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## Alex Throws Shutout As Groton Legion Post #39 Defeats W.I.N.

Alex Morris had all the right stuff on Sunday for Groton Legion Post #39, allowing zero runs and besting W.I.N. by a score of 8-0

Groton Legion Post #39 secured the victory thanks to five runs in the fourth inning. Groton Legion Post #39 big bats were led by Jace Kroll, Pierce Kettering, Darien Shabazz, and Morris, who all drove in runs.

Groton Legion Post #39 put up five runs in the fourth inning. Groton Legion Post #39's big bats in the inning were led by a single by Shabazz, a fielder's choice by Kroll, an error on a ball put in play by Kettering, and a double by Morris.

A double by Josh M in the second inning was a positive for W.I.N..

Morris took the win for Groton Legion Post #39. The righthander went five innings, allowing zero runs on two hits, striking out 12 and walking zero.

Ashton R took the loss for W.I.N.. Ashton went three innings, allowing three runs on four hits, striking out six and walking one.

Morris went 2-for-3 at the plate to lead Groton Legion Post #39 in hits. Groton Legion Post #39 didn't commit a single error in the field. Kettering had the most chances in the field with 12.

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## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

## Kaitlin O'Neill Crowned Miss South Dakota 2021

June 6, 2021, Brookings, SD – Kaitlin O'Neill, whose hometown is Groton, was crowned Miss South Dakota 2021 Saturday night. In addition to her scholarship of \$8,000 for winning the competition, O'Neill was a preliminary talent winner Thursday evening (\$1,000), and on-stage interview winner on Friday (\$500.) She was also the overall interview winner (\$500) and took home the state community service Award (\$1,000).

O'Neill's platform is "Bloom - Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, Healthy You." Her talent was a contemporary ballet to Bad Guy by Eklipse. She is the daughter of Robin O'Neill and Steve O'Neill and competed as Miss Dakota Plains. O'Neill graduated from Minnesota State University-Mankato, with majors in dance and marketing.

First runner-up was Hunter Widvey of Rapid City, garnering a \$4,000 scholarship. Widvey also won the \$1,000 preliminary talent award Friday night.

Second runner-up was Annie Woodmansey of Pierre. In addition to her scholarship award of \$2,000, she received the Quality of Life scholarship and the Sylvia Tannehill Kindness scholarship, each for \$1,000.

Third runner-up was Miranda O'Brian, taking home a scholarship of \$1,500, in addition to the \$500 award

for preliminary on-stage interview and social initiative pitch on Thursday.

Fourth runner-up and winner of a \$1,200 scholarship was Margaret Samp, Sioux Falls. In addition, she received the Ray Peterson "Rookie of the Year" award of \$500 for being the top-placing first-time candidate.

Rounding out the top eight semi-finalists were Carly Goodhart of Sisseton, who also won a \$750 STEM Scholarship, Sylvie Larson of Harrisburg, and Maleah Eschembaum of Aberdeen.

Courtney Remick, Prior Lake, MN, won the most talented non-semi-finalist (\$300 scholarship) as well as a \$750 STEM Scholarship. Emma Salzwedel of Sioux Falls was voted Miss Congeniality by her fellow contestants (\$500 scholarship). Baylee Dittman had the top interview for a non-semi-finalist (\$300 scholarship.)

Fifteen women from across the state competed for the title. All won scholarships, totalling nearly \$35,000.

Kaitlin O'Neill will compete at the Miss America Pageant at the Mohegan Sun resort in Connecticut, December 2021.

###



**Miss South Dakota 2019/2020 Amber Hulse crowns Miss South Dakota 2021, Kaitlin O'Neill.** (Courtesy Photo)

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**Miss South Dakota and her court: 3rd runner-up Miranda O'Bryan, 2nd runner-up Annie Woodmansey, Miss South Dakota 2021 Kaitlin O'Neill, 1st runner-up Hunter Widvey, 4th runner-up Margaret Samp.** (Courtesy Photo)

## Patients Deserve Clarity

I was sitting in my beach chair on vacation soaking up the sun when I overheard the couple next to me sounding concerned. They were throwing out lots of big medical terms but were very confused and said that they did not understand anything that they read on this MRI report. I turned to them, apologized for eavesdropping, and introduced myself as a physician. I offered to “translate” what the radiologist report said, and they gladly accepted.

Their problem was not a lack of information. They had access to the patient portal and were able to download the MRI report and the physician’s notes. All this information was written in medical terms, acronyms, and shorthand with a few words in Latin and Greek sprinkled in. What they lacked was clarity and understanding.

So, I sat there on the beach and translated the report into layman’s terms. The family was grateful, and I was happy to help ease their minds. This was not what I had planned to do on this beautiful day at the beach, but it was rewarding to be able to use my knowledge and skills to help them get some clarity. However, it was disheartening that they had to rely on help from a stranger who happened to overhear their discussion about arteriovenous fistula.

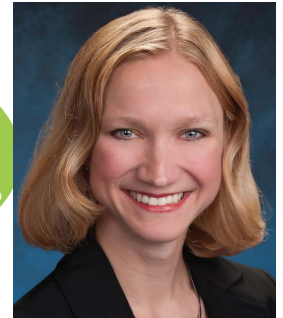
The medical record is written by doctors to communicate to other doctors and is full of terms and jargon that are not used by most people. Having access to this information is good, but when taken out of context or the relationship of a visit with a physician, information can cause more confusion and unnecessary anxiety.

To quote Takeda Shingen, “Knowledge is not power, it is only potential. Applying that knowledge is power. Understanding why and when to apply that knowledge is wisdom!” Years of medical school, residency, and continuing medical education help doctors gain knowledge, understanding, and hopefully, the wisdom to communicate effectively with our patients.

A worthy health care team welcomes and encourages questions, eager to give you the best information possible. We want you to know what is going on with your health, and to fully understand what all the labs and tests mean.

If you ever feel like this family on the beach, my recommendation is to contact your physician or health care provider and ask for more time to discuss your health status. Doctors on the beach everywhere will thank you, as we relax and enjoy our time with our family knowing that your family is well taken care of.

Jill Kruse, D.O. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices family medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org) and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



By Jill Kruse, DO ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

# 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 \***

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Day shift  
and night  
shift  
assemblers!

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

**To apply:  
[www.uslbm.com/careers](http://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.

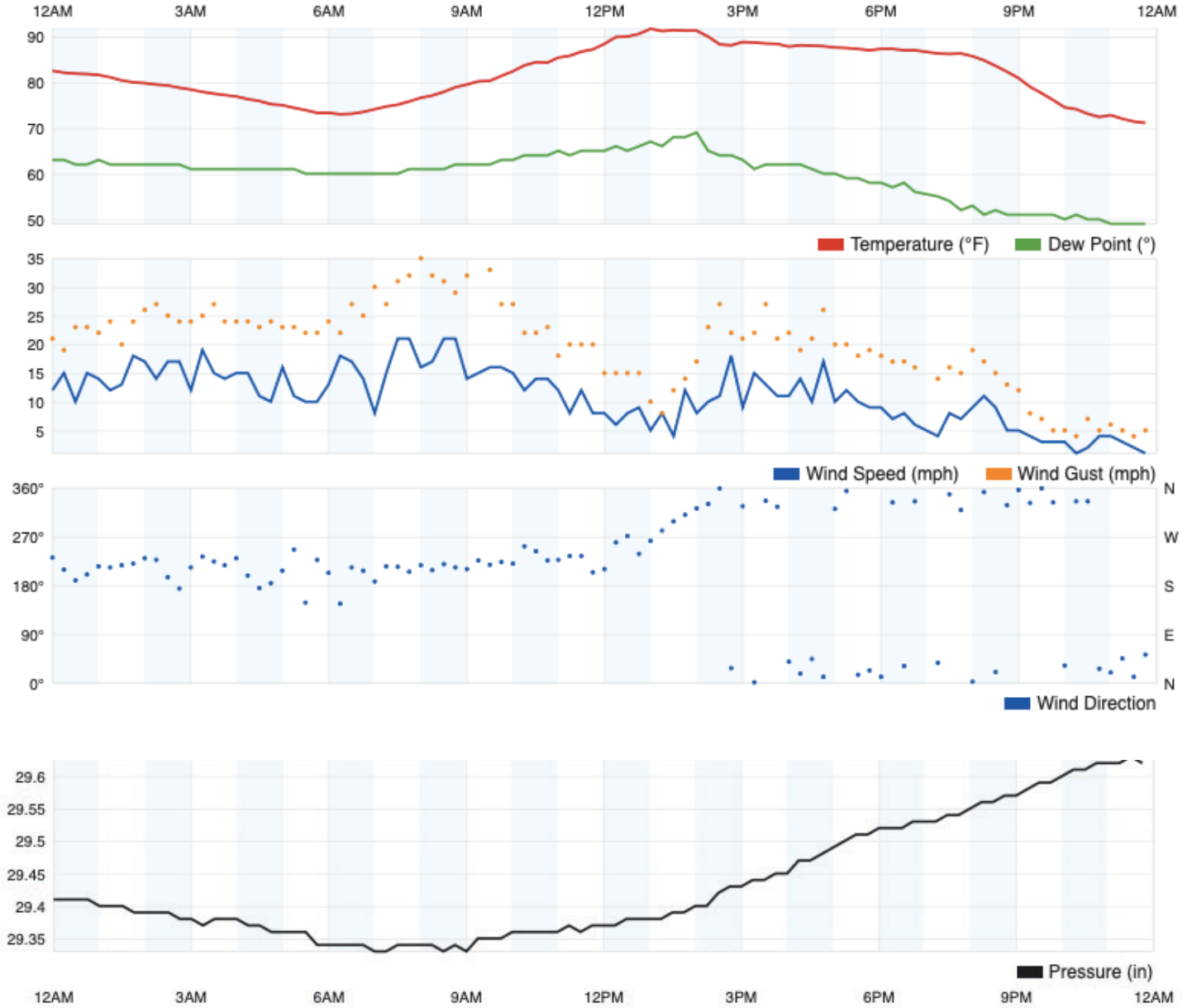
**MS/HS Special Education Paraprofessional.** The Groton Area School District is seeking applicants for the position of Special Education Paraprofessional. Starting salary is \$12.10/hour and position includes comprehensive benefits package. Criminal background check required. Interested parties should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

Applications are available at [www.grotonarea.com](http://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	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
				
Mostly Sunny then Sunny and Breezy	Chance T-storms and Breezy	Slight Chance T-storms then Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy then Slight Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms
High: 98 °F	Low: 67 °F	High: 96 °F	Low: 69 °F	High: 96 °F

## Slight Risk

of severe thunderstorms

1 2 3 4 5

### Hazards

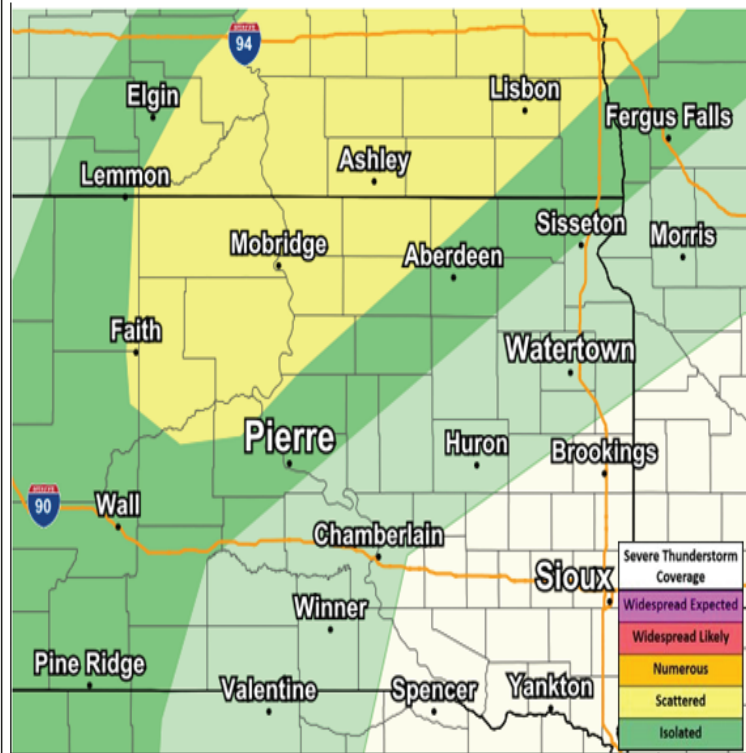
Thunderstorms, a few strong to severe, have the potential to produce lightning, hail to quarter size and wind gusts to 60 mph

### Timing

Storms may develop late this afternoon and spread northeast through the overnight hours. The highest risk period will be from 6 pm - 12 am.

