna-based writer and musician Gerhard Ruiss, who organized writers and artists to call for more decisive action from the government, told the AP.

After a virtual roundtable on the issue in May, the Austrian government pledged an additional 24.6 million euros (\$30 million) for violence prevention— a significant increase over existing funding, but a small fraction of the 228 million euros requested by organizations in the field.

Kurz suggested, however, that more funding could be made available if needed for measures to protect women and children from violence.

"It will not fail because of money," he said.

Roesslhuber and other advocates say additional 3,000 jobs in violence prevention are necessary and

more training is needed for those who work in law enforcement, justice and education to ensure that violence-prevention laws are better enforced. They're also urging police to keep closer tabs on men under restraining orders.

Roesslumer said the current discussion could be a turning point for more decisive action.

"We hope that it's a lasting shift, not just a short flare-up that simply fades away," Roesslumer said. "I have the impression that there's a change underway, and that many people understand we can't go on like this."

But, she cautioned, "it's too early to tell."

Jerusalem evictions that fueled Gaza war could still happen

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — A long-running campaign by Jewish settlers to evict dozens of Palestinian families in east Jerusalem is still underway, even after it fueled weeks of unrest and helped ignite an 11-day Gaza war.

An intervention by Israel's attorney general at the height of the unrest has put the most imminent evictions on hold. But rights groups say evictions could still proceed in the coming months as international attention wanes, potentially igniting another round of bloodshed.

The settlers have been waging a decades-long campaign to evict the families from densely populated Palestinian neighborhoods in the so-called Holy Basin just outside the walls of the Old City, in one of the most sensitive parts of east Jerusalem.

Israel captured east Jerusalem, home to holy sites sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, in the 1967 war and annexed it in a move not recognized internationally. Israel views the entire city as its capital, while the Palestinians want east Jerusalem as the capital of their future state.

The settlers are using a 1970 law that allows Jews to reclaim properties lost during the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, a right denied to Palestinians who lost property in the same conflict, including Palestinian citizens of Israel.

The Israeli rights group Ir Amim, which closely follows the various court cases, estimates that at least 150 households in the neighborhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan have been served with eviction notices and are at various stages in a long legal process.

The plight of four extended families comprising six households in Sheikh Jarrah, who were at risk of imminent eviction, triggered protests that eventually merged with demonstrations over the policing of a flashpoint holy site. After warning Israel to halt the evictions and withdraw from the site, Hamas fired long-range rockets at Jerusalem on May 10, triggering heavy fighting between Israel and the Islamic militant group that rules Gaza.

As tensions rose, Israel's Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit secured the postponement of the final hearing in the case of the four families. Another group of families requested that the attorney general also intervene in their cases, securing a delay. Israelis are currently trying to form a new government, adding more uncertainty to the process.

That has bought time for the families, but nothing has been resolved.

"Everything is very much hanging in the balance," said Amy Cohen, a spokeswoman for Ir Amim. Rights advocates fear Israel will proceed with the evictions once the furor dies down and international attention turns elsewhere.

"We're talking about over 1,000 Palestinians in both these two areas that are at risk of mass displacement," Cohen said. "Because these measures are taking place in such an incremental manner, it's so much easier to dismiss."

The families in Sheikh Jarrah are stuck in limbo. A total of at least 65 families in two areas of the neighborhood are threatened with eviction, according to Ir Amim, including a group of families set to be evicted in August.

Banners hang in the street in Sheikh Jarrah, and small, occasional protests are still held there. Police man checkpoints at either end of the road and keep watch as Jewish settlers — who seized one of the

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homes in 2009 — come and go.

The settlers say they acquired the land from Jews who owned it before the 1948 war, when Jordan captured what is now east Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank. Jordan settled several Palestinian families on the land in the early 1950s after they fled from what is now Israel during the 1948 war. Settlers began trying to evict them shortly after Israel captured the West Bank and east Jerusalem in the 1967 war.

For Palestinians, the evictions conjure bitter memories of what they refer to as the Nakba, or “catastrophe,” of Israel’s creation, when some 700,000 Palestinians — a majority of the population — fled or were driven from their homes as the new state battled five Arab armies. Most ended up in refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza and neighboring countries.

“This isn’t just about Sheikh Jarrah, it’s about the entire Israeli occupation, that’s the problem. They aren’t going to stop here,” says Saleh al-Diab, who was born, grew up, married and raised his own children in one of the homes under threat in Sheikh Jarrah.

“You lose your home to them in 1948 and then they come back after 1967 and take your home again,” he said.

Yaakov Fauci, a settler from Long Island, New York, who gained internet fame after a widely circulated video showed a Palestinian resident scolding him for stealing her home, says the Palestinians are squatting on private property.

“They’ve lived here since 1956. This is not exactly ancestral land going back to the times of Abraham,” he said. Fauci says he is a tenant and has no personal involvement in the legal dispute, but he insists the land belongs to the Jewish people.

“We don’t want to cause them any pain and suffering, but we need to have our land back,” he said. “If there are people there, they have to unfortunately get out.”

Ir Amim estimates that settler organizations have already evicted 10 families in Sheikh Jarrah and at least 74 families in Silwan, a few kilometers (miles) away, in the last few decades.

The Israeli government and a settler organization that markets properties in Sheikh Jarrah did not respond to requests for comment. Israel has previously said the evictions are a private real estate dispute and accused Hamas of seizing on the issue to incite violence.

The settler movement enjoys strong support from the Israeli government and the right-wing parties that dominate Israeli politics. The settlers have benefitted from Israeli policies going back to 1967 that have encouraged the expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem while severely restricting the growth of Palestinian communities.

Today, more than 700,000 Jewish settlers live in both territories, mostly in built-up residential towns and neighborhoods. The Palestinians and much of the international community view the settlements as a violation of international law and a major obstacle to peace.

Ir Amim says Israeli authorities could intervene in any number of ways to prevent the Jerusalem evictions, including by modifying the law that allows settlers to take over such properties.

Hamas, which is designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. and the European Union, has demanded that Israel rein in the settlers as part of the informal truce brokered by Egypt that ended the Gaza war. Egyptian mediators are exploring ways to prevent the evictions, and previous cease-fires have included significant concessions to Hamas.

A war that destroyed hundreds of homes in Gaza may have ensured that residents of Sheikh Jarrah can remain in theirs, at least for now.

Pence: I’ll likely never see eye to eye with Trump on Jan. 6

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — Former Vice President Mike Pence says that he isn’t sure that he and former President Donald Trump will ever see “eye to eye” over what happened on Jan. 6 but that he would “always be proud of what we accomplished for the American people over the last four years.”

Pence, speaking at a Republican dinner Thursday in the early-voting state of New Hampshire, gave his

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most extensive comments to date on the events of Jan. 6, when angry Trump supporters stormed the Capitol, some chanting "Hang Mike Pence!" after the vice president said he did not have the power to overturn Democrat Joe Biden's election victory.

"As I said that day, Jan. 6 was a dark day in history of the United States Capitol. But thanks to the swift action of the Capitol Police and federal law enforcement, violence was quelled. The Capitol was secured," Pence said.

"And that same day, we reconvened the Congress and did our duty under the Constitution and the laws of the United States," Pence continued. "You know, President Trump and I have spoken many times since we left office. And I don't know if we'll ever see eye to eye on that day."

It was a rare departure for Pence, who spent four years standing loyally beside his boss amid controversy, investigation and impeachment. It comes as Pence considers his own potential 2024 White House run and as Republicans, some of whom were angry at Trump in the days after the Jan. 6 insurrection, have largely coalesced back around the former president.

Pence praised Trump several times during his nearly 35-minute speech at the Hillsborough County Republican Committee's annual Lincoln-Reagan Awards Dinner in Manchester. He tried to turn the events of Jan. 6 back around on Democrats, saying they wanted to keep the insurrection in the news to divert attention from Biden's liberal agenda.

"I will not allow Democrats or their allies in the media to use one tragic day to discredit the aspirations of millions of Americans. Or allow Democrats or their allies in the media to distract our attention from a new administration intent on dividing our country to advance their radical agenda," Pence said. "My fellow Republicans, for our country, for our future, for our children and our grandchildren, we must move forward, united."

He accused Biden of campaigning as a moderate but becoming the most liberal president since Franklin D. Roosevelt. He said the administration forced through Congress "a COVID bill to fund massive expansion of the welfare state" and was pushing a "so-called infrastructure bill" that was really a "thinly disguised climate change bill" funded with cuts in the military and historic tax increases.

"I just say enough is enough," he said, adding that "we're going to stand strong for freedom."

Pence also hit upon several favorite themes of conservative Republicans, emphasizing the need for states to shore up voter integrity around the country. He praised law enforcement as heroes, saying: "Black lives are not endangered by police. Black lives are saved by police every day."

He also pushed back against "critical race theory," which seeks to reframe the narrative of American history.

Its proponents argue that federal law has preserved the unequal treatment of people on the basis of race and that the country was founded on the theft of land and labor. But Republicans have said concepts suggesting that people are inherently racist or that America was founded on racial oppression are divisive and have no place in the classroom.

"America is not a racist country," he said, prompting one of several standing ovations and cheers during his speech.

"It is past time for America to discard the left-wing myth of systemic racism," Pence said. "I commend state legislators and governors across the country for banning critical race theory from our schools."

His choice of states, including an April appearance in South Carolina, is aimed at increasing his visibility as he considers whether to run for the White House in 2024.

Trump is increasingly acting and talking like he plans to make a run as he sets out on a more public phase of his post-presidency, beginning with a speech on Saturday in North Carolina.

Since leaving office in January, Pence has been doing work with the Heritage Foundation and Young America's Foundation. His team said he plans more trips, including stops in Texas, California and Michigan.

Along with his visits to South Carolina and New Hampshire, Pence has been hitting the fundraising circuit. He is set to speak next week at another fundraiser hosted by House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, will travel to North Carolina for a Heritage Foundation donor event, and will then head to California, where he

will take part in the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute's speakers' series, a Republican National Committee donor retreat and a Young America's Foundation event, according to aides.

Among other prominent Republicans, former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley said in April that she would stand down if Trump decided to run in 2024. Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has undertaken an aggressive schedule, visiting states that will play a pivotal role in the 2024 primaries and signing a contract with Fox News Channel.

From the Beatles to Elton John: Oldest DJ's storied career

By ALICE FUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Ray Cordeiro considers himself the luckiest radio DJ in the world.

In a storied career spanning over 70 years in Hong Kong, Cordeiro has interviewed superstars including the Beatles and Elton John, and even received an MBE — an order of the British empire for outstanding achievement or service to the community — from Queen Elizabeth.

Cordeiro, who holds the Guinness world record for the world's longest-working DJ, retired last month at the age of 96.

"I've been talking all my life about music and all, and I'd never thought that I would retire. I never thought that I was getting older," he said.

Cordeiro was born in 1924 in Hong Kong and is of Portuguese descent. His musical tastes as a child were influenced by his brother who was 10 years older and collected records from groups like the Mills Brothers and the Andrews Sisters.

Back then records were breakable, Cordeiro said.

"When he's not home and I played his records, I had to be very, very careful, because if I broke it he would get awfully angry," Cordeiro said. "I grew up with his music."

In his youth, Cordeiro worked as a warden at a local prison and a clerk at an HSBC bank. His love for music eventually led him to pursue a career in radio, where he joined public broadcaster Radio Hong Kong, now known as Radio Television Hong Kong.

It was during a three-month study course in London with the BBC in 1964 that Cordeiro landed the interview that kickstarted his career — with the Beatles, the biggest band in the world at the time.

He had some free time after the end of the course before he had to return to Hong Kong and didn't want to "sit around for two weeks doing nothing."

"So I said, why don't I grab the chance of finding some peeps, some pop groups or singers that I can interview and bring back (tapes) to Hong Kong," he said.

During those two weeks, Cordeiro traveled to venues where groups were performing and interviewed them afterward.

The Beatles had become wildly popular and Cordeiro wanted to interview them the most. Armed with a notebook and a pen, he went to the offices of the band's record label, EMI, to ask for an interview with the group.

By a stroke of luck, he was told to return the next day for an interview, with EMI loaning him a tape recorder for it. He bought a magazine with a picture of the Beatles on the cover and took it with him to the interview, and got all the members to autograph it.

"Altogether I have some 26 signatures of all the Beatles, and it's probably worth a fortune," he said.

The interview was short because he didn't have a lot of tape in the tape recorder, but Cordeiro managed to spend time with each member of the Beatles. He said John Lennon recounted the Beatles' early days in Hamburg, Germany, where they lived in relative poverty and played in clubs.

He later interviewed the Beatles again when they visited Hong Kong. The interviews shot him to fame, and he quickly became Hong Kong's top DJ, armed with interviews he had conducted in London with the popular music groups at the time.

"I had a career before that, because I was interviewing local pop stars, but when you compare them to the Beatles it is something quite different," he said.

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As the city's most recognizable DJ, he also got to know other stars such as Elton John and Tony Bennett. Known for his deep, calm voice, flat cap and easy listening repertoire, Cordeiro garnered a loyal following of listeners who would tune in to his weekday radio show "All the Way with Ray," which ran from 1970 until last month.

"I fulfilled my work as a DJ, did what I had to do and the audience followed me, grew up with me, and they're all over the world now," he said. "They're all over and they still listened to me on the internet."

Asked if he were to do it all over again if he would pick being a DJ as a career, Cordeiro doesn't hesitate. "I don't think I have to actually think about it, the answer is yes," he said.

Oregon fall firestorms cautionary tale in worsening drought

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

OTIS, Ore. (AP) — Wildfire smoke was thick when Tye and Melynda Small went to bed on Labor Day, but they weren't too concerned. After all, they live in a part of Oregon where ferns grow from tree trunks and rainfall averages more than six feet (1.8 meters) a year.

But just after midnight, a neighbor awakened them as towering flames, pushed by gusting winds, bore down. The Smalls and their four children fled, leaving behind 26 pet chickens, two goldfish and a duck named Gerard as wind whipped the blaze into a fiery tornado and trees exploded around them.

When it was over, they were left homeless by a peril they had never imagined. Only two houses on their street in Otis survived a fire they expected to be tamped out long before it reached their door less than six miles (9.6 kilometers) from the Pacific.

"Nobody ever thought that on the Oregon coast we would have a fire like this. Here ... it rains. It rains three-quarters of the year," Melynda Small said. "It was one of the scariest things I've ever gone through."

The fire that leveled the rural community of 3,500 people was part of an Oregon wildfire season last fall that destroyed more than 4,000 homes, killed nine people and raged through 1.1 million acres (445,154 hectares). Almost all the damage occurred over a hellish 72 hours that stretched firefighters to their breaking point.

Pushed by unusually strong winds, fires ripped through temperate rainforest just a few minutes' drive from the ocean, crept to within 30 miles (48 kilometers) of downtown Portland, leveled thousands of homes and businesses along Interstate 5 and wiped out communities that cater to outdoors enthusiasts.

It was a wake-up call for the Pacific Northwest as climate change brings destructive blazes that feel more like California's annual fire siege to wet places and urban landscapes once believed insulated from them. And as the U.S. West enters yet another year of drought, Oregon is now starting fire season amid some of the worst conditions in memory.

The state weathered its driest April in 80 years, and in the normally wet months of March and April, it had the lightest rainfall since 1924. Several fires started this week, triggering evacuations and road closures as temperatures soared.

Marc Brooks, who founded Cascade Relief Team to help last fall's fire victims statewide, said by this April his group had been put on alert four times for wildfires at a time when "we should be getting snow, not drought."

The warming climate means snow on Oregon's famous peaks melts earlier, leaving soil and vegetation parched by late summer even if it does rain, said Erica Fleishman, director of the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute at Oregon State University.

Last fall's blazes were driven by "extremely rare" powerful, sustained winds, and in combination with the arid conditions, a major wildfire was almost inevitable, she said. "If we had a spark — and any time we have people, we have a spark — there was a high likelihood that a fire would ignite."

Fire on the Oregon coast isn't without precedent. A series of blazes starting in the 1930s scorched 355,000 acres (143,663 hectares) in what's known as the Tillamook Burn. In 1936, a wind-driven fire killed 10 people in the seaside town of Bandon.