### Some Cities at Risk

Mobridge, McIntosh, Eureka, Bowdle, and Ridgeview



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

ISSUED: 5:30 AM - Monday, June 07, 2021

Severe storms will be possible late this afternoon through the overnight hours, mainly for north central South Dakota. Large hail and high winds will be the main threats. An isolated tornado or two can't be ruled out.

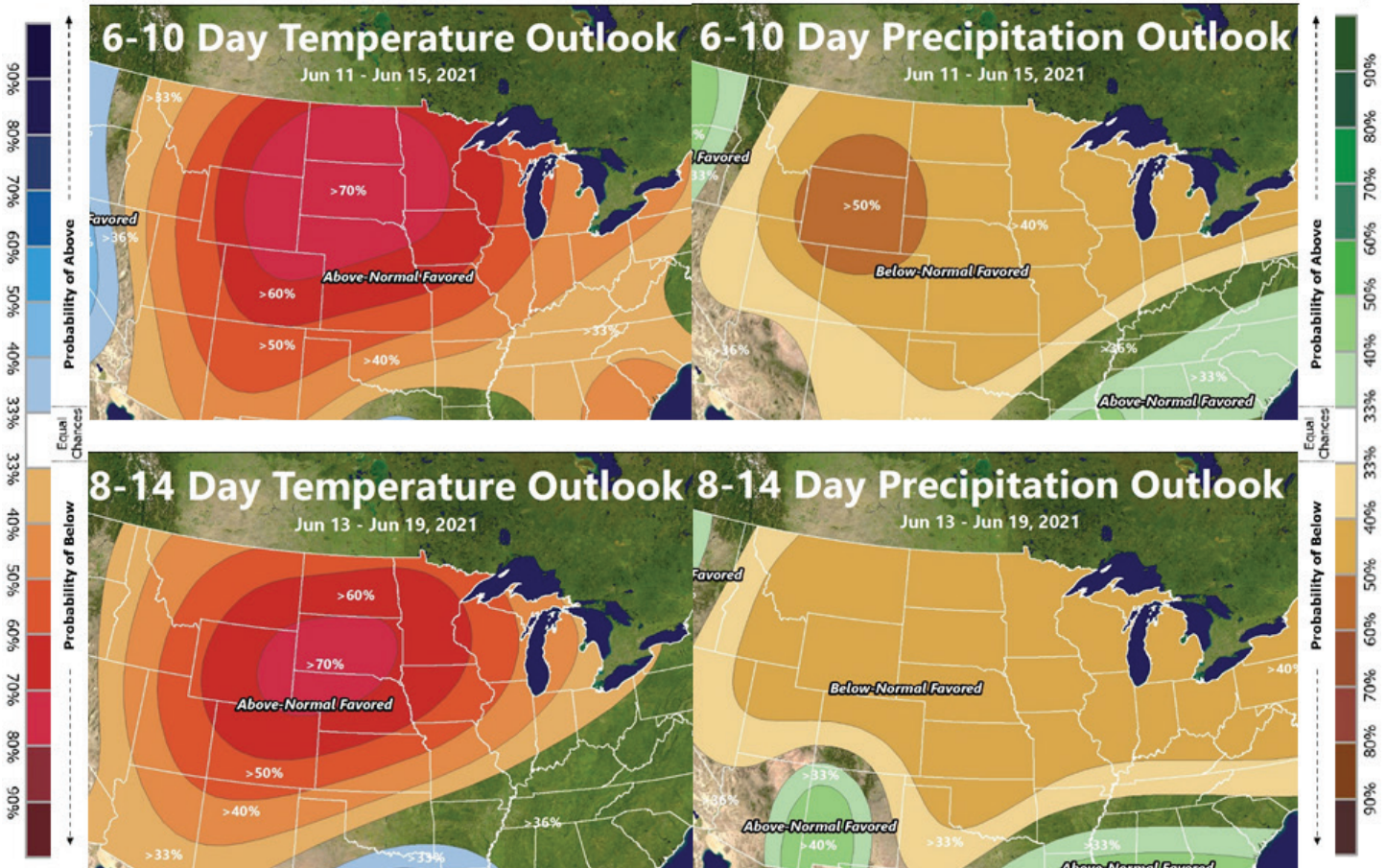


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## Hot & Dry Pattern Persists

Above average temperatures are likely to continue through mid-June. Below average precipitation is also favored.



The current pattern of above average temperatures and below average precipitation is favored to continue over the next 2 weeks. Find the latest outlooks at <https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>

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## Today in Weather History

June 7, 1982: Lightning struck a house in Sunshine Acres, north of Pierre, and the ensuing fire destroyed the interior. One person received minor burns. Over two inches of rain fell in Pierre causing Capital Lake to rise four feet. Water and mud flooded the State Maintenance Building.

June 7, 1993: A large F3 tornado destroyed a farmstead 9 miles southwest of Tulare. The tornado twisted the house on its foundation, virtually destroying it. This storm also destroyed a barn, three steel bins, three granaries, and two hog houses. Ten hogs were killed.

At least three more tornadoes damaged several farms in the Tulare and Redfield areas. A tornado hit one farm northwest of Tulare causing about 65,000 dollars in damage. Another tornado damaged a farm 5 miles west of Redfield.

1692: A massive earthquake strikes Port Royal in Jamaica, killing some 3,000 people.

1816: The following is found on page 31, from the book, "History of the American Clock Business for the Past Sixty Year, and Life of Chauncey Jerome," written by Chauncey Jerome. The book was published in 1860. "The next summer was a cold one of 1816, which none of the old people will ever forget, and which many of the young have heard a great deal about. There was ice and snow in every month of the year. I well remember on the seventh of June, while on my way to work, about a mile from home, dressed throughout with thick woolen clothes and an overcoat on, my hands got so cold that I was obliged to lay down my tools and put on a pair of mittens which I had in my pocket. It snowed about an hour that day." This bitter cold event occurred in Plymouth, Connecticut.

1972 - Richmond VA experienced its worst flood of record as rains from Hurricane Agnes pushed the water level at the city locks to a height of 36.5 feet, easily topping the previous record of thirty feet set in 1771. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in the Laramie Mountains of eastern Wyoming produced golf ball size hail, and up to five inches of rain in just one hour. Half a dozen cities in the Upper Mississippi Valley reported record high temperatures for the date, including La Crosse, WI, with a reading of 97 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)(Storm Data)

1988 - Snow whitened some of the mountains of northern California and northwestern Nevada. Twenty-six cities in the central and eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Rapid City SD with a reading of 104 degrees, and Miles City, MT, with a high of 106 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from southern Oklahoma and eastern Texas to northwestern Florida through the day and night. Thunderstorms spawned 22 tornadoes, including a dozen in Louisiana, and there were 119 reports of large hail and damaging winds. A strong (F-2) tornado at Gross Tete LA killed two persons, injured thirty others, and another strong (F-2) tornado injured 60 persons at Lobdell LA. Softball size hail was reported at Hillsboro TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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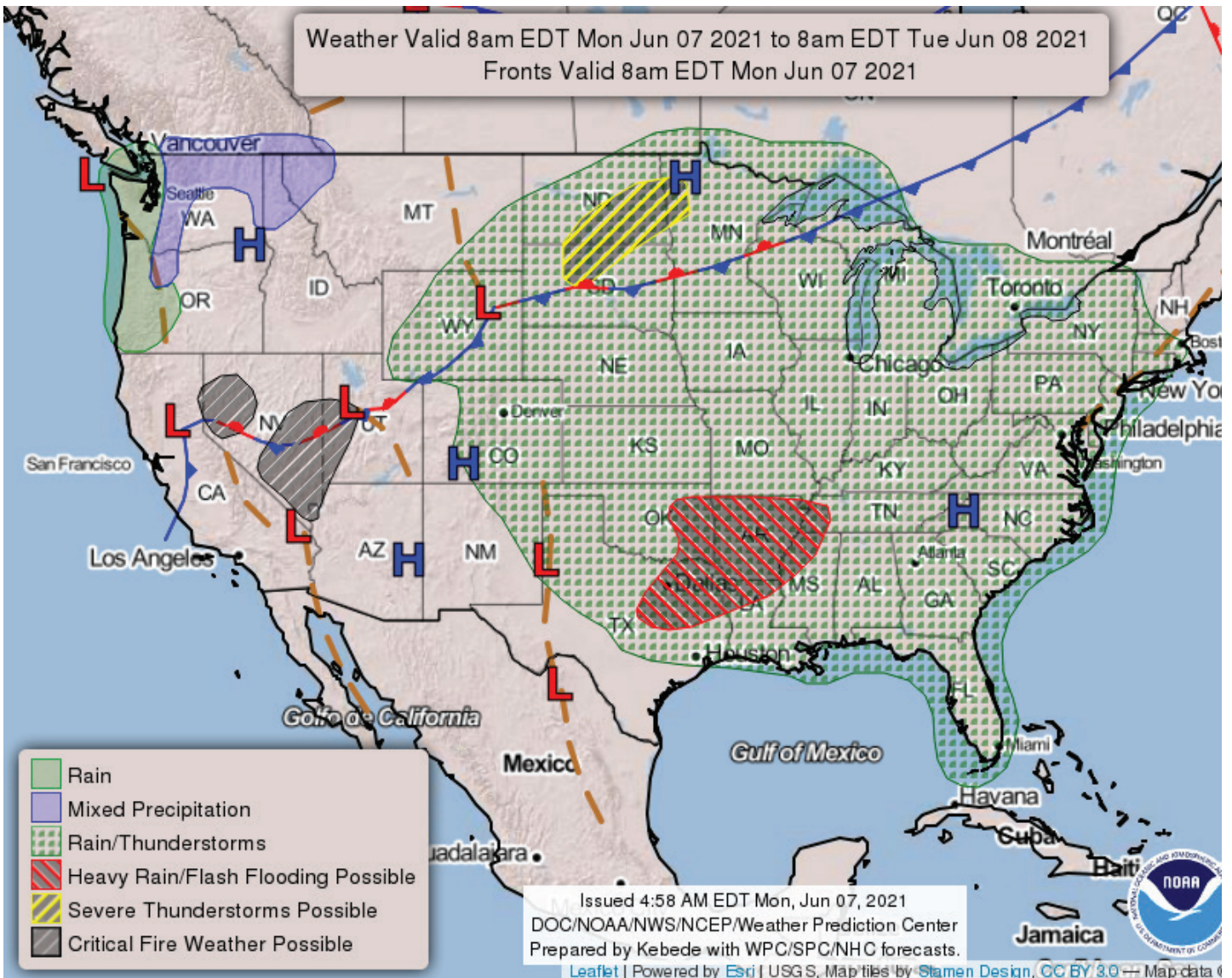
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 91.7 °F**  
**Low Temp: 71.1 °F**  
**Wind: 35 mph**  
**Precip: .00**