But what happened last fall across western Oregon was extreme, said Larry O'Neill, Oregon's state

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climatologist.

The Cascade Mountains run north-south and separate the notoriously rainy part of the state to the west and the drier climate to the east, where fires usually burn in less populated areas. Last year multiple blazes raged in the western Cascades where "you think of it being a rainforest with ferns" and closer to population centers, O'Neill said.

"I thought we still had a generation or so to get our ducks in a row to prepare for this, and these last couple fire seasons here have been a huge wake-up call that we are experiencing it now," said O'Neill.

One fire in southwest Oregon obliterated thousands of homes in two towns along Interstate 5, and was unique for Oregon because it was fueled by houses, gas stations and fast-food restaurants — not forest, said Doug Grafe, head of the Oregon Department of Forestry.

"To lose the number of communities that we did was eye-opening," he said. "That's new ground for Oregon, but California was the canary in the coal mine."

Last fall, that new reality reshaped the Smalls' life — and the lives of hundreds of other Oregon residents — in just a few hours. The Echo Mountain Fire burned nearly 300 homes and displaced about 1,000 people.

Like many of their neighbors, the Smalls were underinsured and did not have wildfire coverage for their white house with green trim. They bounced around for weeks — an emergency evacuation site, camping by a stream and staying with relatives in Washington state.

An insurance payout of \$50,000 was not enough to buy a manufactured home big enough for their family. Eight months after the fire, the money goes to keep their kids in a single room at a local Comfort Inn, while the parents sleep in a borrowed trailer outside.

The family had two rooms paid for by the state, but when wildfire survivors were asked to move to a different motel, the Smalls decided to stay and pay their own way rather than uproot their family again. They said they didn't qualify for federal disaster assistance and that the pandemic cost Tye Small his job as a gas station attendant.

"Our 5-year-old, she had a really hard time. She kept saying ...'We need to go home. We need to feed the fish. We need to feed the chickens,'" Melynda Small said, gazing at her home's ruins. "And so we actually had to bring her here to show her that we didn't need to come feed the fish or feed the chickens."

Unsure of the future, the couple has filled days helping neighbors clear their properties and serving as cheerleaders for the devastated community while their children — ages 18, 15, 9 and 5 — do school work at the motel.

Every time a new manufactured home is delivered to a fire survivor, Melynda Small is there in her "Otis Strong" sweatshirt, beaming with excitement and taking photos for a community Facebook page. By her last tally, there are 38 new manufactured homes and six "stick builds" in progress.

This spring, pink tulips she had planted in front of her house, under the kitchen window, bloomed in the ashes.

"It's actually a lot of progress. It seems like it's been really fast, but it's been almost a year," she said. "I think the time is just going by faster for me because I've been so busy doing all of the other things, keeping my mind busy, my hands busy."

Heart reaction probed as possible rare vaccine link in teens

By LINDSEY TANNER and LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writers

Health authorities are trying to determine whether heart inflammation that can occur along with many types of infections could also be a rare side effect in teens and young adults after the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

An article on seven U.S. teen boys in several states, published online Friday in *Pediatrics*, is among the latest reports of heart inflammation discovered after COVID-19 vaccination, though a link to the vaccine has not been proven.

The boys, aged 14 to 19, received Pfizer shots in April or May and developed chest pain within a few days. Heart imaging tests showed a type of heart muscle inflammation called myocarditis.

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None were critically ill. All were healthy enough to be sent home after two to six days in the hospital and are doing "doing pretty well," said Dr. Preeti Jaggi, an Emory University infectious disease specialist who co-authored the report.

She said more follow-up is needed to determine how the seven fare but that it's likely the heart changes were temporary.

Only one of the seven boys in the Pediatrics report had evidence of a possible previous COVID-19 infection and doctors determined none of them had a rare inflammatory condition linked with the coronavirus.

The cases echo reports from Israel in young men diagnosed after receiving Pfizer shots.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention alerted doctors last month that it was monitoring a small number of reports of heart inflammation in teens and young adults after the mRNA vaccines, the kind made by Pfizer and Moderna.

The CDC hasn't determined if there's really a link to the shots, and continues to urge that everyone 12 and older get vaccinated against COVID-19, which is far riskier than the vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine is available to those as young as 12; the Moderna shot remains cleared only for adult use.

This kind of heart inflammation can be caused by a variety of infections, including a bout of COVID-19, as well as certain medications -- and there have been rare reports following other types of vaccinations.

Authorities will have to tease out whether cases following COVID-19 vaccination are occurring more often than that expected "background rate."

For now, the CDC says most patients were male, reported symptoms after the second dose, and their symptoms rapidly improved.

"I think we're in the waiting period where we need to see whether this is cause-and-effect or not," said John Grabenstein of the Immunization Action Coalition, a former director of the Defense Department's immunization program.

A Pediatrics editorial noted that among U.S. children under age 18, there have been over 4 million COVID-19 cases, more than 15,000 hospitalizations and at least 300 deaths.

It said the heart inflammation cases warrant more investigation but added that "the benefits of vaccination against this deadly and highly transmissible disease clearly far outweigh any potential risks."

Editorial co-author Dr. Yvonne Maldonado, head of an American Academy of Pediatrics infectious diseases committee, is involved in Pfizer vaccine studies, including a COVID-19 vaccine study in children.

Trump's grip on GOP sparks fears about democratic process

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

Seven months after Election Day, former President Donald Trump's supporters are still auditing ballots in Arizona's largest county and may revive legislation that would make it easier for judges in Texas to overturn election results.

In Georgia, meanwhile, the Republican-controlled state legislature passed a bill allowing it to appoint a board that can replace election officials. Trump loyalists who falsely insist he won the 2020 election are running for top election offices in several swing states. And after a pro-Trump mob staged a violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol to halt the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's election victory, Republicans banded together to block an independent investigation of the riot, shielding Trump from additional scrutiny of one of the darkest days of his administration.

To democracy advocates, Democrats and others, the persistence of the GOP's election denial shows how the Republican Party is increasingly open to bucking democratic norms, particularly the bipartisan respect traditionally afforded to election results even after a bitter campaign. That's raising the prospect that if the GOP gains power in next year's midterms, the party may take the extraordinary step of refusing to certify future elections.

"We have to face the facts that Republicans — obviously with exceptions — have become an authoritarian party," said Steven Levitsky, a Harvard political scientist and co-author of the book "How Democracies Die." "It's impossible to sustain a democracy in a two-party system when one of the parties is not willing

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to play by the rules of the game.”

Republicans have already offered a preview of how they might operate. On Jan. 6, the day of the Capitol riot, a majority of House Republicans voted to overturn Biden’s victories in Arizona and Pennsylvania. Biden still would have won an Electoral College victory without those states, but the move signaled how the traditionally ceremonial congressional certification process could be weaponized.

For his part, Trump continues to push Republicans to embrace his election lies. He’s criticized his former vice president, Mike Pence, for fulfilling his constitutional duty to preside over the congressional certification of Biden’s victory. And Trump has gone a step further recently by giving credence to a bizarre conspiracy theory that he could somehow be reinstated into the presidency in August, according to a longtime Trump ally who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

There’s no constitutional or legal mechanism for Trump to return to the presidency absent winning an election in 2024. Trump’s argument that the last election was tainted has been roundly rejected by federal and state officials, including his own attorney general and Republican election leaders. Judges, including those appointed by Trump, also dismissed his claims.

But Levitsky and others warn there are several weak points in the U.S. system where a political party could simply refuse to allow its opponent to formally win a presidential election.

“I’m more concerned about this now than I was on Jan. 7,” said Edward Foley, a law professor at The Ohio State University who studies election disputes. “It seems that, over the months, the lesson has not been ‘never again,’ but how to be more effective next time.”

Still, even critics of the former president and the election paranoia he spread in his party say it’s important not to blow risks out of proportion.

“This strikes me as being overblown,” said Trey Grayson, a former Kentucky secretary of state and a Republican who has been sharply critical of Trump’s election fraud claims.

Grayson said a comparable worry is that voting procedures have become a partisan issue like taxes and abortion, fomenting suspicion of election results. “Both sides are really amping up their rhetoric to amp up their bases,” Grayson said, acknowledging that “there’s clearly a lot more bad stuff going on on my side now.”

Nonetheless, democratically elected officials were able to withstand that “bad stuff” in 2020, despite Trump’s pressures. “When it came time for Republicans to do something in the 2020 election, most of those in power did the right thing,” said Rick Hasen, an election law expert at the University of California-Irvine.

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and Gov. Brian Kemp acknowledged Biden’s win and resisted Trump’s entreaties to overturn it. Republican Gov. Doug Ducey did the same in Arizona. And Mitch McConnell, who controlled the Senate on Jan. 6, gave a scorching speech condemning Trump’s efforts to overturn the election. Only a handful of Republican senators voted to reverse Biden’s victories in Arizona and Pennsylvania.

Still, Hasen said he doesn’t want to sugarcoat things. “There are a lot of warning signs,” he said. “It is a very dangerous moment for democracy.”

Trump has sought revenge against Republicans who didn’t back his attempt to overturn the election. He’s backed GOP primary challengers to Kemp and Raffensperger — the latter is being challenged by Rep. Jody Hice, whom Trump recruited into the race and who voted to overturn the election in the House of Representatives.

Georgia’s new elections bill strips Raffensperger of some of his election duties and gives the GOP-controlled state legislature the ability to replace local election officials. Arizona’s Republican-controlled legislature is pushing to strip Democratic Secretary of State Katie Hobbs of her ability to defend election lawsuits, and state Rep. Mark Finchem, who was at the Jan. 6 rally outside the Capitol and is a central proponent of the Arizona audit, is running for her position.

Levitsky said the United States’ complex electoral system stands out among international democracies by vesting oversight of elections in local, partisan officials. “We rely a lot on local officials, and if one party decides not to behave, we are in for a world of trouble,” he said.

Still, that system has worked for more than 200 years. “There are a lot of safeguards,” Grayson said.

"Now, we can blow through those safeguards and, if it comes down to one state like in 2000, you don't have all 50 safeguards."

Grayson also noted that voters make the final decision. The secretary of state candidates who argue Trump actually won in 2020 will have to win a Republican primary, then a general election to gain power. Congressional candidates may have to answer questions about whether they would seat a president of the opposite party.

"We are going to have these elections, and the voters are going to have to weigh in," Grayson said.

Biden's pledge on media freedom may be easier said than done

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One of the Biden Justice Department's first big moves has been to alert reporters at three major news organizations that their phone records were seized as part of leak investigations under the Trump administration, with President Joe Biden saying he would abandon the practice of spying on journalists.

But while Biden's stated commitment that his Justice Department won't seize reporters' phone records has won support from press freedom groups, it remains unclear if that promise can be kept, especially because Democratic and Republican administrations alike have relied on the tactic in an effort to track down leaks of classified information. His comment last month about what law enforcement should or should not do was all the more striking given Biden's pledge to uphold the tradition of an independent Justice Department.

"In this case, it seems bad policy to institute an absolute ban on logical investigative actions geared to finding out who violated the law, particularly in instances where the journalists themselves whose records may be at issue are not the subject or target of criminal investigation," said David Laufman, a former Justice Department official who led the section that oversaw investigations into leaks.

The Justice Department in recent weeks disclosed that federal investigators had secretly obtained call records of journalists at The Washington Post, The New York Times and CNN in an effort to identify sources who had provided national security information published in the early months of the Trump administration.

Past administrations also have struggled to balance the media's First Amendment newsgathering rights against government interests in safeguarding national security secrets. Inside the Justice Department, officials have on several occasions over the years revised internal guidelines to afford media organizations better protection without ever removing from their arsenal the prerogative to subpoena reporters' records.

Biden appears to be looking to change that.

He told a reporter last month that seizing journalists' records was "simply, simply wrong" and that the practice would be halted under his watch. After the most recent revelation — that the Justice Department in the Trump administration had secretly seized the phone records of four New York Times reporters — White House press secretary Jen Psaki reaffirmed the commitment to freedom of the press.

But she also said discussions with the Justice Department were still underway and that no new policy was ready to be announced.

Michael Weinstein, a former Justice Department prosecutor and criminal defense lawyer in New Jersey, said he understood Biden's comments as making clear his disdain for the practice without necessarily precluding the possibility that it could ever be used under any circumstances.

"I don't see that he's directing any specific case or that he's directing that an investigation take one path or another," Weinstein said. "He's simply putting forth priorities and procedures, which then the Justice Department has to modify its protocols as a result.

"I don't think he's saying you can never do it," he added. "I think he's saying the standards have to be higher."

The Justice Department says it has now concluded notifying the media organizations whose phone records were accessed. The latest revelation came Wednesday when The Times said it had learned that investigators last year secretly obtained records for four reporters during a nearly four-month period in 2017.

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The gap in time likely reflects that the Justice Department regards the seizure of phone records as a last resort when other avenues in a leak investigation have been exhausted. The department said the reporters are neither subjects nor targets of the investigation, but did not reveal which leak was under investigation.

The four reporters shared a byline on an April 2017 story that detailed the FBI's decision-making in the final stages of the Hillary Clinton email investigation. The story included classified information about a document obtained by Russian hackers that helped persuade then-FBI Director James Comey that he, not Attorney General Loretta Lynch, should be the one to announce that the investigation had concluded without criminal charges. His unusual July 2016 news conference, held at the FBI and without Lynch or other leaders, marked an extraordinary departure from protocol.

The Trump administration announced a crackdown on leaks in 2017 as part of an aggressive stance. In addition to the phone records seizures disclosed over the past month regarding the reporters, the department won guilty pleas from a former government contractor who mailed a classified report to a news organization and a former Senate committee aide who admitted lying to the FBI about his contacts with a reporter.

Psaki on Thursday said Trump administration officials had "abused their power" and that Biden was looking to turn the page. But the same intrusive tactics of the last four years were also employed during the Obama administration, which secretly seized phone records of Associated Press reporters and editors during a leak investigation in 2013 and also labeled a Fox News reporter a co-conspirator in a separate leak probe.

Amid blowback, former Attorney General Eric Holder announced guidelines for leak investigations that among other things required sign-off by the highest levels of the department for subpoenas of journalists' records.

But the department's ability to obtain those records under certain circumstances remained intact.

Jobs data to show whether worker shortages still slow hiring

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — With U.S. businesses scrambling to fill millions of jobs as the economy reopens much faster than many had expected, Friday's jobs report for May will help show whether their efforts are succeeding.

The fading of the pandemic has released substantial pent-up demand among consumers to eat out, travel, shop, attend public events and visit with friends and relatives. But it has also produced a disconnect between companies and the unemployed. Businesses are rushing to add workers immediately. Yet many of the unemployed are either seeking better jobs than they had before the pandemic, still lack affordable child care, worry about contracting COVID-19 or have decided to retire early.

That disconnect resulted in a sharp slowdown in hiring in April, when employers added far fewer jobs than economists had forecast and many fewer than had been hired in March.

Analysts have predicted an improvement for May, with 650,000 jobs added, compared with April's surprisingly tepid gain of 266,000. The unemployment rate is projected to fall from 6.1% to 5.9%, according to data provider FactSet. If the forecasts for May are accurate, that would still be a slower hiring pace than the 1 million jobs a month that many economists had envisioned in early spring. The economy still has 8.2 million fewer jobs than it did before the pandemic struck.

Either way, the economy is recovering at a healthy pace, and companies are still seeking workers: Job postings in late May were nearly 26% above pre-pandemic levels, according to the employment website Indeed. Government data shows that posted jobs have reached their highest level on record dating back to 2000.

And consumers are opening their wallets. In April, they increased their spending after a huge gain in March that had been fueled by the distribution of \$1,400 stimulus checks. With more Americans feeling comfortable about staying in hotels and visiting entertainment venues, spending on services jumped.

Service industries, including banking, retail, and shipping, expanded at the fastest pace on record in May.

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The evidence suggests that consumers have embarked on a long-anticipated shift away from the large goods purchases that many of them had made while hunkered down at home to spending on services, from haircuts to sporting events to vacation trips.

The speed and strength of the overall economy's recovery from the pandemic recession, boosted by federal rescue aid and rising vaccinations, have surprised just about everyone. The economy expanded last quarter at a robust 6.4% annual rate, and economists envision growth in the current quarter reaching a sizzling annual pace of 9% or more. All that growth has raised inflation fears. But for now, it has propelled demand for workers.

The number of people seeking unemployment aid has fallen for five straight weeks to its lowest level since the pandemic began, a sign that layoffs are dwindling. There are still 15 million people receiving either federal or state jobless aid, though that number has also declined from roughly 20 million in February.

Many businesses blame a \$300-a-week federal unemployment benefit for discouraging some of the jobless from taking work. Republican governors in 25 states have responded by cutting off that benefit prematurely, starting this month, before the benefits are scheduled to end nationally on Sept. 6.

Jed Kolko, chief economist at Indeed, found that the announcements of federal benefits being cut off sparked an increase in job-search activity in those states, such as clicking on job ads, though that increase faded after several days.

Becky Frankiewicz, president of the temporary staffing firm Manpower Group's North American division, said many of the firm's clients are raising pay and benefits to try to attract more applicants. Some of these companies, particularly in manufacturing and warehousing, are also trying other tactics, like paying their workers weekly or even daily, rather than every two weeks. Manpower is also encouraging its clients to make job offers the same day as an interview rather than waiting.

About 60% of Manpower's temporary placements are leaving their jobs before a temporary assignment ends, Frankiewicz said, mostly because they are receiving better offers.

"People have options," she said. "Companies have to offer speed in cash, speed to hire and a lot of flexibility in how they work."

For now, though, there are signs that many of the unemployed remain cautious about seeking jobs.

On Thursday, Tony Sarsam, CEO of SpartanNash, a grocery distributor and retailer, said on a conference call with investors that the company took part last month in a job fair with 60 companies that had 500 jobs to fill.

"Only four candidates showed up," Sarsam said.

Reports: Facebook to end rule exemptions for politicians

Associated Press undefined

Facebook plans to end a contentious policy championed by CEO Mark Zuckerberg that exempted politicians from certain moderation rules on its site, according to several news reports.

The company's rationale for that policy held that the speech of political leaders is inherently newsworthy and in the public interest even if it is offensive, bullying or otherwise controversial. The social media giant is currently mulling over what to do with the account of former President Donald Trump, which it "indefinitely" suspended Jan. 6, leaving it in Facebook limbo with its owners unable to post.

The change in policy was first reported by the tech site The Verge and later confirmed by the New York Times and the Washington Post.

Facebook has had a general "newsworthiness exemption" since 2016. But it garnered attention in 2019 when Nick Clegg, vice president of global affairs and communications, announced that speech from politicians will be treated as "newsworthy content that should, as a general rule, be seen and heard."

The newsworthiness exemption, he explained in a blog post at the time, meant that if "someone makes a statement or shares a post which breaks our community standards we will still allow it on our platform if we believe the public interest in seeing it outweighs the risk of harm."

This hasn't given politicians unlimited license, however. When Facebook suspended Trump in January,

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it cited "the risk of further incitement of violence" following the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol as the reason. The company says it has never used the newsworthiness exemption for any of Trump's posts. Facebook declined to comment.

China's silencing of Tiananmen tributes extends to Hong Kong

By ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — For years, China has quashed any discussion on the mainland of its bloody 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, nearly erasing what happened from the collective consciousness. Now it may be Hong Kong's turn, as China's ruling Communist Party pulls the city more directly into its orbit.

The semi-autonomous territories of Hong Kong and nearby Macao were for years the last places on Chinese soil allowed to publicly mark the events of June 4, 1989, when the People's Liberation Army opened fire on student-led protesters in a crackdown that left hundreds, if not thousands, dead.

Before last year, tens of thousands gathered annually in Hong Kong's Victoria Park, lighting candles and singing songs to remember the victims. But authorities, citing the coronavirus pandemic, banned the vigil for the second straight year and, on the morning of Friday's anniversary, arrested an organizer of it. A temporary museum dedicated to the event also suddenly closed this week, after authorities investigated it for lacking the necessary licenses to hold a public exhibition.

Hong Kong's security minister warned residents last week against taking part in unauthorized assemblies.

In mainland China, younger generations have grown up with little knowledge of or debate about the crackdown, but the efforts to suppress commemorations in Hong Kong reflect another turn of the screw in Beijing's ever-tightening control over Hong Kong following massive anti-government protests in 2019. Those demonstrations evolved into months of sometimes violent clashes between smaller groups of protesters and police. And they have led to a broader crackdown on dissent in the former British colony, which was long an oasis of capitalism and democracy and was promised that it would largely maintain its freedoms for 50 years when it was returned to China in 1997.

Since the protests, China has imposed a sweeping national security law aimed in part at stiffening the penalties for the actions that protesters engaged in, and authorities have sought to arrest nearly all of the city's outspoken and prominent pro-democracy figures. Most are either behind bars or have fled the city.

Despite the restrictions this year, there are calls for Hong Kongers to remember the 1989 crackdown in private, with vigil organizers calling on residents to light a candle at 8 p.m. Friday no matter where they are.

Online calls circulating on social media also urged residents to dress in black on Friday. Local newspaper Ming Pao last week published an article suggesting that residents write the numbers six and four on their light switches — a nod to the June 4 date — so each flip of the switch is also an act of remembrance.

For decades, Chan Kin Wing has regularly attended the vigil in Hong Kong.

"I was lucky to have been born in Hong Kong. If I had been born on the mainland, I could have been one of the students in Tiananmen Square that day," said Chan, whose parents had fled to Hong Kong from the mainland in the 1960s.

"When June 4, 1989, happened, all of Hong Kong witnessed the indelible historical event of students massacred by a corrupt regime," Chan said.

This year, Chan plans to remember the event privately, dressing in black and changing his profile picture on social media to an image of a lit candle in the dark.

"I've resolved to never forget about June 4, and strive to pass on memories of it to ensure it's never forgotten," he said.

In mainland China, the group Tiananmen Mothers that represents victims' relatives published an appeal on the Human Rights in China website urging the party to heed their long-held demands for a complete release of official records about the crackdown, compensation for those killed and injured, and for those responsible to be held to account.

"We look forward to the day when the CPC and the Chinese government can sincerely and courageously

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set the record straight and take up their due responsibility for the anti-human 1989 massacre in accordance with the law and the facts," the statement said.

The government, however, seems intent on running out the clock on such appeals.

While Tiananmen Mothers said 62 of its members have died since the group was founded in the late 1990s, many young Chinese, it said, have "grown up in a false sense of prosperous jubilation and enforced glorification of the government (and) have no idea of or refuse to believe what happened on June 4, 1989, in the nation's capital."

Hong Kong police on Friday detained a leader of the alliance that organizes the vigil and runs the museum that commemorated the event.

Chow Hang Tung had told The Associated Press in an interview last week that earlier arrests and convictions of prominent activists have had a chilling effect on those who participated in the vigil in the past.

"There will obviously be fear and people cannot just assume that they can come and express their remembrance for the Tiananmen massacre victims and be unscathed," said Chow, vice chair of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China.

She said that what keeps her going is the dream that China and Hong Kong can both have democracy one day. The tide, though, appears to be going in the other direction.

"This is something worth fighting for," she said. "If one day we cannot talk about Tiananmen that would signify that Hong Kong is totally assimilated into Chinese society."

US to swiftly boost global vaccine sharing, Biden announces

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden announced Thursday the U.S. will swiftly donate an initial allotment of 25 million doses of surplus vaccine overseas through the United Nations-backed COVAX program, promising infusions for South and Central America, Asia, Africa and others at a time of glaring shortages abroad and more than ample supplies at home.

The doses mark a substantial — and immediate — boost to the lagging COVAX effort, which to date has shared just 76 million doses with needy countries.

The announcement came just hours after World Health Organization officials in Africa made a new plea for vaccine sharing because of an alarming situation on the continent, where shipments have ground to "a near halt" while virus cases have spiked over the past two weeks.

Overall, the White House has announced plans to share 80 million doses globally by the end of June, most through COVAX. Officials say a quarter of the nation's excess will be kept in reserve for emergencies and for the U.S. to share directly with allies and partners.

Of the first 19 million donated through COVAX, approximately 6 million doses will go to South and Central America, 7 million to Asia and 5 million to Africa.

"As long as this pandemic is raging anywhere in the world, the American people will still be vulnerable," Biden said in a statement. "And the United States is committed to bringing the same urgency to international vaccination efforts that we have demonstrated at home."

U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said the U.S. "will retain the say" on where doses distributed through COVAX ultimately go.

But he also said: "We're not seeking to extract concessions, we're not extorting, we're not imposing conditions the way that other countries who are providing doses are doing. ... These are doses that are being given, donated free and clear to these countries, for the sole purpose of improving the public health situation and helping end the pandemic."

The remaining 6 million in the initial distribution of 25 million will be directed by the White House to U.S. allies and partners, including Mexico, Canada, South Korea, West Bank and Gaza, India, Ukraine, Kosovo, Haiti, Georgia, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, and Yemen, as well as for United Nations frontline workers.

The White House did not say when the doses would begin shipping overseas, but press secretary Jen Psaki said the administration hoped to send them "as quickly as we can logistically get those out the door."

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Vice President Kamala Harris informed some U.S. partners they will begin receiving doses, in separate calls with Mexican President Andres Manuel López Obrador, President Alejandro Giammattei of Guatemala, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Keith Rowley of Trinidad and Tobago. Harris is to visit Guatemala and Mexico in the coming week.

The long-awaited vaccine sharing plan comes as demand for shots in the U.S. has dropped significantly — more than 63% of adults have received at least one dose — and as global inequities in supply have become more pronounced.

Scores of countries have requested doses from the United States, but to date only Mexico and Canada have received a combined 4.5 million doses. The U.S. also has announced plans to share enough shots with South Korea to vaccinate its 550,000 troops who serve alongside American service members on the peninsula. White House COVID-19 coordinator Jeff Zients said that 1 million Johnson & Johnson doses were being shipped to South Korea Thursday.

The U.S. has committed more than \$4 billion to COVAX, but with vaccine supplies short — and wealthy nations locking up most of them — the greater need than funding has been immediate access to actual doses, to overcome what health officials have long decried as unequal access to the vaccines.

The U.S. action means “frontline workers and at-risk populations will receive potentially life-saving vaccinations” and bring the world “a step closer to ending the acute phase of the pandemic,” said Dr. Seth Berkley, CEO of Gavi, which is leading the COVAX alliance.

However, Tom Hart the acting CEO of The ONE Campaign, said that while Thursday’s announcement was a “welcome step, the Biden administration needs to commit to sharing more doses.

“The world is looking to the U.S. for global leadership, and more ambition is needed,” he said.

Biden has committed to providing other nations with all 60 million U.S.-produced doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, which has yet to be authorized for use in America but is widely approved around the world. The AstraZeneca doses have been held up for export by a weeks-long safety review by the Food and Drug Administration, and without them Biden will be hard pressed to meet his sharing goal.

The White House says the initial 25 million doses announced Thursday will be shipped from existing federal stockpiles of Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. More doses are expected to be made available to share in the months ahead.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said via Twitter that Harris had informed him before the White House announcement of the decision to send 1 million doses of the single jab Johnson & Johnson vaccine. “I expressed to her our appreciation in the name of the people of Mexico,” he wrote.

Guatemala’s Giammattei said Harris told him the U.S. government would send his country 500,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

As part of its purchase agreements with drug manufacturers, the U.S. controlled the initial production by its domestic manufacturers. Pfizer and Moderna are only now starting to export vaccines produced in the U.S. to overseas customers. The U.S. has hundreds of millions more doses on order, both of authorized and in-development vaccines.

The White House also announced that U.S. producers of vaccine materials and ingredients will no longer have to prioritize orders from three drugmakers working on COVID-19 shots that haven’t received U.S. approval — Sanofi, Novavax and AstraZeneca — clearing the way for more materials to be shipped overseas to help production there.

No ‘provoking’: Israeli official vows quieter tone with US

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

Israel’s visiting defense minister said Thursday that it will stay engaged as the U.S. tries to return to a nuclear deal with Iran, sidestepping what’s long been an area of open disagreement between the United States and the now-jeopardized government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Benny Gantz told reporters before a meeting with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin that Iran’s nuclear program and other actions were an “existential threat” to Israel. “Stopping Iran is certainly a shared stra-

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tegic need of the United States," Israel and other countries, Gantz said.

But on a visit that came as an opposition coalition back home tries to end Netanyahu's 12 years in power, Gantz — unlike Netanyahu — stopped short of openly opposing the Biden administration's efforts to get the United States back into a deal limiting Iran's nuclear program, in exchange for relief from sanctions.

Sitting across a table from his U.S. counterpart at the Pentagon, Gantz said, "Our dialogue is so important to ensuring that any deal effectively meets its goal of keeping Iran away from nuclear weapons."

"Of course, given the scope of the threat, Israel must always make sure that it has the ability to protect itself," Gantz added.

The Israeli official made clear the change in tone was purposeful. "We will continue this important strategic dialogue in private discussion ... only, not in the media in a provoking way," he said, calling for "open dialogue behind closed doors." It echoed Biden's own embrace of what the administration has called quiet diplomacy when dealing with Israel.

Netanyahu's years-long fight to torpedo the Iran nuclear deal — struck during the Obama administration in 2015, but rejected by President Donald Trump after his election — included Netanyahu denouncing it to a 2015 joint session of the U.S. Congress as a "very bad deal."

Netanyahu has continued that open opposition in recent days, saying a deal "paves the way for Iran to have an arsenal of nuclear weapons with international legitimacy" and that the fight against that was worth any "friction with our great friend the United States."

Biden has pressed for a return to the nuclear deal as the best way to keep Iran from building up what it says is a civilian nuclear program, and to calm a flashpoint in the Middle East. European negotiators expressed some optimism this week as they closed the latest round of talks in Vienna on getting the U.S. and Iran back in the deal.

Gantz also met with national security adviser Jake Sullivan and Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Gantz is part of the coalition pushing to unseat Netanyahu, and he is expected to remain in his post as defense minister if the government changes.

His meetings Thursday underscored U.S. security commitments to Israel as that country weathers its greatest domestic political upheaval in years and the aftermath of last month's war with Hamas militants in Gaza.

Gantz said he would lay out for administration officials a "complete plan" for a diplomatic end to hostilities with the Palestinians. He gave no details.

A key aim of Gantz's visit to Washington was believed to be securing U.S. funding to help restock Israel's Iron Dome, a sophisticated missile defense system that smacked down many of the rockets Hamas militants fired toward Israel last month. More than 260 people were killed, the vast majority Palestinians, in an 11-day war in which Israel struck targets in Hamas-ruled Gaza with hundreds of airstrikes while Hamas fired more than 4,000 rockets at Israel.

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, touring Israel this week in a show of support after the latest Gaza war, said he expected Israelis to seek up to \$1 billion from the U.S. for Iron Dome, including for restocking the system's interception missiles.

U.S. officials made no immediate announcements on funding. Austin noted Biden "has expressed his full support for replenishing Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system, which saved so many lives."

"We are committed to maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge and ensuring that Israel can defend itself," Austin added.

The U.S. partnership in Israel's Iron Dome has wide bipartisan support in Congress, as does overall U.S. support for Israel's defense, a tenet of U.S. foreign policy for decades. Last month's war, however — the fiercest Israeli-Palestinian fighting since 2014 — has exposed a rift in Biden's Democratic Party. Progressives and some others demanded a cease-fire by Israel as well as Hamas as Palestinian deaths grew in the crowded Gaza Strip.

Blinken told reporters before meeting with Gantz that Americans also were talking to him about getting aid in to Gaza to help rebuild housing and services damaged and destroyed in the fighting, in addition to discussing Israeli security.

COVID-19 spurs shutdown of 'Mission Impossible' set

LONDON (AP) — Paramount Pictures on Thursday temporarily shut down production on the British set of Tom Cruise's seventh "Mission: Impossible" film after someone tested positive for coronavirus.