## Today's Info

**Record High:** 95° in 1952, 2020  
**Record Low:** 28° in 1901  
**Average High:** 78°F  
**Average Low:** 53°F  
**Average Precip in June.:** 0.66  
**Precip to date in June.:** 0.00  
**Average Precip to date:** 7.91  
**Precip Year to Date:** 3.97  
**Sunset Tonight:** 9:20 p.m.  
**Sunrise Tomorrow:** 5:46 a.m.



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## GIVE UP? WHY NOT!

People are like weather reports: they change frequently and are not always reliable. Over the years the prescription for predicting the weather has changed dramatically. Now, when weather persons make their reports, it is usually in "percentages." They are always correct because they leave room for variations in their predictions as to what may or may not happen.

God is not that way. If He declares it, we can depend on it. "Trust in Him," said David. We have all trusted in family and friends only to be disappointed. Not that they intended to deceive us intentionally or disrupt our lives on purpose, it's just that they are as human as we are and have the potential as well as the probability to be wrong. "People are still people," Dean Edwards often said. "They are as human today as they were in Eden."

Our ability to trust, however, fluctuates. It seems to come and go depending on the situation. That's why David added "at all times." Our trust in God is to be constant and continual, not casual and conditional. Some of us have a fair-weather faith. If we do not get the answers we want when we want them, we usually rely on our own strengths and strategies, and the results are usually second best rather than God's best.

We prove to Him that we trust in Him when we pour our hearts out to Him in faith believing that we can trust Him! It's like emptying a jar of water by turning it upside down and letting every drop fall to the ground. Letting the last drop fall to the ground is tough but necessary if we are to "let go and let God" prove the power of faith and trust.

Prayer: Lord, give us courage to trust in You at all times for all things in all situations without hesitancy. May we learn the value to trust only in You! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. Psalm 62:8

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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

### States rebound from bleak forecasts to pass record budgets

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Just a year ago, the financial future looked bleak for state governments as governors and lawmakers scrambled to cut spending amid the coronavirus recession that was projected to pummel revenue.

They laid off state workers, threatened big cuts to schools and warned about canceling or scaling back building projects, among other steps.

Today, many of those same states are flush with cash, and lawmakers are passing budgets with record spending. Money is pouring into schools, social programs and infrastructure. At the same time, many states are socking away billions of dollars in savings.

"It's definitely safe to say that states are in a much better fiscal situation than they anticipated," said Erica Mackellar, a fiscal analyst with the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Spending plans for the budget year that begins July 1 are up 10% or more in states spanning from Florida and Maryland to Colorado, Utah and Washington.

In Oklahoma, pandemic uncertainties last year prompted lawmakers to trim \$1.3 billion from their anticipated general revenue. That resulted in across-the-board cuts for public education and most state services.

This year, the new budget is up nearly 18%. That includes money to reduce class sizes in kindergarten and first grade, funding for a new children's behavioral health center and new incentives for businesses to make movies in Oklahoma. The Republican-led Legislature even set aside money to cut individual and corporate income tax rates and expand tax credits for a school choice program.

"Last year: shaky foundation. This year: solid foundation," said Republican state Sen. Roger Thompson, chairman of the chamber's budget-writing committee.

Many states experienced a similar turnaround. Fiscal analysts cite a variety of reasons.

The federal government poured billions of dollars into state coffers through a series of pandemic relief packages. Federal aid also sent billions more to U.S. households and businesses that, in turn, pumped money into the economy.

State finances also fared better than feared. Consumer spending rebounded to shore up sales tax revenue, and state income taxes were bolstered by a strong stock market and high-wage earners who kept working remotely while others were laid off.

The result is that states now face "a very promising fiscal and economic outlook over the next couple of years," said Justin Theal, a state fiscal research officer at The Pew Charitable Trusts.

A recent Pew report found that after an initial sharp plunge in tax revenue, 29 states recovered to take in as much or more during the peak pandemic period of March 2020 through February 2021 than they did during the same 12 months before the pandemic began.

Idaho, Utah, Colorado and South Carolina posted some of the biggest revenue gains along with South Dakota, which was one of the few states never to shut down. The Pew report also noted modest revenue gains for some states that imposed more aggressive coronavirus precautions on their economy, including California, Massachusetts and New York.

The \$212 billion budget enacted earlier this year in New York is up almost 10% over the previous one. Federal COVID-19 relief provided the bulk of that growth. But state spending alone still is up by 3.8% in the new budget, according to Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo's administration.

New York's bigger budget includes a mixture of ongoing and one-time spending, including a \$1.4 billion boost in basic aid for schools and a \$1.3 billion plan to overhaul Penn Station.

Florida's record \$101.5 billion budget is up roughly 11%, with bonuses for teachers, police and firefighters, and new construction projects at schools and colleges. Lawmakers decided they had money to spare, expanding sales tax breaks for school and hurricane supplies and creating a new tax-free week to buy

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museum and concert tickets and recreational gear for camping, fishing and surfing.

Florida is among several states that amplified their 2021-22 budgets with at least part of their share of a \$195 billion state aid package from the recent American Rescue Plan Act signed by President Joe Biden.

Shortly after that plan passed, Moody's Investors Service upgraded the outlook for states from negative to stable, citing stronger state finances and continued federal aid. It said the new federal aid equaled nearly 16% of states' own revenue for the 2019 fiscal year.

Many Republicans in Congress had criticized the Biden relief plan as excessive, especially in the amount of money going to state governments. Many states already had been seeing better-than-expected tax revenue even before the plan was signed into law in March.

Some states, such as Colorado, are waiting until later to decide how to use the latest COVID-19 relief funds because they have until the end of 2024 to spend it.

Even without the latest federal aid, Colorado's budget for the fiscal year starting July 1 is up more than 12% from the previous one, which had been pared back because of pandemic concerns.

Sen. Bob Rankin, a Republican member of the Legislature's Joint Budget Committee, said he is concerned about how that additional \$3.8 billion of federal aid will be spent.

"I'm afraid that we are spending money and making commitments that we will not be able to sustain once that one-time federal money goes away," Rankin said.

In many states, lawmakers are devoting federal COVID-19 relief money to one-time purposes, such as additional aid to workers, expanded access to high-speed internet or replenishing depleted unemployment trust funds.

Missouri is among the states that has yet to decide what to do with the latest federal aid. The general revenue portion of its budget has rebounded from a fiscal 2021 cut to exceed pre-pandemic levels. And Missouri is on pace to shatter a record set in 1998 for its largest end-of-year cash balance.

"Revenues have performed much, much better than I would have ever anticipated during a pandemic," said state Budget Director Dan Haug.

He said he thinks Missouri would have been able to weather the pandemic without this year's Biden relief package.

Lawmakers in Maryland used words like "stunning" and "unique" to describe how federal aid helped reshape their budget situation. The state's record \$52.4 billion budget for its new fiscal year provides bonuses to state workers, boosts payments to the poor, builds parks and playgrounds in every county, and still sets aside about \$2 billion for savings.

"After spending almost the entire part of last year in sleepless nights trying to figure out what in the world we were going to do, to find yourselves in that position was pretty amazing," said Democratic state Sen. Guy Guzzone, chairman of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee.

## Train barrels into another in Pakistan, killing at least 40

By ASIM TANVEER AND MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

MULTAN, Pakistan (AP) — An express train barreled into another that had derailed in Pakistan before dawn Monday, killing at least 40 people, authorities said. More than 100 were injured, and rescuers and villagers worked throughout the day to pull survivors and the dead from the crumpled cars.

Cries for help pierced the night as passengers climbed out of overturned or crushed rail cars, and local people rushed to the scene in the district of Ghotki, in the southern province of Sindh. Later in the day, heavy machinery arrived to cut open some cars, in the hopes of rescuing several people still believed to be trapped. The military deployed troops and helicopters to assist.

At around 3:30 a.m., the Millat Express train derailed and the Sir Syed Express train hit it minutes later, said Usman Abdullah, a deputy commissioner of Ghotki. It wasn't immediately clear what caused the derailment, and the driver of the second train said he braked when he saw the disabled train but didn't have time to avoid the collision.

"The challenge for us is to quickly rescue those passengers who are still trapped in the wreckage," said

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Umar Tufail, a police chief in the district. The death toll steadily rose through the day, reaching at least 40, according to Abdullah.

Officials said more than 100 passengers were injured, and those with critical injuries would be brought by helicopter to a nearby city's hospital. According to railway officials, about 1,100 passengers were on board the two trains.

Earlier, Azam Swati, the minister for railways who headed to the scene of the crash, told The Associated Press that engineers and experts were trying to determine what caused the collision and that all aspects would be examined, including the possibility of sabotage.

Habibur Rehman Gilani, chairman of Pakistan Railways, told Pakistan's Geo News TV that the segment of the railway tracks where the crash took place was old and needed replacing. He did not elaborate.

Aijaz Ahmed, the driver of the Sir Syed Express, told the station that on seeing the derailed train, he tried his best to avoid the crash by braking but failed. Railway officials said Ahmed was slightly injured, and villagers pulled him from the train's engine after the crash.

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed his deep sorrow over the tragedy, saying on Twitter that he had asked the railway minister to supervise the rescue work and also ordered a probe into the crash.

According to local media, some of the passengers on the Millat Express were heading to a wedding party.

Mohammad Amin, one of the passengers on the Millat Express who had minor injuries, told the AP from a hospital that before the train departed from the southern port city of Karachi, he and his brother saw mechanics working on one of the cars.

That led them to believe there was something wrong with it but they were reassured all was fine. Amin said he believed the train car that was being worked on was the one that later derailed. Railway officials said they were recording statements of survivors, including the drivers.

Train accidents are common in Pakistan, where successive governments have paid little attention to improving the poorly maintained signal system and aging tracks.