"We have temporarily halted production on 'Mission: Impossible 7' until June 14th, due to positive coronavirus test results during routine testing," a Paramount spokesperson said in a statement. "We are following all safety protocols and will continue to monitor the situation."

The company provided no further details.

In December, Cruise launched an expletive-laden rant at colleagues on the "Mission: Impossible" set, after he reportedly spotted two crew members violating social distancing rules. In audio released by the Sun tabloid, Cruise can be heard warning that anyone caught not following the rules to stay at least 2 meters (more than 6.5 feet) away from others will be fired.

The film, which paused production for months early last year along with the rest of the film industry when the coronavirus pandemic took hold, is scheduled to be released in 2022.

Biden's pledge on media freedom may be easier said than done

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One of the Biden Justice Department's first big moves has been to alert reporters at three major news organizations that their phone records were seized as part of leak investigations under the Trump administration, with President Joe Biden saying he would abandon the practice of spying on journalists.

But while Biden's stated commitment that his Justice Department won't seize reporters' phone records has won support from press freedom groups, it remains unclear if that promise can be kept, especially because Democratic and Republican administrations alike have relied on the tactic in an effort to track down leaks of classified information. His comment last month about what law enforcement should or should not do was all the more striking given Biden's pledge to uphold the tradition of an independent Justice Department.

"In this case, it seems bad policy to institute an absolute ban on logical investigative actions geared to finding out who violated the law, particularly in instances where the journalists themselves whose records may be at issue are not the subject or target of criminal investigation," said David Laufman, a former Justice Department official who led the section that oversaw investigations into leaks.

The Justice Department in recent weeks disclosed that federal investigators had secretly obtained call records of journalists at The Washington Post, The New York Times and CNN in an effort to identify sources who had provided national security information published in the early months of the Trump administration.

Past administrations also have struggled to balance the media's First Amendment newsgathering rights against government interests in safeguarding national security secrets. Inside the Justice Department, officials have on several occasions over the years revised internal guidelines to afford media organizations better protection without ever removing from their arsenal the prerogative to subpoena reporters' records.

Biden appears to be looking to change that.

He told a reporter last month that seizing journalists' records was "simply, simply wrong" and that the practice would be halted under his watch. After the most recent revelation — that the Justice Department in the Trump administration had secretly seized the phone records of four New York Times reporters — White House press secretary Jen Psaki reaffirmed the commitment to freedom of the press.

But she also said discussions with the Justice Department were still underway and that no new policy was ready to be announced.

Michael Weinstein, a former Justice Department prosecutor and criminal defense lawyer in New Jersey, said he understood Biden's comments as making clear his disdain for the practice without necessarily precluding the possibility that it could ever be used under any circumstances.

"I don't see that he's directing any specific case or that he's directing that an investigation take one path

or another," Weinstein said. "He's simply putting forth priorities and procedures, which then the Justice Department has to modify its protocols as a result.

"I don't think he's saying you can never do it," he added. "I think he's saying the standards have to be higher."

The Justice Department says it has now concluded notifying the media organizations whose phone records were accessed. The latest revelation came Wednesday when The Times said it had learned that investigators last year secretly obtained records for four reporters during a nearly four-month period in 2017.

The gap in time likely reflects that the Justice Department regards the seizure of phone records as a last resort when other avenues in a leak investigation have been exhausted. The department said the reporters are neither subjects nor targets of the investigation, but did not reveal which leak was under investigation.

The four reporters shared a byline on an April 2017 story that detailed the FBI's decision-making in the final stages of the Hillary Clinton email investigation. The story included classified information about a document obtained by Russian hackers that helped persuade then-FBI Director James Comey that he, not Attorney General Loretta Lynch, should be the one to announce that the investigation had concluded without criminal charges. His unusual July 2016 news conference, held at the FBI and without Lynch or other leaders, marked an extraordinary departure from protocol.

The Trump administration announced a crackdown on leaks in 2017 as part of an aggressive stance. In addition to the phone records seizures disclosed over the past month regarding the reporters, the department won guilty pleas from a former government contractor who mailed a classified report to a news organization and a former Senate committee aide who admitted lying to the FBI about his contacts with a reporter.

Psaki on Thursday said Trump administration officials had "abused their power" and that Biden was looking to turn the page. But the same intrusive tactics of the last four years were also employed during the Obama administration, which secretly seized phone records of Associated Press reporters and editors during a leak investigation in 2013 and also labeled a Fox News reporter a co-conspirator in a separate leak probe.

Amid blowback, former Attorney General Eric Holder announced guidelines for leak investigations that among other things required sign-off by the highest levels of the department for subpoenas of journalists' records.

But the department's ability to obtain those records under certain circumstances remained intact.

Trump's grip on GOP sparks fears about democratic process

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

Seven months after Election Day, former President Donald Trump's supporters are still auditing ballots in Arizona's largest county and may revive legislation that would make it easier for judges in Texas to overturn election results.

In Georgia, meanwhile, the Republican-controlled state legislature passed a bill allowing it to appoint a board that can replace election officials. Trump loyalists who falsely insist he won the 2020 election are running for top election offices in several swing states. And after a pro-Trump mob staged a violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol to halt the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's election victory, Republicans banded together to block an independent investigation of the riot, shielding Trump from additional scrutiny of one of the darkest days of his administration.

To democracy advocates, Democrats and others, the persistence of the GOP's election denial shows how the Republican Party is increasingly open to bucking democratic norms, particularly the bipartisan respect traditionally afforded to election results even after a bitter campaign. That's raising the prospect that if the GOP gains power in next year's midterms, the party may take the extraordinary step of refusing to certify future elections.

"We have to face the facts that Republicans — obviously with exceptions — have become an authoritarian party," said Steven Levitsky, a Harvard political scientist and co-author of the book "How Democracies

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Die." "It's impossible to sustain a democracy in a two-party system when one of the parties is not willing to play by the rules of the game."

Republicans have already offered a preview of how they might operate. On Jan. 6, the day of the Capitol riot, a majority of House Republicans voted to overturn Biden's victories in Arizona and Pennsylvania. Biden still would have won an Electoral College victory without those states, but the move signaled how the traditionally ceremonial congressional certification process could be weaponized.

For his part, Trump continues to push Republicans to embrace his election lies. He's criticized his former vice president, Mike Pence, for fulfilling his constitutional duty to preside over the congressional certification of Biden's victory. And Trump has gone a step further recently by giving credence to a bizarre conspiracy theory that he could somehow be reinstated into the presidency in August, according to a longtime Trump ally who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

There's no constitutional or legal mechanism for Trump to return to the presidency absent winning another election in 2024. Trump's argument that the last election was tainted has been roundly rejected by federal and state officials, including his own attorney general and Republican election leaders. Judges, including those appointed by Trump, also dismissed his claims.

But Levitsky and others warn there are several weak points in the U.S. system where a political party could simply refuse to allow its opponent to formally win a presidential election.

"I'm more concerned about this now than I was on Jan. 7," said Edward Foley, a law professor at The Ohio State University who studies election disputes. "It seems that, over the months, the lesson has not been 'never again,' but how to be more effective next time."

Still, even critics of the former president and the election paranoia he spread in his party say it's important not to blow risks out of proportion.

"This strikes me as being overblown," said Trey Grayson, a former Kentucky secretary of state and a Republican who has been sharply critical of Trump's election fraud claims.

Grayson said a comparable worry is that voting procedures have become a partisan issue like taxes and abortion, fomenting suspicion of election results. "Both sides are really amping up their rhetoric to amp up their bases," Grayson said, acknowledging that "there's clearly a lot more bad stuff going on on my side now."

Nonetheless, democratically elected officials were able to withstand that "bad stuff" in 2020, despite Trump's pressures. "When it came time for Republicans to do something in the 2020 election, most of those in power did the right thing," said Rick Hasen, an election law expert at the University of California-Irvine.

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and Gov. Brian Kemp acknowledged Biden's win and resisted Trump's entreaties to overturn it. Republican Gov. Doug Ducey did the same in Arizona. And Mitch McConnell, who controlled the Senate on Jan. 6, gave a scorching speech condemning Trump's efforts to overturn the election. Only a handful of Republican senators voted to reverse Biden's victories in Arizona and Pennsylvania.

Still, Hasen said he doesn't want to sugarcoat things. "There are a lot of warning signs," he said. "It is a very dangerous moment for democracy."

Trump has sought revenge against Republicans who didn't back his attempt to overturn the election. He's backed GOP primary challengers to Kemp and Raffensperger — the latter is being challenged by Rep. Jody Hice, whom Trump recruited into the race and who voted to overturn the election in the House of Representatives.

Georgia's new elections bill strips Raffensperger of some of his election duties and gives the GOP-controlled state legislature the ability to replace local election officials. Arizona's Republican-controlled legislature is pushing to strip Democratic Secretary of State Katie Hobbs of her ability to defend election lawsuits, and state Rep. Mark Finchem, who was at the Jan. 6 rally outside the Capitol and is a central proponent of the Arizona audit, is running for her position.

Levitsky said the United States' complex electoral system stands out among international democracies by vesting oversight of elections in local, partisan officials. "We rely a lot on local officials, and if one party

decides not to behave, we are in for a world of trouble," he said.

Still, that system has worked for more than 200 years. "There are a lot of safeguards," Grayson said. "Now, we can blow through those safeguards and, if it comes down to one state like in 2000, you don't have all 50 safeguards."

Grayson also noted that voters make the final decision. The secretary of state candidates who argue Trump actually won in 2020 will have to win a Republican primary, then a general election to gain power. Congressional candidates may have to answer questions about whether they would seat a president of the opposite party.

"We are going to have these elections, and the voters are going to have to weigh in," Grayson said.

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Biden offers tax deal to Republicans in infrastructure talks

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

President Joe Biden is trying to break a logjam with Republicans on how to pay for infrastructure improvements, proposing a 15% minimum tax on corporations and the possibility of revenues from increased IRS enforcement as a possible compromise.

The offer was made Wednesday to Republican Sen. Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia as part of the bipartisan negotiations and did not reflect a change in Biden's overall vision for funding infrastructure.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Biden examined possible tax code changes from his plans that Republicans might support. The president concluded that a minimum corporate tax could provide some common ground.

"He looked to see what could be a path forward with his Republican colleagues on this specific negotia-

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tion," Psaki told reporters at a Thursday briefing. "This is a component of what he's proposed for a pay-for that he's lifting up as a question as to whether they could agree to that."

Biden has proposed increasing the corporate tax rate to 28% from 21% to help fund his plans for roads, bridges, electric vehicles and broadband internet, and that remains one of his preferred approaches. But the rate hike is a nonstarter with Republicans because it would undo the 2017 tax cuts signed into law by President Donald Trump.

By floating an alternative — there is no minimum corporate tax now on profits — Biden was trying to give Republicans a way to back infrastructure without violating their own red line of keeping corporate tax rates at their current level. The Washington Post first reported the offer.

On Thursday, Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said he spoke with Capito after the session and is "still hoping" to reach a deal with the administration. But he prefers the GOP approach that is eyeing a scaled-down package, paid for by tapping unspent COVID-19 relief funds, rather than taxes.

"Let's reach an agreement on infrastructure that's smaller but still significant, and fully paid for," he said in Paducah, Kentucky.

The president is essentially staking out the principle that profitable corporations should pay income taxes. Many companies can avoid taxes or minimize their bills through a series of credits, deductions and other ways of structuring their income and expenses.

The president has insisted that the middle class should not bear the cost of greater infrastructure spending. Yet a chasm exists in negotiations because Republicans say that corporate tax increases will hinder economic growth.

The idea of imposing a minimum corporate tax is not new for Biden, who proposed the policy during the presidential campaign last year, and that could turn off some Republicans. The center-right Tax Foundation estimated that a minimum tax would subtract 0.21% from long-run U.S. gross domestic product.

"He's been pushing it since the primaries over a year ago," said George Callas, managing director of government affairs for the law firm Steptoe and a former tax counsel to House Republicans. Callas said that the minimum tax would mostly hit firms such as electric utilities and telecoms that make substantial capital investments as well as companies that rely on paying their employees with stock.

At the same time, both Democrats and Republicans have eyed revenues that could come from stepped-up IRS enforcement of unpaid taxes. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., has suggested it could amount to some \$1 trillion, but others say the estimate is far lower.

Biden is seeking roughly \$1 trillion in infrastructure spending, down from an initial pitch of \$2.3 trillion. Republicans, so far, have countered with only \$257 billion in additional spending on infrastructure as part of a \$928 billion package. The GOP's new spending on infrastructure would be a fraction of what the president says is necessary to compete globally and boost economic growth.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said during a Thursday visit to Memphis, Tennessee, that both sides appeared to embrace "the principle that something on the order of \$1 trillion around the transportation side of things was appropriate."

Talks over Biden's top legislative priority have been moving slowly, a daunting undertaking given the massive infrastructure investment, and time for a deal is running out. The administration has set a Monday deadline to see clear direction and signs of progress.

Biden and Capito are set to meet again on Friday, though it's not clear if the meeting will be in-person.

Celebrity attorney F. Lee Bailey dead at 87

By MARK PRATT Associated Press

WALTHAM, Mass. (AP) — F. Lee Bailey, the celebrity attorney who defended O.J. Simpson, Patricia Hearst and the alleged Boston Strangler, but whose legal career halted when he was disbarred in two states, has died, a former colleague said Thursday. He was 87.

Bailey died at a hospital in the Atlanta area, according to Kenneth Fishman, Bailey's former law partner who went on to become a Superior Court judge in Massachusetts.

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Fishman did not disclose the cause of death but said Bailey had moved to Georgia about a year ago to be closer to one of his sons and had been dealing with several medical issues for the past few months.

"In many respects, he was the model of what a criminal defense attorney should be in terms of preparation and investigation," said Fishman, whose legal association and friendship with Bailey dates to 1975.

In a career that lasted more than four decades, Bailey was seen as arrogant, egocentric and contemptuous of authority. But he was also acknowledged as bold, brilliant, meticulous and tireless in the defense of his clients.

"The legal profession is a business with a tremendous collection of egos," Bailey said in an interview with U.S. News and World Report in September 1981. "Few people who are not strong egotistically gravitate to it."

Some of Bailey's other high-profile clients included Dr. Samuel Sheppard — accused of killing his wife — and Capt. Ernest Medina, charged in connection with the My Lai massacre during the Vietnam War.

Bailey, an avid pilot, best-selling author and television show host, was a member of the legal "dream team" that defended Simpson, the former star NFL running back and actor acquitted on charges that he killed his wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ron Goldman, in 1995.

In a tweet Thursday, Simpson said, "I lost a great one. F Lee Bailey you will be missed."

Bailey was the most valuable member of the team, Simpson said in a 1996 story in The Boston Globe Magazine.

"He was able to simplify everything and identify what the most vital parts of the case were," Simpson said. "Lee laid down what the case's strategy was, what was going to be important and what was not. I thought he had an amazing grasp of what was going to be the most important parts of the case, and that turned out to be true."

One of the most memorable moments of the trial came when Bailey cross-examined Los Angeles police Detective Mark Fuhrman in an attempt to portray him as a racist whose goal was to frame Simpson. It was classic Bailey.

Fuhrman denied using racial epithets, but the defense later turned up recordings of Fuhrman making racist slurs.

Even though Fuhrman remained cool under pressure, and some legal experts called the confrontation a draw, Bailey, recalling the exchange months later, said, "That was the day Fuhrman dug his own grave."

Bailey's latest book, "The Truth About the O.J. Simpson Trial: By The Architect of the Defense," was being released this month.

Bailey earned acquittals for many of his clients, but he also lost cases, most notably Hearst's.

Hearst, a publishing heiress, was kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army terrorist group on Feb. 4, 1974, and participated in armed robberies with the group. At trial, Bailey claimed she was coerced into participating because she feared for her life. She still was convicted.

Hearst called Bailey an "ineffective counsel" who reduced the trial to "a mockery, a farce, and a sham," in a declaration she signed with a motion to reduce her sentence. Hearst accused him of sacrificing her defense in an effort to get a book deal about the case.

She was released in January 1979 after President Jimmy Carter commuted her sentence.

Bailey made his name as the attorney for Sheppard, an Ohio osteopath convicted in 1954 of murdering his wife.