In 1990, a packed passenger plowed into a standing freight train in southern Pakistan, killing 210 people in the worst rail disaster in Pakistan's history.

## 'Get used to me': Postmaster evokes Trump style in Biden era

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Louis DeJoy is uninterested in the niceties of Washington. The wealthy longtime businessman with an outer borough New York accent prides himself as a problem solver ready to disrupt an unwieldy bureaucracy. And he's facing potential legal troubles.

In other words, the postmaster general may be the closest thing to former President Donald Trump left in the nation's capital. But there's little President Joe Biden can do about it.

"Get used to me," DeJoy told critics in Congress during a hearing earlier this year.

As he approaches his first anniversary at the U.S. Postal Service's helm, DeJoy is under mounting pressure to resign. He's been criticized by lawmakers from both parties for changes to the agency that have resulted in service slowdowns. Democrats are particularly worried that he's purposefully undermining the post office, which is critical to the conduct of elections and is one of the few federal agencies a vast majority of Americans like.

The scrutiny of DeJoy, 63, has intensified as the Justice Department investigates him over political fundraising at the North Carolina-based company he ran prior to his work at the post office.

"Postmaster General DeJoy would not be in his job if he worked for any other company," said Rep. Carolyn Maloney, a New York Democrat who chairs the House oversight committee.

DeJoy spokesman Mark Corallo said the postmaster general "never knowingly violated" campaign finance laws.

DeJoy was born in Brooklyn and still retains its distinct accent, despite long living in Greensboro, North Carolina. After growing up in New York, he took over his father's small, declining trucking business in the 1980s, transforming it into New Breed Logistics, which he sold in 2014. His firm offered logistical services



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nationwide, which critics are quick to note sometimes competed with the post office.

DeJoy became postmaster general shortly after Trump declared the post office "a joke." DeJoy implemented cost-cutting mechanisms he said would help make the agency — which has lost \$9.2 billion in the 2020 budget year — more fiscally solvent. Those included reducing employee overtime and removing mail-sorting machines from postal facilities around the country.

"I am direct and decisive," DeJoy said in a video message to employees last summer. "And I don't mince words."

After the changes, mail slowed enough that Democrats worried about an electoral crisis. The coronavirus pandemic prompted a voting-by-mail surge in last year's presidential election, and widespread delays sparked concerns that millions of ballots wouldn't arrive on time.

A federal judge wrote in September that "the Postal Service's actions are not the result of any legitimate business concerns" but instead consistent with the Trump administration's goals "to disrupt and challenge the legitimacy" of elections.

Ultimately, while there were complaints about mail delays affecting some balloting and counting, fears of widespread electoral disruptions from DeJoy's larger changes mostly proved unfounded. The Postal Service says it delivered at least 135 million ballots to or from voters — and delivered 99.89% of those mailed after Sept. 4, ahead of Election Day on Nov. 4, within seven days, as promised.

"Some people may have breathed a sigh of relief," Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, which represents more than 200,000 post office employees, said of passing the election test. "But as important as mail ballots are ... all mail is important."

DeJoy nonetheless apologized to customers affected by service delays that occurred during last year's holiday season rush, and said his whole agency would "strive to do better" amid bipartisan criticism at a House hearing in February.

Such frustrations were new. A Pew Research Center poll released before DeJoy took over found that 91% of Americans had a favorable view of the post office.

"I think the postmaster general's intentions were good but the implementation was far less so," said John McHugh, a former Republican congressman from Ohio who now heads the Package Coalition, an advocacy group of businesses that rely on package delivery. "I'd like to think he's learned his lesson."

The Postal Service lost \$87 billion over the past 14 budget years, according to the Government Accountability Office. While much of the budgetary concerns stem from a 2006 law requiring the agency to fully fund costly retiree health benefits for the next 75 years, the post office has also been hurt by an inevitable, internet-fueled decline in mail volume. That was exacerbated by the pandemic.

In March, DeJoy announced a 10-year plan he says can help the post office avoid \$160 billion in further projected losses over the next decade by cutting post office hours, relaxing delivery standards so some mail takes longer, and other austerity measures.

The Postal Service is also seeking to increase the cost of a first-class stamp to 58 cents in late August.

DeJoy's proposed overhaul could help the post office operate more like a business than a public service. But he's bristled at suggestions he's a Trump holdover with an ideology that now conflicts with a Democratic administration.

"I'm not a political appointee," DeJoy told the House hearing. "I was selected by a bipartisan board of governors and I'd really appreciate if you'd get that straight." When pressed on how long he'd remain in his post, DeJoy responded, "A long time. Get used to me."

Wisconsin Rep. Mark Pocan, who organized a letter signed by 90 House Democrats in August calling for DeJoy's removal, said the postmaster general "is a guy who obviously has a lot of confidence in himself."

"He doesn't seem to understand that one of the few services that the federal government does that's in the Constitution is the Postal Service," Pocan said "and we have a higher obligation to do the job correctly."

DeJoy can only be removed by a vote of the Postal Service's governing board, which has nine members in addition to DeJoy and the deputy postmaster general. The Senate recently approved three new, Biden-appointed members. By law, though, no more than five of the nine voting board members can be from the

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same party and two existing, Democratic members have publicly supported DeJoy and his 10-year plan. Biden could dismiss existing board members and replace them with his own appointees who might support replacing DeJoy — but he'd have to show cause for doing so.

Meantime, Congress may forge ahead with post office changes with DeJoy still in charge. A bipartisan plan to scrap requirements that the Postal Service pre-fund retiree health benefits, potentially saving the agency billions of dollars, is advancing. That's surprising because lawmakers have fought over that issue for years.

Republican supporters say the move would complement DeJoy's 10-year plan rather than supplant it. A Democratic proposal that could defy the postmaster general's overhaul remains stalled.

When Pocan pressed him during another House hearing about what grade he would give himself as postmaster general, DeJoy resisted answering, then finally replied, "An 'A' for bringing strategy and the planning and effort."

Recalling the exchange, Pocan joked that almost no one would give DeJoy's performance an 'A,' "Unless it was followed by a derogatory name."

## Turkish mafia boss dishes dirt, becomes YouTube phenomenon

By SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — From alleged drug trafficking and a murder cover-up to weapons transfers to Islamic militants, a convicted crime ringleader has been dishing the dirt on members of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling party through a series of tell-all videos that have captivated the nation and turned him into an unlikely social media phenomenon.

Sedat Peker, a 49-year-old fugitive crime boss, who once openly supported Erdogan's Justice and Development Party, has been releasing nearly 90-minute long videos from his stated base in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, making scandalous but yet-unproven drip-by-drip allegations, in an apparent bid to settle scores with political figures.

The weekly YouTube videos have been viewed more than 75 million times, causing an uproar, heightening concerns over Turkish state corruption and putting officials on the defensive. They have also exposed alleged rifts between rival factions within the ruling party and added to Erdogan's troubles as he battles an economic downturn and the coronavirus pandemic.

On Sunday morning, a couple in Istanbul were absorbed while watching Peker's latest release. They were among millions in Turkey who tuned in.

"I've added (Peker's videos) to the category of TV series I watch every week," Gulistan Atas said. "Just like a TV episode, I wait in excitement, and every week on Sunday, we prepare our breakfast when we get up and watch them along with our breakfast."

Clad in a waistcoat or a half-buttoned shirt displaying a medallion, Peker taunts his opponents from behind a desk with neatly arranged notes, prayer beads and books, promising to bring their downfall using nothing more than a "tripod and a camera."

His initial videos targeted former Interior Minister Mehmet Agar and his son, Tolga, a ruling party lawmaker, whom he accused of raping a young Kazakh journalism student and later covering up her murder as a suicide. Mehmet Agar, Peker suggested, misappropriated a luxury marina that may have been used in drug trafficking operations. Agar later resigned from the marina's board.

Subsequent videos leveled accusations against business people and media figures close to the government, as well as former Prime Minister Binali Yildirim's son, claiming he was involved in drug smuggling from Venezuela. But the target of Peker's most vitriolic and mocking attacks is Interior Minister Suleyman Soyly, whom he accuses of abuse of power and corruption while aiming to become Turkey's president. Peker justifies the tell-all by saying Soyly betrayed him despite the crime leader's help to defeat a rival faction within the ruling party.

All those implicated have rejected Peker's accusations.

In an explosive claim with international dimensions, the mob boss said that a former security advisor to

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Erdogan accused of leading a paramilitary force had sent weapons to Al-Qaida-linked militants in Syria. Erdogan hasn't yet addressed those claims although the government has in the past denied allegations that it had armed jihadis.

Erdogan ignored the Peker videos for weeks, but broke his silence on May 26, when he dismissed earlier allegations by the mafia leader as a conspiracy against Turkey.

"We will spoil these games, these plots. No one should doubt that we will disrupt this devious operation," Erdogan said. "We pursue members of criminal gangs wherever in the world they flee to ... We will not leave these criminals alone until we bring them back to our country and hand them over to the judiciary."

Peker responded to Erdogan that week and suggested that the Turkish strongman could be the focus of future videos. He later said he would speak about Erdogan after his meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden on June 14 so as not to "weaken his hand." In his latest video Sunday, he said his revelations would be conducted with respect and wouldn't hurt the state itself.

"Will finding and bringing me (to Turkey) change the reality," he said.

Opposition parties, meanwhile, have seized on the allegations to demand the resignations of implicated figures as well as parliamentary and judiciary inquiries.

The ruling party and its nationalist allies have blocked opposition bids to launch parliamentary inquiries into Peker's claims as well as into the arms smuggling allegations.

Authorities have issued a new warrant for Peker's arrest.

Can Selcuki, the director of polling and analysis platform Turkiye Raporu, said of Peker: "We shouldn't forget that he's a criminal," but explained the videos' popularity as a need for information.

"It seems to me people are asking this illegal operator these questions because they can't get answers elsewhere. And this tells me there's a growing demand in Turkish society for more transparency," Selcuki said.

Peker addresses his viewers, especially people under age 40, as the real owners of Turkey who have the power of demanding accountability and change.

A nationalist who advocates unity between Turkic-speaking nations, Peker has been in and out of prison since age 17 for his involvement in organized crime and other offenses. After his last release from prison in 2014, he held rallies to support Erdogan's party and leveled threats against his opponents. His 2015 wedding to Ozge Peker, who was his lawyer, drew a host of celebrity guests.

In April, an operation was launched against Peker's group, leading to the arrest of around 60 of his associates.

His home in Istanbul was also searched. Peker maintains that he was forced to speak out after his wife and two daughters were allegedly mistreated and humiliated during the police raid.

"They ask me why I am doing it," Peker said in the latest video. "I swear to God that at first I did it out of anger, I expected an apology ... Now, I don't know why I am doing it ... I feel like doing it."

Gulistan Atas' husband Alparslan Atas said Peker's videos were like the movies "The Godfather" and "Scarface," to be forever etched in people's memories.

"I like that the state's dirty laundry has come to light and spread around because knowing that the people who are in politics with their hands on the Quran can at the same time do cocaine business gives me interesting information," he said.