Sheppard spent more than a decade behind bars before the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a landmark 1966 decision that "massive, pervasive, prejudicial publicity" had violated his rights. Bailey helped win an acquittal at a second trial.

Bailey also defended Albert DeSalvo, the man who claimed responsibility for the Boston Strangler murders between 1962 and 1964. DeSalvo confessed to the slayings, but was never tried or convicted, and later recanted. Despite doubts thrown on DeSalvo's claim, Bailey always maintained that DeSalvo was the strangler.

Throughout his career, Bailey antagonized authorities with his sometimes abrasive style and his quest for

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publicity. He was censured by a Massachusetts judge in 1970 for "his philosophy of extreme egocentricity," and was disbarred for a year in New Jersey in 1971 for talking publicly about a case.

But publicity was part of his strategy, Fishman said.

"Enjoying the public eye became a tool for him," Fishman said. "He was one of the first lawyers to go outside the courtroom and talk in front of a bunch of microphones. All the news about a case was from the prosecution's side. So his strategy was to get out there and throw doubt on all the criminal charges."

Bailey was disbarred in Florida in 2001 and the next year in Massachusetts for the way he handled millions of dollars in stock owned by a convicted drug smuggler in 1994. He spent almost six weeks in federal prison charged with contempt of court in 1996 after refusing to turn over the stock. The experience left him "embittered."

He passed the bar exam in Maine in 2013, but was denied the right to practice by the state's highest court, which concluded that he had not demonstrated that he understood the seriousness of his actions that led to his disbarment in the other states.

Francis Lee Bailey was born in the Boston suburb of Waltham, the son of a newspaper advertising man and a schoolteacher.

He enrolled at Harvard University in 1950 but left at the end of his sophomore year to train to become a Marine pilot. He retained a lifelong love of flying and even owned his own aviation company.

While in the military, Bailey volunteered for the legal staff at the Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station in North Carolina, and soon found himself the legal officer for more than 2,000 men.

Bailey earned a law degree from Boston University in 1960, where he had a 90.5 average, but he graduated without honors because he refused to join the Law Review. He said the university waived the requirement for an undergraduate degree because of his military legal experience.

Bailey was married four times and divorced three. His fourth wife, Patricia, died in 1999. He had three children.

Drought saps California reservoirs as hot, dry summer looms

By ADAM BEAM Associated Press

OROVILLE, Calif. (AP) — Each year Lake Oroville helps water a quarter of the nation's crops, sustain endangered salmon beneath its massive earthen dam and anchor the tourism economy of a Northern California county that must rebuild seemingly every year after unrelenting wildfires.

But the mighty lake — a linchpin in a system of aqueducts and reservoirs in the arid U.S. West that makes California possible — is shrinking with surprising speed amid a severe drought, with state officials predicting it will reach a record low later this summer.

While droughts are common in California, this year's is much hotter and drier than others, evaporating water more quickly from the reservoirs and the sparse Sierra Nevada snowpack that feeds them. The state's more than 1,500 reservoirs are 50% lower than they should be this time of year, according to Jay Lund, co-director of the Center for Watershed Sciences at the University of California-Davis.

Over Memorial Day weekend, dozens of houseboats sat on cinderblocks at Lake Oroville because there wasn't enough water to hold them. Blackened trees lined the reservoir's steep, parched banks.

At nearby Folsom Lake, normally bustling boat docks rested on dry land, their buoys warning phantom boats to slow down. Campers occupied dusty riverbanks farther north at Shasta Lake.

But the impacts of dwindling reservoirs go beyond luxury yachts and weekend anglers. Salmon need cold water from the bottom of the reservoirs to spawn. The San Francisco Bay needs fresh water from the reservoirs to keep out the salt water that harms freshwater fish. Farmers need the water to irrigate their crops. Businesses need reservoirs full so people will come play in them and spend money.

And everyone needs the water to run hydroelectric power plants that supply much of the state's energy.

If Lake Oroville falls below 640 feet (195 meters) — which it could do by late August — state officials would shut down a major power plant for just the second time ever because of low water levels, straining the electrical grid during the hottest part of the summer.

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In Northern California's Butte County, low water prompts another emotion: fear. The county suffered the deadliest U.S. wildfire in a century in 2018 when 85 people died. Last year, another 16 people died in a wildfire.

Walking along the Bidwell Canyon trail last week, 63-year-old Lisa Larson was supposed to have a good view of the lake. Instead, she saw withered grass and trees.

"It makes me feel like our planet is literally drying up," she said. "It makes me feel a little unsettled because the drier it gets, the more fires we are going to have."

Droughts are a part of life in California, where a Mediterranean-style climate means the summers are always dry and the winters are not always wet. The state's reservoirs act as a savings account, storing water in the wet years to help the state survive during the dry ones.

Last year was the third driest on record in terms of precipitation. Temperatures hit triple digits in much of California over the Memorial Day weekend, earlier than expected. State officials were surprised earlier this year when about 500,000 acre feet (61,674 hectare meters) of water they were expecting to flow into reservoirs never showed up. One acre-foot is enough water to supply up to two households for one year.

"In the previous drought, it took (the reservoirs) three years to get this low as they are in the second year of this drought," Lund said.

The lake's record low is 646 feet (197 meters), but the Department of Water Resources projects it will dip below that sometime in August or September. If that happens, the state will have to close the boat ramps for the first time ever because of low water levels, according to Aaron Wright, public safety chief for the Northern Buttes District of California State Parks. The only boat access to the lake would be an old dirt road that was built during the dam's construction in the late 1960s.

"We have a reservoir up there that's going to be not usable. And so now what?" said Eric Smith, an Oroville City Council member and president of its chamber of commerce.

The water level is so low at Lake Mendocino, along the Russian River in Northern California, that state officials last week reduced the amount of water heading to 930 farmers, businesses and other junior water-rights holders.

"Unless we immediately reduce diversions, there is a real risk of Lake Mendocino emptying by the end of this year," said Erik Ekdahl, deputy director for the State Water Board's Division of Water Rights.

Low water levels across California will severely limit how much power the state can generate from hydroelectric power plants. When Lake Oroville is full, the Edward Hyatt Power Plant and others nearby can generate up to 900 megawatts of power, according to Behzad Soltanzadeh, chief of utility operations for the Department of Water Resources. One megawatt is enough to power between 800 and 1,000 homes.

That has some local officials worrying about power outages, especially after the state ran out of energy last summer during an extreme heat wave that prompted California's first rotating blackouts in 20 years. But energy officials say they are better prepared this summer, having obtained an additional 3,500 megawatts of capacity ahead of the scorching summer months.

The low levels are challenging for tourism officials. Bruce Spangler, president of the board of directors for Explore Butte County, grew up in Oroville and has fond memories of fishing with his grandfather and learning to launch and drive a boat before he could drive a car. But this summer, his organization has to be careful about how it markets the lake while managing visitors' expectations, he said.

"We have to be sure we don't promise something that can't be," he said.

Low lake levels haven't stopped tourists from coming yet. With coronavirus restrictions lifting across the state, Wright — the state parks official for Northern California — said attendance at most parks in his area is double what it normally is this time of year.

"People are trying to recreate and use facilities even more so (because) they know they are going to lose them here in a few months," he said.

US traffic deaths up 7% last year, highest number since 2007

DETROIT (AP) — U.S. traffic deaths rose 7% last year, the biggest increase in 13 years even though

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people drove fewer miles due to the coronavirus pandemic, the government's road safety agency reported Thursday.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration blamed the increase on drivers taking more risks on less-congested roads by speeding, failing to wear seat belts, or driving while impaired by drugs or alcohol.

An estimated 38,680 people died in traffic crashes last year, the most of any year since 2007, the agency said in releasing preliminary numbers. Final numbers normally come out in the fall.

The increase came even though the number of miles traveled by vehicle fell 13% from 2019.

Motorcyclist deaths rose 9% last year to 5,015, while bicyclist deaths were up 5% to 846. Pedestrian deaths remained steady at 6,205, and the number of people killed in passenger vehicles rose 5% to 23,395, according to NHTSA.

Deaths involving a large truck fell 2%, while traffic fatalities among people 65 and older fell 9%.

The agency said it has data showing that speeds increased through the year, and examples of extreme speeding became more common.

Preliminary data from the Federal Highway Administration shows that vehicle miles traveled fell by about 430.2 billion miles last year when compared with 2019. There were 1.37 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 2020, up from 1.11 deaths a year earlier.

'Next big wave': Radiation drugs track and kill cancer cells

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

Doctors are reporting improved survival in men with advanced prostate cancer from an experimental drug that delivers radiation directly to tumor cells.

Few such drugs are approved now, but the approach may become a new way to treat patients with other hard-to-reach or inoperable cancers.

The study tested an emerging class of medicine called radiopharmaceuticals, drugs that deliver radiation directly to cancer cells. The drug in this case is a molecule that contains two parts: a tracker and a cancer-killing payload.

Trillions of these molecules hunt down cancer cells, latching onto protein receptors on the cell membrane. The payload emits radiation, which hits the tumor cells within its range.

"You can treat tumors that you cannot see. Anywhere the drug can go, the drug can reach tumor cells," said Dr. Frank Lin, who had no role in the study but heads a division at the National Cancer Institute that helps develop such medicine.

Results were released Thursday by the American Society of Clinical Oncology ahead of its annual meeting this weekend. The study was funded by Novartis, the drug's maker, which plans to seek approvals in the United States and Europe later this year.

When cancer is confined to the prostate, radiation can be beamed onto the body or implanted in pellets.

But those methods don't work well in more advanced prostate cancer. About 43,000 men in the United States each year are diagnosed with prostate cancer that has spread and is no longer responding to hormone-blocking treatment.

The study tested a new way to get radiation treatment to such patients.

It involved 831 men with advanced prostate cancer. Two-thirds were given the radiation drug and the rest served as a comparison group. Patients got the drug through an IV every six weeks, up to six times.

After about two years, those who received the drug did better, on average. The cancer was kept at bay for nearly nine months compared to about three months for the others. Survival was better too — about 15 months versus 11 months.

The gain may not seem like much, but "these patients don't have many options," said ASCO president Dr. Lori Pierce, a cancer radiation specialist at the University of Michigan.

Radioactivity can reduce blood cell production, which can lead to anemia and clotting problems for patients. In the study, 53% of the patients had serious side effects compared to 38% of patients in the comparison group. Both groups were allowed to get other treatments.

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The results pave the way for government approval and will boost interest in radiation drugs, Lin said. Others already in use include Novartis' Lutathera for a rare type of cancer of the stomach and gut. And Bayer's Xofigo is approved for men whose prostate cancer has spread to the bone but not elsewhere. Xofigo targets areas where the body is trying to repair bone loss from tumor damage, but it isn't directly aimed at prostate cancer cells wherever they may be in the body.

Since the experimental drug targets tumor cells, "that would be a first for prostate cancer," Lin said. In the coming decade, such drugs "will be a major thrust of cancer research," said Dr. Charles Kunos, who worked on standards for radiopharmaceutical research at the National Cancer Institute before leaving to join University of Kentucky's Markey Cancer Center. "It will be the next big wave of therapeutic development."

"There's great potential" with drugs being tested for melanoma and breast, pancreatic and other cancers, said Dr. Mary-Ellen Taplin of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, who enrolled patients in the study and reviewed the data.

As for prostate cancer, "it opens up a range of future strategies," including at earlier stages of disease and alongside other treatments, said study leader Dr. Michael Morris of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

White-knuckle thriller for AMC as it sells stock into frenzy

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN and STAN CHOE AP Business Writers

Got your popcorn? The wild ride for the summer's blockbuster stock, AMC Entertainment, got even crazier on Thursday.

The movie-theater company's stock plunged nearly 40% in the morning after it announced plans to sell 11.6 million shares to raise cash, while warning buyers they could lose all their investment. But it erased the loss in just a few hours. After the stock sale was complete, it climbed above the record closing price it had set a day earlier, only to sink back to a 17.9% loss by the end of trading.

It's the latest stupefying, nearly unexplainable set of moves for one of the "meme stocks" that have rocked Wall Street this year. Many professional investors say AMC, GameStop and other meme stocks have hit heights untethered to reality and are primed for a steep fall, but that's not stopping an army of smaller-pocketed and novice investors from holding their ground and promising to take their prices "to the moon."

For AMC, that has vaulted its stock price from below \$2 early this year to the \$50.85 average price that it sold shares for on Thursday. The surge means its total market value climbed above \$30 billion, putting it on par with bigger companies like AutoZone and Old Dominion Freight Line, which unlike AMC are making profits and didn't have speculation of bankruptcy swirling around them after the pandemic shuttered theaters last year.

In a filing with regulators, AMC couldn't give a reason for the rise in its stock price that's tied to its profit prospects, the usual reason for a stock price to move. The company said it didn't know how long the reasons behind its stock surge will last, while warning investors: "Under the circumstances, we caution you against investing in our Class A common stock, unless you are prepared to incur the risk of losing all or a substantial portion of your investment."

The immediate reaction in the market was sour. AMC shares fell as soon as the market opened, and the plunge was so sharp that trading was temporarily halted three times during the morning. A day earlier, its trading had been halted four times when the stock was heading in the opposite direction and nearly doubled.

Other meme stocks also fell, including an 8.5% drop for GameStop. It was the poster child for the phenomenon early this year, when the struggling video-game retailer suddenly surged 1,625% in January. Back then, the maniacal moves for meme stocks shocked Wall Street, but many professional investors expected the fervor to peter out eventually.

Everyone agreed that a new generation of investors was seizing more power in the market, with their

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ranks growing because of easy-to-use trading apps and zero trading fees. But one big reason for the incoming wave of novices was that the pandemic had left them with little else to do.

When the pandemic eased, the thinking on Wall Street went, those traders would go back to eating out at restaurants, heading to bars and maybe even seeing movies at the theater instead of talking up and bidding up meme stocks.

It didn't play out that way, at least not yet. Meme stocks did lose momentum following their January supernova, but they began soaring again recently. AMC quintupled in the two weeks through Wednesday, for example. GameStop is back above \$250 after dropping from a peak of \$347 in late January to \$40 a few weeks later.

For their part, many retail investors said on the social media forums that have spurred the meme stocks' moves that they'll remain steadfast.

"We can stay irrational longer than they can stay solvent" was the title of one thread on Reddit's WallStreetBets forum, which has been a central character in the rise of meme stocks.

Other users were asking if BlackBerry would be the next stock of a company overly maligned by professional investors to pop. The company's stock careened from a 32% gain to a loss of 11% during Thursday morning trading. It ended the day with a gain of 4.1%.

They're just the latest in a cacophony of crazy swings for meme stocks. AMC's stock soared 95% Wednesday after it launched a program to share news with its newfound, massive base of fanatical shareholders. The new initiative will offer direct messages from the company's CEO to retail investors, as well as offer free screenings, discounts and a free large popcorn this summer.

The huge moves for meme stocks have caused some critics to warn of a dangerous bubble, with investors taking excessive risks across financial markets after the Federal Reserve slashed interest rates to record lows.

One encouraging part of all this, though, is that the most worrisome behavior seems to be rolling through different investments rather than inflating the entire market, said Yung-Yu Ma, chief investment strategist for BMO Wealth Management.

He pointed to what are known as "blank-check companies," which raise money and then hunt for companies to buy. Interest was exploding in these special-purpose acquisition companies early this year, but it's fallen off recently. He pointed to a similar rise and fall for some of the more obscure cryptocurrencies.

"I wouldn't say it's healthy for the market, but it's somewhat contained," Ma said.

He thinks interest in meme stocks will likewise peter out.

"What happens is you get successive groups of investors that get burned with these things" after seductive runs higher in price yield to sharp drops, he said. "Some people make money, but the ones late to the party get burned, and that's a recipe for fizzling out eventually."

Pill shows benefit in certain hard-to-treat breast cancers

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

A pill has been shown to help keep certain early-stage, hard-to-treat breast cancers at bay after initial treatment in findings being reported early because they are so promising.

Study results were released Thursday by the American Society of Clinical Oncology ahead of its annual meeting and published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The pill, called Lynparza, was found to help breast cancer patients with harmful mutations live longer without disease after their cancers had been treated with standard surgery and chemotherapy.

It was studied in patients with mutations in genes known as BRCA1 and BRCA2 that can predispose people to breast cancer if they don't work properly, but who did not have a gene flaw that can be targeted by the drug Herceptin.

Most patients in the study also had tumors that were not fueled by the hormones estrogen or progesterone. Cancers not fueled by these two hormones or by the gene Herceptin targets are called "triple negative." They are especially hard to treat.

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The new study tested Lynparza in 1,836 women and men with early-stage disease who were given the drug or placebo pills for one year after surgery and chemotherapy. About 82% of patients in the study had triple-negative breast cancer.

Independent monitors advised releasing the results after seeing clear benefit from Lynparza. After three years, 86% of patients on it were alive without their cancer recurring compared to 77% in the placebo group.

The results suggest more patients should get their tumors tested for BRCA mutations to help guide treatment decisions, said ASCO president Dr. Lori Pierce, a cancer radiation specialist at the University of Michigan.

Serious side effects were not more common with the drug. Other side effects included anemia, fatigue and blood cell count abnormalities.

Lynparza, which is marketed by AstraZeneca and Merck, is already sold in the United States and elsewhere for treating breast cancers that have widely spread and for treating certain cancers of the ovaries, prostate and pancreas. It costs roughly \$14,000 per month, though what patients pay out of pocket varies depending on income, insurance and other factors.

The study was supported by AstraZeneca and the National Cancer Institute.

Audio cut in speech on Black people's role in Memorial Day

HUDSON, Ohio (AP) — Organizers of a Memorial Day ceremony turned off a speaker's microphone when the former U.S. Army officer began talking about how freed Black slaves had honored fallen soldiers soon after the Civil War.

Retired Army Lt. Col. Barnard Kemter said he included the story in his speech because he wanted to share the history of how Memorial Day originated.

But organizers of the ceremony in Hudson, Ohio, said that part of the speech was not relevant to the program's theme of honoring the city's veterans.

Cindy Suchan, chair of the Memorial Day parade committee and president of the Hudson American Legion Auxiliary, said it was either she or Jim Garrison, adjutant of the American Legion Post 464, who turned down the audio, the Akron Beacon Journal reported.

The Ohio American Legion said Thursday that it was investigating.

"The American Legion deplores racism and reveres the Constitution," the organization's national commander, James W. "Bill" Oxford, said in a statement. "We salute LTC Kemter's service and his moving remarks about the history of Memorial Day and the important role played by Black Americans in honoring our fallen heroes. We regret any actions taken that detracts from this important message."

In the days before the ceremony, Suchan said she reviewed the speech and asked Kemter to remove certain portions. Kemter said he didn't see the suggested changes in time to rewrite the speech and talked with a Hudson public official who told him not to change it.

Kemter said he was disappointed that the organizers silenced two minutes of his 11-minute speech, during which he talked about how former slaves and freed Black men exhumed the remains of more than 200 Union soldiers from a mass grave in Charleston, South Carolina, and gave them a proper burial.

"This is not the same country I fought for," said Kemter, who spent 30 years in the Army and served in the Persian Gulf War.

The decision to turn off the audio disrespected Kemter and all veterans, Hudson's mayor and City Council said in a statement, which also said the city is committed to addressing issues of systemic racism and intolerance.

"Veterans have done everything we have asked of them during their service to this country, and this tarnished what should have been a celebration of their service," the statement said.

Johnny Gilbert, the voice of 'Jeopardy!', keeps going at 92

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Johnny Gilbert, who decided to stick with "Jeopardy!" after Alex Trebek's death,

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faced the wrenching question once again as production for next season neared.

This time it would mean adjusting to the quiz show's yet-to-be-named host, as opposed to the succession of celebrities who have been filling in since Trebek succumbed to pancreatic cancer last November.

"It's not easy for me because I worked with Alex for 37 years, and I never thought of anybody replacing him," he said. "Nobody can do it like he did it, you know."

No one does it like Gilbert either, who at age 92 has decided he's not ready to call it quits on the show business career he began pursuing as a teenager.

Last year, when he was reluctant to continue after losing his admired and longtime colleague, others with the show urged Gilbert to consider his role as a comforting touchstone for viewers who also were in mourning for Trebek.

"If you just listen to the way Johnny articulates each name, each word, he has a voice and even more importantly, delivery, unlike anyone else," said Mike Richards, the show's executive producer. Without Trebek, "the fact we can still rely on Johnny is obviously very important to us as well."

"This is 'Jeopardy!'" is Gilbert's richly booming introduction that opens each episode and belies his years. In turn, he's acknowledged with thanks from the host and, occasionally, has been shown at an otherwise off-camera stage perch.

During the pandemic, he's been taping his contributions remotely from the Los Angeles-area home he shares with his wife, Sheree Gilbert. They've been together for several more years than his "Jeopardy!" stint, the sort of marital and career longevity that's rare in Hollywood.

Born near Roanoke, Virginia, and raised in the coastal city of Newport News, Gilbert had something different in mind when he first dreamed of being an entertainer — singing — and his parents supported their only child's aspirations.

"I started taking voice lessons when I was still in high school, got a job with a little band and traveled around in that area for a while," he said. "That was the beginning of it all."

A winding path followed, one with bumps and byways that included military service, but Gilbert wasn't to be deterred. His advantages, besides an impressive vocal range: determination and a willingness to adapt to the work at hand.

He was 18 when a newspaper want-ad for a band singer sent him to Jacksonville, Florida. Turned out the act had already hit the road but instead of backtracking home, he searched out a local talent manager.

A club on the outskirts of town was looking for an emcee, the manager told Gilbert, who had to admit he was unfamiliar with the term. Master of ceremonies, explained the manager, who was undaunted when Gilbert said he had no experience.

"He taught me how to introduce people on the stage and take them off the stage," he recalled. He got the job and the opportunity to sing with the club band, a gig that lasted for about six weeks and set the pattern for his fledgling career.

It was America in the 1950s, dotted with nightclubs and supper clubs, and Gilbert made the most of the opportunities. He started in the South and worked "my way all across the country," he said.

The draft interrupted his career but not his stage work: Gilbert's talent was noticed and he was assigned to a U.S. Army special services entertainment unit in Germany.

He was back on the nightclub circuit post-service when an agent suggested to a delighted Gilbert that he give television a try. He started in New York with game shows including "Music Bingo," then moved to LA to host "Beat the Odds" and back again to New York as work dictated.

Among his many other TV credits are "The Joker's Wild," Dinah Shore's talk show "Dinah!" and "The \$25,000 Pyramid." Then the syndicated version of former network series "Jeopardy!" beckoned in 1984, with both co-creator Merv Griffin and Trebek in his corner, Gilbert said.

"So 37 years ago, Merv hired me to be the announcer on a show called 'Jeopardy!' for 13 weeks," he said.

Gilbert expressed reservations about whether the Sony Pictures Television series would bring him back when taping resumes in late July or early August for season 38. He's served as warm-up host for the studio audience as well as the show's announcer.

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"I'm not as young as I used to be," Gilbert said. But there is a tradition of longevity in the field, including the late Don Pardo of "Saturday Night Live." He was the show's voice for 38 seasons until his 2014 retirement at age 96.

"Jeopardy!" producer Richards, who'd stepped in as the show's first fill-in host, quickly brushed aside the notion that Gilbert's tenure was in anyone's hands but his own.

"Johnny will be the announcer of 'Jeopardy!' as long as he would like to be the announcer of 'Jeopardy!'" Richards said. "I have told him that, and it's just how he is, humble. He's never taken the job for granted."

Netanyahu foes push for quick vote to end his 12-year rule

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's opponents pushed Thursday for a quick parliament vote to formally end his lengthy rule, hoping to head off any last-minute attempts to derail their newly announced coalition government.

The latest political maneuvering began just hours after opposition leader Yair Lapid and his main coalition partner, Naftali Bennett, declared they had reached a deal to form a new government and muster a majority in the 120-member Knesset, or parliament.

The coalition consists of eight parties from across the political spectrum with little in common except the shared goal of toppling Netanyahu after his record-setting 12 years in power. The alliance includes hard-liners previously allied with Netanyahu, as well as center-left parties and even an Arab faction — a first in Israeli politics.

But the fragile coalition still faces a tough road ahead — it was not able to unseat the parliament speaker, a Netanyahu ally, later on Thursday and it remained unclear how events would play out over the next few days.

Netanyahu lashed out at his foes on Thursday, signaling that he will continue to exert pressure on former allies who joined the coalition. "All members of Knesset who were elected with right-wing votes need to oppose this dangerous leftist government," he wrote on Twitter.

Bennett, who is slated to become prime minister, has come under heavy pressure from Israeli hard-liners who accuse him of betrayal. He heads Yamina, a small right-wing party that appeals to religious, nationalist voters. But he has also said that all members of the emerging coalition will have to be flexible and pragmatic.

In a televised interview, Bennett said he would never agree to freeze construction in Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, which is seen by the Palestinians and much of the international community as a major obstacle to peace.

"There will be no freezes," he said, acknowledging the international community will push for one. "Look, there will be pressures. We will have to manage," he told Channel 12 TV.

"My attitude on this topic is to minimize the conflict. We will not solve it," he said, adding that it was more realistic to improve business ties and the quality of life for Palestinians.

Israel's political drama has riveted Israelis at a time when tumult has not been in short supply: four inconclusive elections in two years followed by an 11-day war in the Gaza Strip last month that was accompanied by mob violence between Jews and Arabs in cities across the country. The country also is emerging from the coronavirus crisis that caused deep economic damage and exposed tensions between the secular majority and the ultra-Orthodox minority.

Yet the political debate has focused squarely on Netanyahu, who is facing corruption charges — and whether he should stay or go.

"We never had a coalition like this," said Hillel Bar Sadeh at a coffee shop in Jerusalem. "We like to have a new spirit, we like to have some unity."

The owner of the coffee shop, Yosi Zarifi, said he trusts that Netanyahu will return to power — and distrusts the coalition.

"Everybody is clear that this trick will not last, there won't be any glue (to keep it together) here," he said.

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The anti-Netanyahu bloc announced the coalition deal just before a deadline at midnight Wednesday. The agreement triggered a complex process that is likely to stretch over the next week.

The coalition has a razor-thin majority of 61 votes in parliament. On Thursday, it attempted to replace parliament speaker Yariv Levin, in order to speed up the vote on the new government. But the effort failed after Nir Orbach, a lawmaker from Yamina, refused to sign on, underscoring the fragility of the alliance.

Levin can now use his position to delay the vote and give Netanyahu more time to sabotage the coalition.

As the coalition was coming together in recent days, Netanyahu and his supporters ramped up a pressure campaign against former hawkish allies, including Bennett and his No. 2 in the Yamina party, Ayelet Shaked.

Netanyahu accused them of betraying their values. His supporters launched vicious social media campaigns and staged noisy protests outside Shaked's home. The prime minister's Likud party also called for a demonstration Thursday night outside the home of Orbach, urging him to quit the coalition.

That's a taste of the pressure to be expected for lawmakers on the right.

"There will be a lot of pressure, especially on right-wingers, especially for religious right-wingers," said Gideon Rahat, a political science professor at Hebrew University. "They will go to the synagogue and people will pressure them. It will be a nightmare for some of them."

Under the coalition agreement, Lapid and Bennett will split the job of prime minister in a rotation. Bennett, a former ally of Netanyahu, is to serve the first two years, while Lapid is to serve the final two years — though it is far from certain their fragile coalition will last that long.

The historic deal also includes a small Islamist party, the United Arab List, which would make it the first Arab party ever to be part of a governing coalition.

EXPLAINER: Why and when do COVID-19 vaccines expire?

By The Associated Press undefined

How long do vaccines last?

That's now a critical question as the Biden administration prepares to send tens of millions of unused COVID-19 doses abroad to help curb the pandemic.

Some state officials have said in recent days that some unused doses may expire by the end of the month, and White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Thursday that looming expiration dates were a factor as the administration works to get the doses sent out as quickly as possible.

Many drugs and vaccines can last for years if stored properly, but all can eventually start losing effectiveness much like how food can degrade in a pantry. Vaccine providers keep an eye on the expiration dates that come with each batch, to ensure they're using up their supplies in time.

Expiration dates for vaccines are determined based on data the manufacturer submits to regulators proving how long the shots stay at the right strength, said former Food and Drug Administration vaccine chief Norman Baylor.

It's called a "potency assay," and it can vary by vaccine. Some vaccines, such as tetanus shots, typically last two years if properly stored.

Like many perishable items, COVID-19 vaccines remain stable longer at lower temperatures.

The vaccines authorized in the U.S., made by Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson, can last for up to about six months from the time of manufacture, depending on how they're stored.

But the COVID-19 vaccines are new, and those expiration dates eventually could be extended because the companies have continued to test samples of batches in the months since the shots first rolled out, Baylor explained.

Federal agency: Nevada flower near mine should be protected

By SCOTT SONNER Associated Press

RENO, Nev. (AP) — An extremely rare wildflower that grows only in Nevada's high desert where an Australian mining company wants to dig for lithium should be protected under the Endangered Species

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Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said Thursday.

The agency outlined its intention to propose listing Tiehm's buckwheat as a threatened or endangered species as part of its belated, 12-month review of a listing petition conservationists filed in 2019. A federal judge said last month the finding was six months overdue and ordered the agency to render a decision within weeks.

The conclusion announced on Thursday that federal protection is warranted could jeopardize Ioneer Ltd.'s plans to build the mine halfway between Reno and Las Vegas.

It also ups the ante in an early test of the Biden administration's ability to make good on promises to protect public lands and their native species while at the same time pursuing an ambitious clean energy agenda that includes bolstering production of lithium needed for electric car batteries.

Environmentalists say the delicate, 6-inch (15-centimeter) tall wildflower with yellow blooms is on the brink of extinction with fewer than 30,000 individual plants remaining.

Ioneer acknowledges Tiehm's buckwheat hasn't been documented anywhere else in the world but insists it can co-exist with the mine.

Nevertheless, the looming listing presents the biggest regulatory hurdle to date for what would be only the second large-scale lithium mine operating in the United States.

Under the court order, the service now has until Sept. 30 to submit a formal rule proposing protection of the plant as a threatened or endangered species. A 60-day public comment period will follow.

The Center for Biological Diversity first petitioned for federal listing in October 2019 and weeks later filed suit against the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to block construction of the mine at Rhyolite Ridge west of Tonopah in the Silver Peak Range about 20 miles (32 kilometers) east of the California line and 200 miles (322 km) southeast of Reno — where Tesla Motors' largest lithium battery factory is located.

"Tiehm's buckwheat shouldn't be wiped off the face of the earth by an open-pit mine," Patrick Donnelly, the center's Nevada director, said Thursday. "The service stepping in to save the plant from extinction is the right call."

Ioneer Managing Director Bernard Rowe said Thursday they expected the warranted finding and share the Fish and Wildlife Service's "commitment to protect and preserve Tiehm's buckwheat in its habitat."

"This process will provide greater certainty around our schedule and diminishes the prospect of future litigation," he said. "We remain confident that the science strongly supports the coexistence of our vital lithium operation and Tiehm's buckwheat."

The tiny population of Tiehm's buckwheat is found on 21 acres (8 hectares) spread across 3 square miles (7.8 square kilometers) at the mine site.

Scientists say the plant plays an integral role in the desert ecosystem by stabilizing soils, dispersing seeds and creating a sort of oasis that provides rare food and moisture for bees and other pollinators.

The service said a 2019 survey estimated the plant's global population totaled 43,921 — all at the mine site. But it said in Thursday's finding that an unprecedented rodent attack during severe drought last summer damaged or destroyed more than half the plants.

It said that herbivory combined with the potential impact from the mining project would reduce the flower's population by an estimated 70% to 88% — "or from 43,921 individuals to roughly 5,289-8,696 individuals."

Ioneer is proposing to salvage most of the remaining plants by transplanting them to another location, the service said.