## **Palestinian mom fights to stave off punitive home demolition**

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

TURMUS AYYA, West Bank (AP) — Sanaa Shalaby says she had no idea what her estranged husband was up to until Israeli soldiers raided her home in the occupied West Bank last month.

Now she's waging a legal battle to prevent Israel from demolishing the two-story villa where she lives with her three youngest children. It's drawing attention to Israel's policy of punitive home demolitions, which rights groups view as collective punishment.

Israeli security forces arrested her husband, Muntasser Shalaby, and accuse him of carrying out a May

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2 drive-by shooting that killed an Israeli and wounded two others in the occupied West Bank. Israel says demolishing family homes is one of the only ways to deter attackers, who expect to be arrested or killed and who are often glorified by Palestinian factions.

The U.S. State Department has criticized such demolitions, and an internal Israeli military review in the 2000s raised questions about their effectiveness. The case of the Shalabys — who all have U.S. citizenship — could reignite the debate. Israel's Supreme Court is expected to issue a final ruling on the demolition next week.

Sanaa and her husband had been estranged for nearly a decade. He lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he ran a profitable smoke shop and married three other women in private Muslim ceremonies not recognized by U.S. authorities.

"It's allowed in our religion," Sanaa said. "I didn't agree to it."

He came back to the West Bank in April for what she says was one of his yearly visits to see the children. He had also sought treatment for paranoia after having been institutionalized in the U.S. in recent years, according to a deposition he gave to her lawyer.

Sanaa said she knew nothing about the attack and had no indication he was planning anything.

"People commit crimes far worse than this in America and they don't demolish their homes," she said. "Whoever committed the crime should be punished, but it's not the family's fault."

When the soldiers showed up after the attack they ransacked the home and briefly detained her 17-year-old son. She said they had a large dog that terrified her and her two younger children, a 12-year-old boy and a 9-year-old girl. The soldiers came back weeks later to map out the house for demolition.

Now Sanaa says her children spend all day in bed and refuse to go to school. "I know my children and they were never like this," she said. "My son, Ahmed, has to take his final exams and he can't study. He opens his book, reads a couple pages and then he walks off."

An Israeli official said the security agencies believe home demolitions are an effective deterrent. The official declined to comment on the Shalaby case, but said everyone is notified in advance and given the right to contest demolitions in court. Someone in Sanaa's situation would have a "good legal case" if her account is independently verified, the official said.

"There are clear checks and balances," the official said. "We are using it only when we feel that it is necessary, and only because we understand that this is an effective deterrent."

The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss security procedures.

HaMoked, an Israeli rights group that has represented dozens of families seeking to halt punitive demolitions and is currently representing Sanaa, says such petitions rarely succeed. Of 83 cases brought since 2014, only 10 demolitions were prevented, it said. In the remaining cases, homes were partially or completely demolished, or apartments in multi-story buildings were permanently sealed off.

Jessica Montell, the group's executive director, says that from a legal perspective the question of whether it serves as a deterrent is irrelevant.

"You don't collectively punish innocent people just because they're related to a criminal in the hope that that will deter future criminals. It's an illegal and immoral policy regardless of the effectiveness," she said.

The Israeli military prepared a report on punitive home demolitions in 2004 that led to a moratorium on the practice the following year, according to HaMoked, which received a Power Point presentation of the classified report in 2008 through a court petition.

The presentation raises concerns about the legality of such demolitions and international criticism of them. It also questions their effectiveness, saying the demolitions might even motivate more attacks. Such demolitions were mostly halted until 2014, when three Israeli teenagers were kidnapped and killed in the occupied West Bank.

A campaign by Jewish settlers to evict dozens of Palestinian families from their homes in east Jerusalem was one of the main causes of last month's 11-day Gaza war, in which Israeli airstrikes demolished hundreds of homes in the militant-ruled territory.

Both forms of displacement summon bitter memories of what the Palestinians refer to as the Nakba, or

"catastrophe," when some 700,000 Palestinians fled or were driven out of what is now Israel during the 1948 war surrounding its creation.

Shalaby said she has been in continual contact with the U.S. Embassy but was told it couldn't do anything about the demolition.

The State Department declined to comment on the case, citing privacy concerns. But it said it was opposed to the punitive demolition of Palestinian homes. "The home of an entire family should not be demolished for the actions of one individual," it said in a statement.

The Israeli Supreme Court will hear Sanaa's case on June 17.

She hopes she will be able to remain in the house that she and her husband built in 2006. She said she had sold her bridal jewelry to help finance the construction. She raised her youngest children in the house, and an older daughter had her wedding there last year during a pandemic lockdown.

"My daughter got married here during the time of the coronavirus," she said, pointing to the front courtyard and smiling at the memory. "It was better than any wedding hall."

## Mexico president appears to hold key majority in elections

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN and MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's party and its allies appeared poised to maintain their majority in Mexico's lower chamber of the congress, according to initial results.

Only 47% of ballots had been counted late Sunday, but electoral authorities released "quick count" results based on voting samples that allow estimates of the voting trends to determine the rough potential makeup of the Chamber of Deputies.

López Obrador's Morena party will have to rely on votes from its allies in the Workers Party and Green Party, but together they were expected to capture between 265 and 292 seats in the 500-seat chamber. Morena alone was expected to win 190 to 203 seats.

That would signal a significant decline for the president's party. In the current congress, Morena has a simple majority, holding 253 seats on its own. It would also deprive the president of a qualified majority of two-thirds required to approve constitutional reforms.

The opposition alliance made up of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, National Action Party and Party of the Democratic Revolution were estimated to win between 181 and 213 seats. Those would be gains for those parties, which have often appeared rudderless in the face of López Obrador's popularity.

Even without López Obrador on the ballot, the mid-term elections were seen by many as a referendum on his administration and his ability to continue what he calls the "Fourth Transformation" of Mexico. Turnout was high for mid-term elections, edging above 51% of eligible voters.

López Obrador's critics had depicted the elections as a chance to stop the still-popular president from concentrating more power and weakening checks and balances. The president said the opposition is dominated by conservatives who oppose his campaign against corruption and wasteful spending.

López Obrador has complained about courts and independent regulatory agencies that have blocked some of his tougher proposals to empower state-owned industries. Opponents warned that if he won a majority, he might try to subjugate courts and regulatory agencies created during Mexico's decades-long transition to full democracy.

After polls closed, Lorenzo Córdova, president of the National Electoral Institute, declared the election a success. He said only 30 of more than 130,000 polling places across the country were not able to open due to a variety of circumstances.

Half of those unopened polling places were in the southern state of Oaxaca where voting materials were stolen or damaged, institute Executive Secretary Edmundo Jacobo said Sunday night.

Representatives of the major parties speaking at the electoral institute's general council meeting applauded the conduct of Sunday's vote amid the pandemic, despite noting that the run-up to voting was one of the most violent in recent times.

Mexico City housewife Dolores Martinez said she was pleased with López Obrador's anti-corruption fight,

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after decades of corrupt administrations.

"I like it a lot," Martinez said as she waited to vote. "There has to be transparency."

But other voters said they were disappointed by López Obrador. "The pandemic was poorly managed," said Teresita Loza, who waited in line to vote with her daughter, Sara Loza. Loza said the president's programs had handed out money, but hadn't created results.

As for much of the campaign, violence marked the days leading up to the vote. On Saturday, an employee of the state prosecutors' office in Chiapas who was not authorized to be quoted said five people who were carrying voting material to polling places were ambushed and killed on a rural highway. Those killed appeared to be volunteers, not government employees.

Three dozen candidates, mostly for local posts, have been killed to date, and on Friday, a government electoral agency worker was shot to death in Tlaxcala state, near Mexico City.

Fifteen of the country's 32 state governorships also were at stake. Almost 20,000 local posts including mayors and town council seats were being decided in 30 states, and those have often been the most violence-scarred races. Results from those local and state-level races were not expected before Monday.

Experts said criminal gangs sought to influence the elections, while the government ascribed most of the killings to other questions and said they weren't necessarily related to elections.

The country's electoral authority said the elections would be among the most thoroughly monitored in history, with over 19,000 registered observers, and violence at polling places themselves is relatively rare.

López Obrador has raised minimum wages and strengthened government aid programs like supplementary payments to the elderly, students and training programs for youths. He has also created a quasi-military National Guard and given the army a huge role in building his pet projects, which include trains, an oil refinery and airports.

But he has not hewed to a traditional leftist line. He has maintained friendly if sometimes tension-fraught relations with the United States and willingly helped keep tens of thousands of Central American migrants from reaching the U.S. border. He abhors government debt or waste.

Opponents depict him as intolerant of criticism and obsessed with a nostalgic 1960s vision of Mexico, when oil was king and state-owned companies dominated many sectors of the economy. Socially conservative and a professed Christian "in the broadest sense," he has angered feminists with his policies, but has pleased many Mexicans by living austere.

The elections represent the first mass public events since the coronavirus pandemic hit the country over a year ago, though case numbers have fallen and Mexico has vaccinated about a quarter of adults. The estimated 350,000 fatalities in the pandemic — about 230,000 of them test-confirmed — do not appear to have played a major role in the campaigns, but may weigh on voters' minds.

## Time ticking away, Democrats face wrenching test on agenda

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bracing for political trouble, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer warned Democratic colleagues that June will "test our resolve" as senators return Monday to consider infrastructure, voting rights and other stalled-out priorities at a crucial moment in Congress.

Six months into the party's hold on Washington, with Joe Biden in the White House and Democrats controlling the House and Senate, there is a gloomy uncertainty over their ability to make gains on campaign promises.

As Democrats strain to deliver on Biden's agenda, the limits of bipartisanship in the 50-50 Senate are increasingly clear: Talks over an infrastructure package are teetering, though Biden is set to confer again Monday with the lead GOP negotiator, and an ambitious elections overhaul bill is essentially dead now that Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., announced his opposition Sunday.

"We need to move the ball," said Yvette Simpson, CEO of Democracy for America, a liberal advocacy organization.

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"We told everyone to come out against all odds in the pandemic and vote," she said about the 2020 election. The promise was that with Democrats in power, "we're going to have all these great things happen, their lives are going to be better. And what they're finding is that it looks like Washington as usual."

The summer work period is traditionally among the busiest for Congress, but Democrats are growing wary because time is running out for Biden to negotiate a sweeping infrastructure package and other priorities are piling up undone. The days ahead are often seen as a last chance at legislating before the August recess and the start of campaigns for next year's elections.

Schumer, in setting the agenda, is challenging senators to prepare to make tough choices. But he is also facing a test of his own ability to lead the big-tent party through a volatile period of shifting priorities and tactics in the aftermath of the Trump era and the Capitol insurrection.

While Democratic senators have been generating goodwill by considering bipartisan bills in the evenly split Senate, they face mounting pressure from voters who put them in office to fight harder for legislation that Republicans are determined to block with the filibuster. Democrats in the evenly split Senate hold the majority because Vice President Kamala Harris can be the tie breaker,

Key among that legislation is S.1, the elections and voting overhaul bill, which now appears headed for defeat. But Schumer also said votes may be coming on gun control legislation and the Equality Act, a House-passed bill to ensure civil rights for the LGBTQ community.