"However, we are uncertain whether the salvage operation will succeed because current research indicates that Tiehm's buckwheat is a soil specialist, that adjacent unoccupied sites are not suitable for all early life-history stages, and there has been no testing and multiyear monitoring on the feasibility of successfully transplanting the species," the agency said.

Other threats to the plant include road-building, off-road travel, livestock grazing and climate change, the service said.

Ioneer says the mine would create 400 to 500 construction jobs and 300 to 400 operational jobs, and is expected to produce 22,000 tons (19,958 metric tons) of lithium — enough to power hundreds of thou-

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sands of electric vehicles annually.

Demand for lithium worldwide is expected to double by 2025. Much of the world's lithium supply currently comes from Australia and South America, where Chinese firms are heavily invested.

Boosting domestic production could potentially lower the price tag on a key component of President Joe Biden's \$2 trillion climate plan: offering rebates to consumers to trade in gas-powered for electric cars.

The only large-scale lithium mine currently operating in the U.S. is also in Nevada, only about 10 miles (16 kilometers) from where Ioneer proposes its mine. The North Carolina-based Albemarle's Silver Peak Mine has been in operation since the 1960s.

A third lithium mine proposed in north-central Nevada near the Oregon line at the largest known lithium deposit in the U.S. also is facing legal challenges.

Justice Department probing postmaster over fundraising

By ERIC TUCKER and ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department is investigating Postmaster General Louis DeJoy over political fundraising activity at his former business, a DeJoy spokesman said Thursday.

Federal authorities in recent weeks have subpoenaed DeJoy and interviewed current and former employees of DeJoy and his business, The Washington Post reported. Mark Corallo, a DeJoy spokesman, confirmed an investigation in a statement to The Associated Press.

"Mr. DeJoy has learned that the Department of Justice is investigating campaign contributions made by employees who worked for him when he was in the private sector. He has always been scrupulous in his adherence to the campaign contribution laws and has never knowingly violated them," Corallo said.

The agency declined to comment on news of the investigation.

DeJoy, a wealthy former logistics executive, has been mired in controversy since taking over the Postal Service last summer and putting in place policy changes that delayed mail before the 2020 election, when there was a crush of mail-in ballots.

Last year, DeJoy faced additional scrutiny after the newspaper reported that five people who worked for his former company, New Breed Logistics, said they were urged by aides of DeJoy or by DeJoy himself to write checks and attend political fundraisers at DeJoy's North Carolina mansion. Two former employees told the newspaper that DeJoy would later give bigger bonuses to reimburse for the contributions.

It's not illegal to encourage employees to contribute to candidates. It is illegal to reimburse them as a way of avoiding federal campaign contribution limits.

DeJoy, who has not been charged with a crime, denied he had repaid executives for contributing to President Donald Trump's campaign, amid questioning before a congressional committee last year.

Campaign finance disclosures show that between 2000 and 2014, when New Breed was sold, more than 100 employees donated a total of more than \$610,000 to Republican candidates supported by DeJoy and his family. He and his family have contributed more than \$1 million to Republican politicians.

A district attorney in Wake County, North Carolina, earlier this year decided not to pursue a criminal investigation into the allegations, saying the matter was out of her office's jurisdiction.

Corallo said DeJoy will cooperate with the investigation.

"Mr. DeJoy fully cooperated with and answered the questions posed by Congress regarding these matters. The same is true of the Postal Service Inspector General's inquiry which after a thorough investigation gave Mr. DeJoy a clean bill of health on his disclosure and divestment issues. He expects nothing less in this latest matter and he intends to work with DOJ toward swiftly resolving it," Corallo said.

Sponsors hail Naomi Osaka's 'courage' on mental health

By MAE ANDERSON and ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — A few years ago, a star athlete dropping out of a major tennis tournament over mental health issues might have been seen as a sign of weakness.

Today, at least for Naomi Osaka's corporate sponsors, it is being hailed as refreshingly honest.

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That would explain why so many of them have stuck by Osaka after the four-time Grand Slam champion announced Monday that she was withdrawing from the French Open because she didn't want to appear for the requisite news conferences that caused her "huge waves of anxiety."

Osaka, who also acknowledged suffering "long bouts of depression," received criticism by some who say the media events are just "part of the job." But Nike, Sweetgreen and other sponsors put out statements in support of the 23-year-old star after she revealed her struggles.

"Our thoughts are with Naomi," Nike said in a statement. "We support her and recognize her courage in sharing her own mental health experience." Sweetgreen tweeted that its partnership with Osaka "is rooted in wellness in all its forms." And Mastercard tweeted: "Naomi Osaka's decision reminds us all how important it is to prioritize personal health and well-being."

Allen Adamson, co-founder of marketing consultancy Metaforce, said that Osaka's disclosure has made her a more authentic spokesperson — and more valuable to corporate sponsors.

"Every athlete gets a sports sponsorship because they win games or perform well," he said. "But the best ones become true brand ambassadors when they have a broader persona. The best brand ambassadors are real people. (Osaka) is talking about an issue that is relevant to many people. Mental health is a bigger issue than winning or losing tennis."

Reilly Opelka, a 23-year-old American tennis player seeded 32nd at the French Open who plays his third-round match Friday, told The Associated Press he's glad Osaka "is taking time to get better."

"She's one of the best players in the world — she's very influential," Opelka said. "The sport needs her. She's an icon. It's bad for the sport to have one of the main attractions not around."

Osaka, who was born in Japan to a Japanese mother and Haitian father, moved to the United States with her family when she was 3, and now lives in Los Angeles.

She has taken a leading role in protesting the deaths last year of George Floyd and other Black people who died at the hands of the police, wearing a mask with a different victim's name on each match day at the 2020 U.S. Open. She was named the 2020 AP Female Athlete of the Year.

According to Forbes, Osaka is the world's highest-paid woman athlete, earning \$37 million in 2020 from blue-chip sponsors such as Tag Heuer, AirBnB, and Louis Vuitton in addition to Mastercard and Nike.

Nike has stood by sports stars after other controversies, including Tiger Woods after his 2009 sex scandal and former 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick after he knelt during games to protest police brutality against Black people. But it recently dropped Brazilian soccer star Neymar after he refused to cooperate with an internal investigation into sexual assault allegations from a Nike staffer.

Osaka's disclosure comes as celebrities and other public figures openly address their own issues with depression and anxiety. Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan Markle, shared their experiences in a televised interview with Oprah Winfrey and have since teamed with her to create a mental health focused series called "The Me You Can't See," in which Prince Harry talks about working through anxiety and grief.

Osaka also joins a growing list of top-tier athletes speaking out about mental health. Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps, NBA players Kevin Love and DeMar DeRozan, and the WNBA's A'ja Wilson have all spoken very publicly about their bouts with depression, sharing both the successes and setbacks.

The four Grand Slam tournaments reacted to Osaka's withdrawal by pledging to do more to address players' mental health issues. The episode also could serve as a tipping point for the professional tennis tours — and leagues in other sports — to safeguard athletes' mental, and not just physical, health, said Windy Dees, professor of sport administration at the University of Miami.

"It's absolutely a growth opportunity for the (Women's Tennis Association) and all leagues, there's a lot of work to be done," Dees said.

Marketing consultant Adamson believes Osaka's decision to come forward will encourage many more athletes to divulge their own mental health battles. He noted that if Osaka had revealed her bouts with depression 10 years ago, her corporate sponsors likely would have stayed on the sidelines because the issue had been taboo. But, he noted, the pandemic has raised awareness around mental illness.

From August 2020 to February, the percentage of adults with recent symptoms of an anxiety or a de-

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pressive disorder increased from 36.4% to 41.5%, according to a survey by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Census Bureau.

The survey also found the percentage of those reporting they didn't get the help they needed increased from 9.2% to 11.7%. Increases were largest among adults aged 18–29 years and those with less than a high school education.

Ken Duckworth, chief medical officer for the National Alliance On Mental Illness, said Osaka's decision to go public is a positive development for all people who feel isolated.

"We are moving from mental health and mental illness as a 'they' thing to a 'we' thing," he said. "These are ordinary common human problems. And I firmly believe that isolation and shame directly contributes to people not getting help. I look at a great athlete, an exceptional athlete, as one potential role model."

FDA warns doctors to stop using heart pump tied to deaths

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. health regulators warned surgeons Thursday to stop implanting a heart pump made by Medtronic due to power failures recently tied to cases of stroke and more than a dozen deaths.

Medtronic said earlier in the day it would stop selling its Heartware assist device, which is intended to boost blood circulation in patients with heart failure.

Recent company data showed the device can unexpectedly stop working and sometimes fail to restart, the Food and Drug Administration said. The company said it hasn't been able to pinpoint the root cause in every case.

Surgeons can use implants from other manufacturers, the FDA said in a memo to physicians.

About 4,000 people worldwide currently have the Medtronic device, roughly half of them in the U.S. For those patients, the agency said U.S. doctors should contact the company for the latest guidance on managing the device, which includes managing blood pressure.

The FDA said Medtronic halted sales after reviewing 100 reports of power failures with the device, which led to 14 patient deaths and 13 patients having it removed. The company previously issued recalls on some Heartware devices and components used when implanting it. In December, the company warned about power failures or delayed restarts with three lots.

The company said patients should not automatically have the device removed. Taking out recalled heart implants has to be carefully weighed against the potential risks of surgery. Medtronic said in a statement physicians should decide "on a case-by-case basis, considering the patients clinical condition and surgical risks." The company said it is preparing a guide for managing patients "who may require support for many years."

The Heartware device was used for heart failure patients awaiting transplant or as a permanent implant for those who weren't healthy enough for that procedure. The device helps strengthen one of the heart's lower chambers needed for adequate blood circulation.

Medtronic is one of the world's largest medical device and equipment makers, selling thousands of implants used to treat heart, neurological and joint conditions.

Talk of Trump 2024 run builds as legal pressure intensifies

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump was calling into yet another friendly radio show when he was asked, as he often is, whether he's planning a comeback bid for the White House. "We need you," conservative commentator Dan Bongino told the former president.

"Well, I'll tell you what," Trump responded. "We are going to make you very happy, and we're going to do what's right."

It was a noncommittal answer typical of a former president who spent decades toying with presidential runs. But multiple people who have spoken with Trump and his team in recent weeks say such remarks shouldn't be viewed as idle chatter. Instead, they sense a shift, with Trump increasingly acting and talk-

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ing like he plans to mount a run as he embarks on a more public phase of his post-presidency, beginning with a speech on Saturday in North Carolina.

The interest in another run, at least for now, comes as Trump has been consumed by efforts to undo last year's election, advancing baseless falsehoods that it was stolen and obsessing over recounts and audits that he is convinced could overturn the results, even though numerous recounts have validated his loss. He's also facing the most serious legal threat of his career.

New York prosecutors have convened a special grand jury to consider evidence in their criminal investigation into his business dealings — seen by many as a sign that Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. is moving toward seeking charges in the two-year, wide-ranging investigation that has included scrutiny of hush money payments, property valuations and employee compensation.

Trump has slammed the probe as "purely political," and those around him insist he isn't concerned about potential legal exposure even as they suggest his political posture is evolving.

"I have definitely picked up a shift that there's more of an intentionality to be leaning on the side of it's going to happen than it's not," said Matt Schlapp, chair of the American Conservative Union, who is close to the former president. "I think it's a very real possibility."

Trump would face daunting headwinds in addition to his legal vulnerabilities. He would run with the legacy of being the only American president to be impeached twice. A campaign would almost certainly revive memories of the deadly insurrection he helped spark at the U.S. Capitol earlier this year, potentially dragging down other Republicans who have sought to move past the violence.

Beyond that, Trump would be 78 years old on Inauguration Day in 2025 — the same age as Democrat Joe Biden on his own Inauguration Day this year — and multiple Republicans are already making moves for runs of their own. Trump's former vice president, Mike Pence, is slated to visit the early voting state of New Hampshire on Thursday.

Trump has long dangled the prospect of presidential campaigns to gin up media attention and stay part of the conversation. And many had initially brushed off Trump's talk of another run as a tool to maintain relevance and his status as a GOP kingmaker. But there are tentative signs that he plans to follow through in more substantive ways to test his political strength, including by holding rallies this summer. His team is eyeing events in Ohio, Florida, Alabama and Georgia to bolster midterm candidates and energize voters.

Allies say Trump misses the office and is eager to return to the action — especially as he sees other potential candidates making moves. He has also felt emboldened by some recent developments, including the ouster of one of his chief critics, Republican Rep. Liz Cheney, from her House leadership position. And some see the presidency as offering potentially useful legal shelter as probes into him and his family business intensify.

"There's a continued, enduring interest and folks encouraging him to run in 2024, but he's in no rush to make a decision. And he'll do that at the appropriate time," said Trump spokesperson Jason Miller.

There is doubt, however, among some in Trump's orbit that he will move forward unless he sees a clear path to victory, for fear of being stained by another loss.

For now, Trump remains obsessed with the 2020 election. One longtime ally said one reason Trump has not said he's running outright is because he has refused to acknowledge the election is over. The person said he's now going a step further by giving credence to a bizarre conspiracy theory that he could somehow be reinstated into the presidency in August.

There's no constitutional or legal mechanism for Trump to return to the presidency absent winning another election in 2024. Trump's argument that the last election was tainted has been roundly rejected by federal and state officials, including his own attorney general and Republican election leaders. Judges, including those appointed by Trump, also dismissed his claims.

The person who described his thinking, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

Florida Sen. Rick Scott, chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, told The Associated Press on Thursday that he had not discussed the "August conspiracy" with Trump in their recent conversations.

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"Joe Biden is the duly elected president of the United States. We follow the Constitution in this country," he said. "Joe Biden is the president of the United States. We went through the electoral votes, we went through that whole process, and Joe Biden is the president."

As Trump advances such baseless conspiracy theories, Republican state legislators are pushing what experts say is an unprecedented number of bills aimed at restricting access to the ballot box that could affect future elections. While Republicans say the goal is to prevent voter fraud, Democrats contend the measures are aimed at undermining minority voting rights.

Trump remains a commanding force in the Republican Party, despite his loss. A recent Quinnipiac University national poll found that 66% of Republicans would like to see him run for reelection, though the same number of Americans overall said they would prefer he didn't — and there is no evidence that he has grown any more popular since losing by more than 7 million votes last November.

Supporters in early-voting states are anticipating another Trump run, even as a long list of other would-be contenders, including former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Arkansas Sen. Tom Cotton, have been making visits.

"He's definitely laying the groundwork, keeping his powder dry for a run," Josh Whitehouse, a former member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives who worked for Trump's campaign and administration, said of the former president. "I'd expect nothing less, knowing who he is and having worked for him for so long."

While voters will certainly hear out other candidates, he said that, at the end of the day, support will coalesce around Trump if he decides to run.

"The energy's still there," Whitehouse said. "You can't replicate it."

Slow to start, China now vaccinating at a staggering pace

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — In the span of just five days last month, China gave out 100 million shots of its COVID-19 vaccines.

After a slow start, China is now doing what virtually no other country in the world can: leveraging the power and all-encompassing reach of its one-party system and a maturing domestic vaccine industry to administer shots at a staggering pace. The rollout is far from perfect, including uneven distribution, but Chinese public health leaders now say they're hoping to inoculate 80% of the population of 1.4 billion by the end of the year.

As of Wednesday, China had given out more than 704 million doses — with nearly half of those in May alone. China's total is roughly a third of the 1.9 billion shots distributed globally, according to Our World in Data, an online research site.

The call to get vaccinated comes from every corner of society. Companies offer shots to their employees, schools urge their students and staffers, and local government workers check on their residents.

That pressure underscores both the system's strength, which makes it possible to even consider vaccinating more than a billion people this year, but also the risks to civil liberties — a concern the world over but one that is particularly acute in China, where there are few protections.

"The Communist Party has people all the way down to every village, every neighborhood," said Ray Yip, former country director for the Gates Foundation in China and a public health expert. "That's the draconian part of the system, but it also gives very powerful mobilization."

China is now averaging about 19 million shots per day, according to Our World in Data's rolling seven-day average. That would mean a dose for everyone in Italy about every three days. The United States, with about one-quarter of China's population, reached around 3.4 million shots per day in April when its drive was at full tilt.