Fed up by the delays, some senators are ready to change the rules to eliminate the filibuster, which they blame for the inaction. The long-running Senate filibuster rules require 60 votes to advance most legislation, meaning as many as 10 Republicans would need to cross party lines to help Democrats achieve their priorities. Some senators propose reducing the voting threshold to 51.

But Manchin, in announcing his opposition to the voting rights bill Sunday as the "wrong piece of legislation to bring our country together," also restated his refusal to end the filibuster — for now, denying his party a crucial vote needed to make the rules change that could help advance its agenda.

Without support from Manchin or others, including Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., who also wants to keep the filibuster, Schumer is all but warning that Democratic senators will be forced to confront the limits of their fragile majority. That could exacerbate party divisions and expose Democrats to criticism from Republicans eager to show that Biden's party cannot govern.

"The June work period will be extremely challenging," Schumer warned. "I want to be clear that the next few weeks will be hard and will test our resolve as a Congress and a conference."

Schumer has been laying the groundwork for this moment since he became majority leader in January, trying to build the case that bipartisanship can work in some cases — with passage of an Asian hate crimes bill or a water public work package — but also has its limits, according to two Democratic aides granted anonymity to discuss the private strategy.

Their weekly closed-door policy caucus lunches have been intense, particularly during the two special sessions they have held to privately debate the path forward on the voting rights bill, one of the aides said.

Senators rise from their seats one by one to ask pointed questions or state their views on the elections overhaul, which many Democrats view as crucial to protecting democracy, especially as states led by Republicans impose restrictive new voting laws.

Manchin's opposition delivers a serious blow to the election bill, which has taken on urgency for Democrats as former President Donald Trump encourages the changes in the states, not dissimilar from the way he egged on his supporters to "fight like hell" for his presidency before they stormed the Capitol on the Jan. 6.

Rather than force reluctant senators to fall in line, Schumer is trying to lead Democrats to their own conclusion — either bipartisan deals with Republicans are possible or they have no other choice but to undertake a go-it-alone strategy on infrastructure or other priorities, the aides said.

One aide suggested Schumer is no arm-twisting leader in the style of Lyndon Johnson, who before he became president was famous for his hardball cajoling as majority leader.

In the letter to colleagues released the day Republicans deployed the filibuster to block the creation of a bipartisan commission to investigate the insurrection, Schumer took stock of the gains so far. But he said: "We have also seen the limits of bipartisanship."

## High court asked to review men-only draft registration law

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is being asked to decide whether it's sex discrimination for the government to require only men to register for the draft when they turn 18.

The question of whether it's unconstitutional to require men but not women to register could be viewed as one with little practical impact. The last time there was a draft was during the Vietnam War, and the military has been all-volunteer since. But the registration requirement is one of the few remaining places where federal law treats men and women differently, and women's groups are among those arguing that allowing it to stand is harmful.

The justices could say as soon as Monday whether they will hear a case involving the Military Selective Service Act, which requires men to register for the draft.

Ria Tabacco Mar, the director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Women's Rights Project, who is urging the court to take up the issue, says requiring men to register imposes a "serious burden on men that's not being imposed on women."

Men who do not register can lose eligibility for student loans and civil service jobs, and failing to register is also a felony punishable by a fine of up to \$250,000 and five years in prison. But Tabacco Mar says the male-only requirement does more than that.

"It's also sending a tremendously harmful message that women are less fit than men to serve their country in this particular way and conversely that men are less fit than women to stay home as caregivers in the event of an armed conflict. We think those stereotypes demean both men and women," she said.

Even if the draft is never used again, retaining the men-only requirement sends a "really damaging message," said Tabacco Mar, who represents the National Coalition For Men and two individual men challenging the law.

A group of retired senior military officers and the National Organization for Women Foundation are among the others urging the court to take the case.

If the court agrees to hear the case, it wouldn't be deciding whether women have to register, just whether the current system is constitutional. If it isn't, then it would then be up to Congress to decide how to respond, either by passing a law requiring everyone to register or deciding registration is no longer necessary.

The issue of who has to register for the draft has been to the court before. In 1981, the court voted 6-3 to uphold the men-only registration requirement. At the time, the decision was something of an outlier because the court was regularly invalidating gender-based distinctions in cases about other areas of the law. Many of those cases were brought by the founding director of the ACLU's Women's Rights Project, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who became a justice in 1993.

The last time the high court considered the Military Selective Service Act, then-Justice William Rehnquist explained that the purpose of registration "was to prepare for a draft of combat troops." He said that because women could not serve in combat, the law was not unlawful sex discrimination that violated the Constitution.

But military policy has changed. In 2013, the Department of Defense lifted the ban on women serving in combat. Two years later, the department said all military roles would be open to women without exception.

Just last year, a congressional commission concluded that the "time is right" to extend the obligation to register to women. "The current disparate treatment of women unacceptably excludes women from a fundamental civic obligation and reinforces gender stereotypes about the role of women, undermining national security," the commission said in a report.

The Biden administration is urging the justices not to take the case and to let Congress instead tackle the issue. Administration lawyers wrote in a brief that any "reconsideration of the constitutionality of the male-only registration requirement ... would be premature at this time" because Congress is "actively considering" the issue.

The Selective Service System, the agency that oversees registration, said in a statement that it doesn't



comment on pending litigation but that it is "capable of performing whatever mission Congress should mandate."

If the court agrees to take the case, arguments wouldn't happen until the fall at the earliest, after the court's summer break. The court already has high-profile cases awaiting it then. They include a major challenge to abortion rights and an appeal to expand gun rights.

The case about the draft is National Coalition For Men v. Selective Service System, 20-928.

## As India's surge wanes, families deal with the devastation

By SHEIKH SAALIQ and BISWAJEET BANERJEE Associated Press

LUCKNOW, India (AP) — Two months ago Radha Gobindo Pramanik and his wife threw a party to celebrate their daughter's pregnancy and the upcoming birth of their long-awaited grandchild. They were so happy that they paid little attention to his wife's cough.

It's an oversight that may forever haunt him. Within days, his wife, his daughter and his unborn grandchild were all dead, among the tens of thousands killed as the coronavirus ravaged India in April and May.

"Everyone whom I loved the most has left me," the 71-year-old said on a recent night as a Hindu priest chanted mantras and performed a ritual for the dead at his home in the northern city of Lucknow. "I am left alone in this world now."

As India emerges from its darkest days of the pandemic, families across the country are grieving all that they've lost and are left wondering if more could have been done to avoid this tragedy.

There are also signs that the virus is not done devastating India's families because even as new infections are down, thousands are still dying each day and the illness is believed to be spreading undetected in areas without access to testing.

Ruby Srivastava lost her family in a single week in April. First her mother and father to the virus. Then her brother to a motorcycle accident. And finally her grandmother to shock.

Now the 21-year-old is left dealing with the insurmountable pain and the questions she asks herself.

She wonders if things might have been different if her father, a government worker in Lucknow, hadn't been called away to help hold local elections in their state of more than 200 million people.

Health experts had warned against holding the polls. Fearing the virus, many of the hundreds of thousands of government workers ordered to help out had begged not to go. But the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's government in Uttar Pradesh state insisted the vote would go ahead as planned.

For four days, more than 1.3 million candidates fought for nearly 800,000 seats. Tens of millions voted as the virus spread unchecked.

In the days that followed, scores of government employees who worked the polls would die. One teachers union said 1,600 educators alone were killed, many of them complaining of fever and breathlessness.

Srivastava wonders what would have happened if her father's superiors believed him and hadn't denied his requests for sick leave until finally he fainted in his office and was sent home.

She wonders if her father could have been saved had he gotten better treatment at the government-run hospital they took him to before deciding they would take care of him themselves at home.

At the height of the surge, Indian hospitals were overwhelmed and life-saving drugs and oxygen were in short supply. People were dying on their way to health centers, gasping for breath. Families were panicking.

Once back home, Srivastava's family paid an exorbitant price for an oxygen cylinder for her father. They were so relieved they almost didn't notice that her mother was also coughing.

"Our full attention was on our father," Srivastava said. "So we did not realize that she was also facing problems."

Her mother's situation quickly grew worse and on April 22 she died. A day later so did her father.

After their cremations, Srivastava's younger brother was taking their ashes on his motorcycle for a ceremony to immerse them in the Ganges River when he was killed in an accident. Three days after that, her heartbroken grandmother died of cardiac arrest.

Srivastava's entire family had been wiped out in a few devastating days.

Pramanik also has regrets about his family's final days.

Most of all he wishes he had paid attention to his wife's cough and off-and-on fever and never held the party for his daughter, Navanita. They had been so excited that their daughter was finally pregnant after nine years of trying and had grown complacent with health protocols at a time when they thought they were safe from the virus.

Friends suggested his wife get tested for COVID-19, but she refused.

To make matters worse, the day after the party he and his wife traveled to Navanita's house on the fringes of the capital. There the two women talked all night, making arrangements for the baby's birth in June.

Within 24 hours Pramanik's wife's fever returned, she complained of breathlessness and she was hospitalized. Three days later she died.

Distraught, the father and daughter returned to Lucknow by train. A promise was made that Navanita would take care of him.

"She told me: 'You are not alone. I am with you,'" he recalled.

When they got home, Navanita started showing symptoms.

Over the next five days the virus took over her body. She was hospitalized and finally shifted to an intensive-care unit and hooked up to a ventilator.

On the night of April 17, Pramanik and his son-in-law sat outside the ICU trying to console one another. Together they wept.

The next morning, doctors told them they needed to find a better-equipped medical facility for Navanita. Frantic calls around the city were met with refusals. Beds were full nearly everywhere.

After hours of trying, they finally found space for her. It was too late. Navanita died on the way to the new hospital, her unborn child inside her.

Two months later, Pramanik is still wracked with guilt. If only he had made different decisions, he tells himself, his wife and daughter would still be alive. He would be a grandfather.

"Sometimes I feel I have killed my wife and daughter," he said. "This thought keeps me awake the whole night."

## Harris targets corruption, immigration on Latin America trip

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE and CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN Associated Press

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — With Kamala Harris visiting Guatemala and Mexico on her first foreign trip as vice president, the Biden administration is expected to announce new measures to fight smuggling and trafficking, and hopes to announce additional anti-corruption efforts as well on Monday, a senior administration official said.

The official, who briefed reporters traveling with Harris on Sunday, spoke on condition of anonymity to preview announcements before they have been made public. No further details were provided.

Harris has been tasked by President Joe Biden with addressing the root causes of the spike in migration to the U.S.-Mexico border, and her aides say corruption will be a central focus of her meetings with Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei on Monday and Mexico's Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador on Tuesday.

"Corruption really does sap the the wealth of any country, and in Central America is at a scale where it is a large percentage of GDP across the region," said special envoy Ricardo Zuniga.

"We see corruption as one of the most important root causes to be dealt with," Zuniga added.

The trip got off to a rocky start when Harris' plane returned to Joint Base Andrews in Maryland about 30 minutes after takeoff because of what her spokesperson said was a problem with the landing gear. She departed on another plane and landed late Sunday in in Guatemala City, where she was met by Foreign Minister Pedro Brolo.

Harris is seeking to secure commitments from Guatemala and Mexico for greater cooperation on border security and economic investment, and aides say she will also discuss vaccine sharing during her meetings.

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But corruption in the region — a far more intractable challenge — will complicate her efforts.

It's already had a significant impact on her work in Central America. Harris has yet to engage substantively with the leaders of Honduras and El Salvador, who are both embroiled in corruption scandals.

Giammattei has faced criticism over corruption within his own government. Zuniga acknowledged that the U.S. government faces a challenge in working with him but argued Harris was in the country in part to have a direct conversation with the president about this and other issues.

"The best way to deal with these cases where you have a very complex relationship in a country like Guatemala is to talk clearly and plainly as partners, as countries that have to get along" he said.

Harris has laid out an approach centered on creating better opportunities and living conditions in the region through humanitarian and economic aid. She announced plans to send \$310 million to provide support for refugees and address food shortages, and recently secured commitments from a dozen companies and organizations to invest in the Northern Triangle countries to promote economic opportunity and job training.

Washington won some goodwill through its vaccine diplomacy this past week. Giammattei and López Obrador both received calls from Harris on Thursday telling them the U.S. would be sending 500,000 doses and 1 million doses, respectively, of COVID-19 vaccine.

While in Guatemala, Harris also plans to meet community leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs. In Mexico, she will speak with female entrepreneurs and hold a roundtable with labor workers.

She's underscored the need to address corruption in public remarks and events. In a May meeting with a number of leading voices on Guatemala's justice system, she noted her work as a prosecutor and said that "injustice is a root cause of migration."

"Part of giving people hope is having a very specific commitment to rooting out corruption in the region," she said.

Harris has also raised the issue during virtual meetings with the leaders of both countries, and aides say she will do it again during meetings on her trip. During their past conversations, they have discussed areas of mutual interest — improving port security, fighting smuggling networks, going after corrupt actors — and the goal of this trip is to turn that talk into action, aides say.

While the vice president will make announcements concerning new efforts at cooperation and new programs, she's not expected to announce any new aid during her trip.

While in Latin America, Harris will also have to navigate the politics of immigration. Congressional Republicans have criticized both Biden and Harris for deciding not to visit the border, and contend the administration is ignoring what they say is a crisis there. April was the second-busiest month on record for unaccompanied children encountered at the U.S.-Mexico border, following March's all-time high. The Border Patrol's total encounters in April were up 3% from March, marking the highest level since April 2000.

Conservatives will be watching Harris closely for any missteps, hoping to drag her into further controversy on an issue that they see as a political winner.

In her efforts to win commitments on corruption from the region's leaders, Harris can point to a number of moves by the Biden administration last week.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken emphasized the problem during his own recent trip to Central America. The White House issued a memo elevating foreign corruption to a major national security issue, and directed all federal agencies to prioritize it and modernize their foreign corruption-fighting tools.

Eric Olson, director of policy at the Seattle International Foundation, which works to promote good governance in Central America, said that addressing corruption will take particular diplomatic skill. Harris will need to hold the leaders of Guatemala and Mexico accountable while also deepening trust and cooperation with the two nations.

"The challenge that she faces is how to, on the one hand, have a conversation, keep the door open — while not seeming to ignore the obvious elephant in the room, which is this incredible penetration of the state by corrupt actors," he said.

In Mexico, López Obrador continues to face a complicated security situation in many parts of the country. Nearly three-dozen candidates or pre-candidates were killed before this weekend's midterm elections as drug cartels sought to protect their interests. The government's inability to provide security in parts

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of the country is of interest to the U.S. in an immigration context, both for the people who are displaced by violence and the impact it has on a severely weakened economy trying reemerge from the pandemic.

The number of Mexicans encountered by U.S. Customs and Border Protection rose steadily from December through April. Mexico remains a key U.S. ally in trying to slow immigration, not only of its own citizens, but those crossing its territory. Successive U.S. administrations have effectively tried to push their immigration enforcement goals south to Mexico and Guatemala.

Nongovernmental organizations placed Guatemala's widespread corruption at the top of their list of concerns before Harris' visit.

Last month, two lawyers who are outspoken critics of Giammattei's administration were arrested on what they say were trumped-up charges aimed at silencing them.

The selection of judges for Guatemala's Constitutional Court, its highest, was mired in influence peddling and alleged corruption. Giammattei picked his chief of staff to fill one of the five vacancies. When Gloria Porras, a respected force against corruption, was elected to a second term, the congress controlled by Giammattei's party refused to seat her.

Harris' visit comes with high expectations, but experts say clear progress on corruption may be elusive. "These are societies built on corruption," said Olson. "You're not gonna have an impact in six months."

## Oldest male chimpanzee in US dies at San Francisco zoo

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The oldest male chimpanzee living in an accredited North American zoo died Saturday at the San Francisco Zoo & Gardens. He was 63.

The chimpanzee, named Cobby, had been a hand-reared performing chimpanzee before he was brought to the San Francisco zoo in the 1960s. Although the zoo said in a news release that the chimpanzee's cause of death had not been determined, the animal had recently been ill and zoo officials believe old age was a factor.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature lists chimpanzees as endangered, and they are considered among the most at-risk primates in Africa due to hunting, habitat loss and disease.

The average life expectancy of the 100,000 to 200,000 chimpanzees living in the wild is 33 years, while it is between 50 and 60 years under human care, the zoo said.

Cobby was integral in bringing together the San Francisco Zoo's chimpanzee population, officials said, and acted like the elder of the troop.

"Cobby was part of San Francisco," said Tanya M. Peterson, executive director of the San Francisco Zoological Society, in a statement. "He touched so many lives, and people have so many memories of him. He is irreplaceable, and our hearts are broken. We will all miss seeing his handsome grey beard watching over us from the top platform of the yard."

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## Clarence Williams III, 'The Mod Squad's' Linc, dies at 81

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Clarence Williams III, who played the cool undercover cop Linc Hayes on the counterculture series "The Mod Squad" and Prince's father in "Purple Rain," has died. He was 81.

Williams died Friday at his home in Los Angeles after a battle with colon cancer, his manager Allan Mindel said Sunday. Tributes came quickly on social media from both those who worked with Williams and those who admired him for his trailblazing roles and impactful performances.

"Tales from the Hood" director Rusty Cundieff tweeted that his sadness over Williams' passing, "cannot be overstated. His artistry and sheer coolness was extraordinary. I will forever be in his debt for his brilliant performance in Tales From the Hood. Loved working with him! Blessed travels good sir!"

Lenny Kravitz wrote on Twitter, "When I was a kid growing up in NYC Clarence Williams III was a face on TV that I identified with and that inspired me. From the Mod Squad, to Purple Rain and Sugar Hill, he always performed with dynamic energy. Rest in power, king."

Director Peyton Reed tweeted that he worked with Williams on the TV movie "The Love Bug" in 1995.

"I had grown up watching him as Linc in 'The Mod Squad' and thought he was the epitome of cool. Turns out he was. Rest In Peace, Clarence," Reed wrote.

A native of New York, Williams career spanned over five decades in theater, television and film. He was born into a creative family in 1939 and raised by his musical grandparents. His grandfather was a jazz composer and pianist, his father a musician and his mother, Eva Taylor, a singer and actress. He got his acting start on Broadway after a stint as a paratrooper and received a Tony nomination for his role in William Hanley's "Slow Dance on the Killing Ground" in 1964.

His breakout role would come with "The Mod Squad," which he led with Peggy Lipton and Michael Cole.

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Bill Cosby had seen Williams perform and told Aaron Spelling he should consider him for the role of Linc. The show ran from on ABC from 1968 through 1973. A trailblazing show for attempting to portray the hippie generation of the time, "The Mod Squad" was a star-maker for all three. But roles were not quick to follow for Williams.

He appeared on Broadway opposite Maggie Smith in Tom Stoppard's "Night and Day" in 1979 before getting cast as the troubled father in "Purple Rain," which came out in 1984.

Director John Frankenheimer would become a frequent collaborator. They first teamed up for his adaptation of Elmore Leonard's "52 Pick-Up" at a time when Williams was not having much luck in Hollywood and crashing on Cosby's couch to keep a roof over his head.

"He asked me to read for the part of one of the blackmailers, but after only four lines, he told me to stop," Williams recalled in a 1999 interview. "I thought it was all over, but he said, 'Have your agent call me. It will be a 10-week shoot. Thank you for coming in.' That was it."

Williams also appeared in Frankenheimer's "Against the Wall," "Reindeer Games" and some episodes of "Tales from the Crypt."

Williams could command a variety of genres, including comedy. He played a drug lord opposite Dave Chappelle in "Half Baked" and stole scenes in Keenen Ivory Wayans' blaxploitation parody film "I'm Gonna Get You Sucka." He also had a recurring role as the FBI agent in David Lynch's "Twin Peaks" who tells Agent Cooper he's been suspended.

Other film roles included "Tales from the Hood," "Deep Cover," "Sugar Hill," "The General's Daughter," Lee Daniels' "The Butler" and an uncredited role in "American Gangster." And he had many, many television appearances on everything from "Miami Vice" and "Hill Street Blues" to "Everybody Hates Chris" and "Justified."

He was married to the actress Gloria Foster from 1967 to 1984.

Williams never fretted over his longtime association with "The Mod Squad," though.

"All most people know about me is the two hours they've invested in a movie theater or the time spent in front of their TV," he said in an interview in 1999. "There's so much entertainment out there right now, it's difficult to break through and become part of the national consciousness. It's nice to be recognized, and I have no problem with it at all."

## Last of Soviet soldiers who liberated Auschwitz dies at 98

BERLIN (AP) — David Dushman, the last surviving Soviet soldier involved in the liberation of the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz, has died. He was 98.

The Jewish Community of Munich and Upper Bavaria said Sunday that Dushman had died at a Munich hospital on Saturday.

"Every witness to history who passes on is a loss, but saying farewell to David Dushman is particularly painful," said Charlotte Knobloch, a former head of Germany's Central Council of Jews. "Dushman was right on the front lines when the National Socialists' machinery of murder was destroyed."

As a young Red Army soldier, Dushman flattened the forbidding electric fence around the notorious Nazi death camp with his T-34 tank on Jan. 27, 1945.

He admitted that he and his comrades didn't immediately realize the full magnitude of what had happened in Auschwitz.

"Skeletons everywhere," he recalled in a 2015 interview with Munich newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung. "They stumbled out of the barracks, they sat and lay among the dead. Terrible. We threw them all of our canned food and immediately drove on, to hunt fascists."

More than a million people, most of them Jews deported there from all over Europe, were murdered by the Nazis at Auschwitz-Birkenau between 1940 and 1945.

Dushman earlier took part in some of the bloodiest military encounters of World War II, including the battles of Stalingrad and Kursk. He was seriously wounded three times but survived the war, one of just 69 soldiers in his 12,000-strong division.

His father — a former military doctor— was meanwhile imprisoned and later died in a Soviet punishment camp after falling victim to one of Josef Stalin's purges.