It's still unclear how many people in China are fully vaccinated — which can mean anywhere from one to three doses of the vaccines in use — as the government does not publicly release that data.

Zhong Nanshan, the head of a group of experts attached to the National Health Commission and a

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prominent government doctor, said on Sunday that 40% of the population has received at least one dose, and the aim was to get that percentage fully vaccinated by the end of the month.

In Beijing, the capital, 87% of the population has received at least one dose. Getting a shot is as easy as walking into one of hundreds of vaccination points found all across the city. Vaccination buses are parked in high foot-traffic areas, including in the city center and at malls.

But Beijing's abundance is not shared with the rest of the country, and local media reports and complaints on social media show the difficulty of getting an appointment elsewhere.

"I started lining up that day at 9 in the morning, until 6 p.m., only then did I get the shot. It was exhausting," Zhou Hongxia, a resident of Lanzhou, in northwestern Gansu province, explained recently. "When I left, there were still people waiting."

Zhou's husband hasn't been so lucky and has yet to get a shot. When they call the local hotlines, they are told simply to wait.

Central government officials on Monday said they're working to ensure supply is more evenly distributed.

China has even focused on vaccinating its citizens abroad, donating vaccines to Thailand, some of which were used to inoculate its nationals before most Thais received their doses. Globally, it has vaccinated more than 500,000 overseas citizens under what it calls the "Spring Sprout" program.

Before the domestic campaign ramped up in recent weeks, many people were not in a rush to get vaccinated as China has kept the virus, which first flared in the country, at bay in the past year with strict border controls and mandatory quarantines. It has faced small clusters of infections from time to time, and is currently managing one in the southern city of Guangzhou.

Although there are distribution issues, it is unlikely that Chinese manufacturers will have problems with scale, according to analysts and those who have worked in the industry.

Sinovac and Sinopharm, which make the majority of the vaccines being distributed in China, have both aggressively ramped up production, building brand new factories and repurposing existing ones for COVID-19. Sinovac's vaccine and one of the two Sinopharm makes have received an emergency authorization for use from the World Health Organization, but the companies, particularly Sinopharm, have faced criticism for their lack of transparency in sharing their data.

"What place in the world can compare with China on construction? How long did it take our temporary hospitals to be built?" asked Li Mengyuan, who leads pharmaceutical research at Western Securities, a financial firm. China built field hospitals at the beginning of the pandemic in just days.

Sinovac has said it has doubled its production capacity to 2 billion doses a year, while Sinopharm has said it can make up to 3 billion doses a year. But Sinopharm has not disclosed recent numbers of how many doses it actually has made, and a spokesman for the company did not respond to a request for comment. Sinovac has produced 540 million doses this year as of late May, the company said on Friday.

Government support has been crucial for vaccine developers every step of the way — as it has in other countries — but, as with everything, the scope and scale in China is different.

Yang Xiaoming, chairman of Sinopharm's China National Biotec Group, recounted to state media recently how the company initially needed to borrow lab space from a government research center while it was working on a vaccine.

"We sent our samples over, there was no need to discuss money, we just did it," he said.

Chinese vaccine companies also largely do not rely on imported products in the manufacturing process. That's an enormous benefit at a time when many countries are scrambling for the same materials and means China can likely avoid what happened to the Serum Institute of India, whose production was hobbled because of dependence on imports from the U.S. for certain ingredients.

But as the availability of the vaccine increases so, too, can the pressure to take it.

In Beijing, one researcher at a university said the school's Communist Party cell calls him once a month to ask him if he has gotten vaccinated yet, and offers to help him make an appointment.

He has so far declined to get a shot because he would prefer the Pfizer vaccine, saying he trusts its data. He spoke on condition of anonymity because of concerns he could face repercussions at his job at a government university for publicly questioning the Chinese vaccines.

China has not yet approved Pfizer for use, and the researcher is not sure how long he can hold out — although the government has, for now, cautioned against making vaccines mandatory outright.

“They don’t have to say it is mandatory,” Yip, the public health expert, said. “They’re not going to announce that it’s required to have the vaccine, but they can put pressure on you.”

Peruvians to pick new president amid relentless pandemic

By REGINA GARCIA CANO and FRANKLIN BRICENO Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Amid an unrelenting coronavirus pandemic that has overwhelmed cemeteries, Peruvian voters will choose Sunday between a political novice who has scared business by promising to overhaul the key mining industry and a career politician whose father is a former president jailed for corruption and human rights violations.

The polarizing runoff election between rural teacher Pedro Castillo and Keiko Fujimori, making her third run for the presidency, comes on the heels of the Peruvian government’s admission that the death toll of the pandemic is at least 2.5 times higher than previously acknowledged. The jump brings the estimated death toll to more than 180,000 in a country with about one-tenth the population of the United States.

Polls have shown the two candidates virtually tied heading into Sunday’s runoff. In the first round of voting, featuring 18 candidates, neither received more than 20% support and both are strongly opposed by sectors of Peruvian society, leading some to label the choice as between the lesser of two evils.

While Castillo’s stance on nationalizing key sectors of the economy has softened, he remains committed to rewriting the constitution that was approved under the regime of Fujimori’s father and his rivals have compared his leftist policies to those of late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

Fujimori, a conservative former congresswoman, has been imprisoned as part of a graft investigation though she was later released. Her father, former President Alberto Fujimori, governed between 1990 and 2000 and is serving a 25-year sentence for corruption and the killings of 25 people. She has promised to free him should she win.

“She is the daughter of a corrupt man who supports everything bad that her father did,” said homemaker Mirian Ortiz during a protest against Fujimori in the capital of Lima. Some protesters shouted “Fujimori never again” and others carried portraits of people who disappeared during Alberto Fujimori’s government.

The challenges awaiting whoever takes office July 28 cannot be overestimated.

Among Latin American countries, only Brazil and Mexico have reported higher death tolls from COVID-19 and both have much larger populations. Peru’s vaccination campaign has seen meager progress, and the pandemic has already pushed 3 million more people into poverty.

The winner will also face a divided Congress that likely will make it difficult to pass legislation and may not even allow him or her to finish their term in office. In November, Peru had three presidents in a single week after one was impeached by Congress over corruption allegations and protests forced his successor to resign.

“Both candidates are certainly not suitable, considering the challenges the country will face,” said Claudia Navas, an analyst with the global firm Control Risks.

“We will not see a light at the end of the tunnel with regards to the management of the pandemic or the complex political environment because they will have several things against them, starting with a fragmented Congress. Fujimori will face opposition on the streets, Castillo will face opposition from the (country’s) institutions. I mean, they will be quite alone,” Navas said.

Few expected Castillo to make it this far. The son of illiterate peasants, he went on to complete a degree in educational psychology at Peru’s César Vallejo University. He still lives in the country’s third-poorest district, deep in the Andes, and until recently was a rural schoolteacher. He entered politics by leading a teachers strike.

While Fujimori’s father was a political outsider when he won office, she grew up in the halls of power. She attended Boston University and got a master’s from Columbia University in the United States. She later served as first lady during her father’s last six years in office.

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Peru is the second largest copper exporter in the world and mining accounts for almost 10% of its GDP and 60% of its exports, so Castillo's initial proposal to nationalize the nation's mining industry set off alarm bells.

But after advancing to the runoff, Castillo moved away from his nationalization proposal and recently has pitched renegotiating contracts with mining companies.

Fujimori, in turn, has promised an "additional contribution" from the mining sector to finance irrigation and reservoirs in rural communities where it operates. She has also pledged to distribute 40% of a tax on mining, oil and gas extraction among poor families in those areas.

Meanwhile, Castillo said he will collect the largest state debts held by powerful groups in the mining, financial, telecommunications and airline industries. The 158 largest debts total more than \$2.4 billion, according to government data.

Both have promised COVID-19 vaccines for all Peruvians.

The country has tallied more than 1.9 million coronavirus cases and has only fully vaccinated about 3.7% of its 32.5 million residents, according to data from the Johns Hopkins University.

So many people have died since the pandemic began that some have been buried in clandestine graves in areas surrounding cemeteries that have run out of space. People's anger over the government's mismanagement of the pandemic only heightened when an official document revealed that hundreds of wealthy and well-connected individuals, including a former president, were secretly vaccinated.

Noam Lupu, associate director of the Latin American Public Opinion Project at Vanderbilt University, said the lack of stable coalitions for the winner may result in the new president trying to govern alone, testing the powers of the presidency, while the threat of impeachment may push him or her to undermine the country's institutions to be able to remain in office.

"I think there's a lot of concern about the sort of ideological extremism of the two candidates," Lupu said. "Obviously, Keiko Fujimori is the daughter of the former dictator, so, there's a concern about her commitment to democracy and the corruption scandals surrounding her. And on the other side, Pedro Castillo is quite unknown to a lot of people, we don't know a lot about him, but his statements are certainly far to the left ideologically and also not reassuring in terms of commitment to democracy. Again, it's not clear who is the bigger threat."

US jobless claims drop to 385,000, another pandemic low

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell last week for a fifth straight week to a new pandemic low, the latest evidence that the U.S. job market is regaining its health as the economy further reopens.

The Labor Department reported Thursday that jobless claims dropped to 385,000, down 20,000 from the week before. The number of weekly applications for unemployment aid, which generally reflects the pace of layoffs, has fallen steadily all year, though it remains high by historical standards.

The decline in applications reflects a swift rebound in economic growth and the job market's steady recovery from the coronavirus recession. More Americans are venturing out to shop, travel, dine out and congregate at entertainment venues. All that renewed spending has led companies to seek new workers.

Employers have added 1.8 million jobs this year — an average of more than 450,000 a month — and the government's May jobs report on Friday is expected to show that they added an additional 656,000 last month, according to a survey of economists by the data firm FactSet. The economy remains down 8.2 million jobs from its level in February 2020, just before the virus tore through the economy.

AnnElizabeth Konkel, economist at the Indeed Hiring Lab, noted that the number of people who are collecting traditional state unemployment benefits rose by 169,000 in the week of May 22 to nearly 3.8 million.

"Reviving a labor market after a deadly pandemic is complicated," she said. "Not all indicators move at the same speed or take the same recovery path. Hopefully, the COVID-19 cases continue to decline as the number of fully vaccinated individuals rises. Fully returning to pre-COVID normal is essential to a full

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labor market recovery.”

In the meantime, U.S. employers are posting a record number of available jobs. And many of them have complained that they can't find enough workers to meet rising customer demand.

Job growth slowed sharply in April compared with March, a pullback that was widely attributed to a labor shortage in some industries, especially at restaurants and other employers in the hospitality sector.

At least 25 states have responded by announcing plans to cut off some emergency federal aid to the unemployed — including a \$300-a-week federal benefit — as early as next week. Critics argue that the extra federal unemployment aid, on top of regular state jobless benefits, discourages some of the jobless from seeking work.

Weekly applications for unemployment aid, which topped 900,000 in early January, have fallen steadily all year, though they remain high by historical standards: Before COVID-19 all but paralyzed the economy in March 2020, claims were regularly coming in below 230,000 a week.

In the week that ended May 15, a total of 15.4 million people were receiving some form of jobless aid, including special federal programs to aid the unemployed during the pandemic. That was down from 15.8 million the previous week. That figure has steadily declined from about 20 million in December.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, June 4, the 155th day of 2021. There are 210 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 4, 1919, Congress approved the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which said that the right to vote could not be denied or abridged based on gender. The amendment was sent to the states for ratification.

On this date:

In 1812, the Louisiana Territory was renamed the Missouri Territory, to avoid confusion with the recently admitted state of Louisiana. The U.S. House of Representatives approved, 79-49, a declaration of war against Britain.

In 1912, Massachusetts became the first state to adopt a minimum wage law.

In 1939, the German ocean liner MS St. Louis, carrying more than 900 Jewish refugees from Germany, was turned away from the Florida coast by U.S. officials.

In 1940, during World War II, the Allied military evacuation of some 338,000 troops from Dunkirk, France, ended. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill declared: "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender."

In 1942, the World War II Battle of Midway began, resulting in a decisive American victory against Japan and marking the turning point of the war in the Pacific.

In 1972, a jury in San Jose, California, acquitted radical activist Angela Davis of murder and kidnapping for her alleged connection to a deadly courthouse shootout in Marin County in 1970.

In 1977, the VHS home videocassette recorder was introduced to North America by JVC during a press conference in Chicago.

In 1985, the Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling striking down an Alabama law providing for a daily minute of silence in public schools.

In 1986, Jonathan Jay Pollard, a former U.S. Navy intelligence analyst, pleaded guilty in Washington to conspiring to deliver information related to the national defense to Israel. (Pollard, sentenced to life in prison, was released on parole on Nov. 20, 2015.)

In 1989, a gas explosion in the Soviet Union engulfed two passing trains, killing 575.

In 1990, Dr. Jack Kevorkian carried out his first publicly assisted suicide, helping Janet Adkins, a 54-year-

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old Alzheimer's patient from Portland, Oregon, end her life in Oakland County, Michigan.

In 1998, a federal judge sentenced Terry Nichols to life in prison for his role in the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

Ten years ago: China's Li Na captured her first Grand Slam singles title, becoming the first tennis player from China to achieve such a feat; Na beat Francesca Schiavone 6-4, 7-6 (0) in the French Open final. Former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, 80, died in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Five years ago: A day after the death of Muhammad Ali, President Barack Obama said the boxing legend "shook up the world and the world is better for it," and that Ali stood with Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela in fighting for what was right. Hillary Clinton scored a sweeping win in the U.S. Virgin Islands, picking up all seven pledged delegates at stake as she inched tantalizingly close to the Democratic nomination. Garbine Muguruza (GAHR'-been-yuh MOO'-guh-roo-sah) won her first Grand Slam title by beating defending champion Serena Williams 7-5, 6-4 at the French Open.

One year ago: In the first of a series of memorials set for three cities over six days, celebrities, musicians and political leaders gathered in front of George Floyd's golden casket in Minneapolis. Protesters stayed on the streets of New York City after curfew for another day. Major cities across California lifted curfews amid more peaceful demonstrations over Floyd's death. In an incident captured by a TV news crew, a 75-year-old protester, Martin Gugino, fell and hit his head on the pavement after being pushed backward by two police officers in Buffalo, New York, who were clearing demonstrators from in front of City Hall. (Gugino spent about a month in the hospital with a fractured skull and a brain injury; the officers were suspended without pay, but criminal charges against them were eventually dropped.) Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam said a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee would be removed from Richmond's Monument Avenue, and that the state would no longer "preach a false version of history." Casinos in Las Vegas and throughout Nevada reopened for the first time since March. A judge rejected Ponzi king Bernard Madoff's bid for early release from his 150-year prison sentence. (Madoff died in prison in April 2021.)

Today's Birthdays: Sex therapist and media personality Dr. Ruth Westheimer is 93. Actor Bruce Dern is 85. Musician Roger Ball is 77. Actor-singer Michelle Phillips is 77. Jazz musician Anthony Braxton is 76. Rock musician Danny Brown (The Fixx) is 70. Actor Parker Stevenson is 69. Actor Keith David is 65. Blues singer-musician Tinsley Ellis is 64. Actor Eddie Velez is 63. Singer-musician El DeBarge is 60. Actor Julie White is 60. Actor Lindsay Frost is 59. Actor Sean Pertwee is 57. Former tennis player Andrea Jaeger is 56. Opera singer Cecilia Bartoli is 55. R&B singer Al B. Sure! is 53. Actor Scott Wolf is 53. Actor-comedian Rob Huebel is 52. Comedian Horatio Sanz is 52. Actor James Callis is 50. Actor Noah Wyle is 50. Rock musician Stefan Lessard (The Dave Matthews Band) is 47. Actor-comedian Russell Brand is 46. Actor Angelina Jolie is 46. Actor Theo Rossi is 46. Alt-country singer Kasey Chambers is 45. Actor Robin Lord Taylor is 43. Rock musician JoJo Garza (Los Lonely Boys) is 41. Model Bar Refaeli (ruh-FEHL'-lee) is 36. Olympic gold medal figure skater Evan Lysacek is 36. Americana singer Shakey Graves is 34. Rock musician Zac Farro is 31.