After the war, Dushman helped train the Soviet Union's women's national fencing team for four decades and witnessed the attack by eight Palestinian terrorists on the Israeli team at the 1972 Munich Olympics, which resulted in the deaths of 11 Israelis, five of the Palestinians and a German policeman.

Later in life, Dushman visited schools to tell students about the war and the horrors of the Holocaust. He also regularly dusted off his military medals to participate in veterans gatherings.

"Dushman was a legendary fencing coach and the last living liberator of the Auschwitz concentration camp," the International Olympic Committee said in a statement.

IOC President Thomas Bach paid tribute to Dushman, recounting how as a young fencer for what was then West Germany he was offered "friendship and counsel" by the veteran coach in 1970 "despite Mr Dushman's personal experience with World War II and Auschwitz, and he being a man of Jewish origin."

"This was such a deep human gesture that I will never ever forget it," Bach said in a statement.

Dushman trained some of the Soviet Union's most successful fencers, including Valentina Sidorova, and continued to give lessons well into his 90s, the IOC said.

Details on funeral arrangements weren't immediately known. Dushman's wife, Zoja, died several years ago.

## Serena Williams loses at French Open; Federer withdraws

By JEROME PUGMIRE AP Sports Writer

PARIS (AP) — Serena Williams turns 40 in September. Roger Federer hits that milestone the month before. No one knows how many more French Open appearances each will make, and this year's tournament ended for both on Sunday.

Williams fell way behind and could not put together a comeback against a much younger and less-experienced opponent in the fourth round at Roland Garros, losing 6-3, 7-5 to Elena Rybakina — who wasn't even born when the American made her tournament debut in 1998.

Asked whether that might have been her last match at the clay-court major, Williams responded: "Yeah, I'm definitely not thinking about it at all. I'm definitely thinking just about other things, but not about that."

Her defeat came hours after Federer withdrew, saying he needed to let his body recover ahead of Wimbledon after a long third-round victory that ended at nearly 1 a.m. on Sunday.

Wimbledon — which Federer has won eight times and Williams seven — begins June 28.

"I'm kind of excited to switch surfaces," Williams said. "Historically I have done pretty well on grass."

She has won 23 Grand Slam singles titles; Federer has won 20. They are two of the sport's greatest and most popular players, so it was quite a blow to the tournament, its TV partners and tennis fans to see both gone from the French Open field one after the other — and a week after Naomi Osaka pulled out, citing a need for a mental health break.

Williams has won the French Open three times. But the American hasn't been past the fourth round in Paris since she was the runner-up in 2016.

Rybakina is a 21-year-old from Kazakhstan who is ranked 22nd. This was just the seventh Grand Slam appearance for Rybakina — and the first time she ever made it so much as past the second round.

"When I was small, of course, I was watching her matches on TV. So many Grand Slams," Rybakina said.

Against Williams, whose right thigh carried a heavy tape job, Rybakina hit big, flat serves. She dealt with, but managed to steady, her nerves. She even produced the occasional return winner off Williams' speedy and spectacularly gifted serve, breaking her five times, including in the next-to-last game.

"I knew that the serve was going to be difficult for me to return. She's powerful, but I was ready," Rybakina said. "Then, after few points, I felt ... comfortable."

Rybakina said she followed her coach's strategy of sending shots to Williams' backhand side and trying to stay away from her forehand.

Every time Williams appeared as if she might turn things around, she could not quite get the momentum fully in her favor.



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Down a quick break in the second set, she got to 2-all. Williams then was down 4-3 in the second set but pulled even again when Rybakina sailed a forehand well wide to get broken.

In the next game, Williams gave away the opening point when, near the baseline, she failed to get out of the way of a shot from Rybakina that was flying long. Williams smiled ruefully and leaned over, resting and propping herself up with her racket.

Repeatedly one sort of mistake or another undid Williams. She ended up with 19 unforced errors and only 15 winners.

"I'm so close. There is literally a point here, a point there, that could change the whole course of the match," Williams said. "I'm not winning those points. That, like, literally could just change everything."

Since winning the 2017 Australian Open while pregnant for her most recent major singles title — No. 23 set a record for the professional era — Williams has come close to tying Margaret Court's all-time mark of 24. That includes four runner-up finishes at Grand Slam tournaments, most recently against Bianca Andreescu at the 2019 U.S. Open.

But since then, Williams has been beaten twice in semifinals, and once each in the third and fourth rounds. Last year at the French Open, she withdrew before the second round, citing an injured left Achilles.

Federer, meanwhile, never had pulled out of a Grand Slam tournament once he had started competing in it until now.

Rybakina next will meet Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova with a semifinal berth on the line; they're playing doubles together and are scheduled to play a third-round match in that event Monday. Pavlyuchenkova advanced with a 5-7, 6-3, 6-2 victory over two-time Australian Open champion Victoria Azarenka.

The other quarterfinal on that side of the women's draw is going to be Paula Badosa against Tamara Zidansek. Neither has been this far at a major tournament, either.

One of those four players will become a first-time Grand Slam finalist next weekend.

Stefanos Tsitsipas is still looking for his first major final, too, and he reached the quarterfinals at Roland Garros for the second year in a row by eliminating 12th-seeded Pablo Carreno Busta 6-3, 6-2, 7-5.

Tsitsipas next faces No. 2 Daniil Medvedev, who has won six of their previous seven meetings.

Medvedev is a two-time Grand Slam finalist — at the 2019 U.S. Open and this year's Australian Open — but was 0-4 for his career in Paris until now. He advanced Sunday by eliminating No. 22 Cristian Garin 6-2, 6-1, 7-5.

The other quarterfinal on that side of the field will be No. 6 Alexander Zverev of Germany against unseeded 22-year-old Alejandro Davidovich Fokina of Spain. Davidovich Fokina beat Federico Delbonis 6-4, 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 to reach his first Grand Slam quarterfinal, before Zverev made quick work of Kei Nishikori 6-4, 6-1, 6-1 at night in a matchup between two past U.S. Open runners-up.

## Meghan and Harry welcome second child, Lilibet 'Lili' Diana

By LINDSEY BAHR and JONATHAN LANDRUM Associated Press

Prince Harry and Meghan may have stepped away from their royal duties — but family appeared to be top of mind in naming their second child, Lilibet "Lili" Diana Mountbatten-Windsor, who was born Friday in California.

The name pays tribute to both Harry's grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, whose family nickname is Lilibet, and his late mother, Princess Diana.

"Thank you for your continued kindness and support during this very special time for our family," Harry and Meghan, also known as the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, wrote in a statement that accompanied the birth announcement Sunday.

The baby is "more than we could have ever imagined, and we remain grateful for the love and prayers we've felt from across the globe," they continued.

The baby girl was born at 11:40 a.m. at the Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara, California, and weighed in at 7 lbs, 11 oz, a spokesperson for the couple said. The child is eighth in line to the British throne.

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A Buckingham Palace spokesperson said the queen; Harry's father, Prince Charles; his brother, Prince William; and other members of the family had been informed and are "delighted with the news of the birth of a daughter for The Duke and Duchess of Sussex."

U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson also congratulated the couple in a tweet.

Harry and Meghan Markle — formerly an actor — married at Windsor Castle in May 2018 and welcomed their son, Archie Harrison Mountbatten-Windsor, a year later.

No photos of the newborn or the Sussexes accompanied the announcement. The couple has said that in lieu of gifts, they request those interested learn about or support nonprofit organizations working for women and girls, including Girls Inc., Harvest Home, CAMFED or Myna Mahila Foundation.

The birth of the healthy baby girl opens a happy chapter for the couple following a miscarriage in July 2020. Meghan gave a personal account of that traumatic experience in hope of helping others.

Months before the miscarriage, the couple announced they were quitting royal duties and moving to North America, citing what they said were the unbearable intrusions and racist attitudes of the British media. They live in Montecito, an upscale area near Santa Barbara, California.

In the wake of quitting royal duties, they gave an explosive TV interview to Oprah Winfrey in March, in which the couple described painful comments about how dark Archie's skin might be before his birth and Meghan talked about the intense isolation she felt inside the royal family that led her to contemplate suicide.

Buckingham Palace said the allegations of racism made by the couple were "concerning" and would be addressed privately.

Winfrey and Harry recently collaborated on the Apple TV+ mental-health series "The Me You Can't See."

In the interview with Oprah, Meghan also talked about the fact that her son was not given the title of prince. Harry said the royal family cut him off financially after he announced plans to step back from his roles — and that he was able to afford security for his family because of the money his mother left behind.

Despite leaving royal duties, Harry's place in the order of succession to the throne remains.

The first seven places remain unchanged: Prince Charles; Prince William; William's children, Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis; Prince Harry, and his son, Archie.

Lilibet's birth moves Prince Andrew, who was born second in line in 1960, down to ninth place.

## Russian opposition figure leaves country for Ukraine

MOSCOW (AP) — A well-known Russian opposition politician who was held in police custody for two days last week in a criminal investigation said Sunday that he has left the country for Ukraine.

Dmitry Gudkov said in a Facebook post that sources in Kremlin circles had told him "that if I do not leave the country, the fake criminal case will continue until my arrest."

Gudkov said he believes the investigation was aimed at preventing him from running for the national parliament this year. He was a parliament member in 2011-16.

Gudkov was detained at his country house last week in connection with an investigation into money allegedly owed to the city for rental of office space. He was released without charges Thursday.

His detention came as authorities continue to crack down on dissent ahead of September's parliamentary elections.

Last week, a court sent prominent opposition figure Andrei Pivovarov to jail for two months pending a probe into his actions as head of the Open Russia group, which authorities have declared an undesirable organization. Pivovarov had announced the group was disbanding several days before his arrest.

## Merkel's party fends off far-right challenge in state vote

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives handily batted away a challenge from the far right in a state election Sunday that was seen as the last big test for Germany's political parties before a national vote in September.

Projections by public broadcaster ARD put Merkel's center-right Christian Democratic Union at 36.6%, a

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gain of more than 6 percentage points compared to the last election five years ago in the sparsely populated state of 2.2 million inhabitants.

The far-right Alternative for Germany, or AfD, was projected to get 22% of the vote, a slight drop compared to 2016. The party has moved steadily further to the right in recent years and its chapter in Saxony-Anhalt has come under increased scrutiny from Germany's domestic intelligence service for its ties to extremist groups.

While elections in Germany's 16 states are often influenced by local issues and voting sentiments, they are also seen as important bellwethers for the national mood. A strong win for the CDU would be seen as a sign that the party's new leader, Armin Laschet, can hope for support from both conservatives and centrists on Sept. 26, when it aims to hold onto power at the federal level despite four-term chancellor Merkel not running again.

The election result, if projections based on partial counts are confirmed, would be a strong endorsement for incumbent governor Reiner Haseloff of the CDU, who now has the comfort of being able to pick from as many as four possible coalitions with smaller parties. For the past five years, the 67-year-old has governed in an unprecedented coalition with the center-left Social Democrats and environmentalist Greens.

Haseloff, whose popularity in the state was a strong pull for voters, ruled out any cooperation with AfD or the ex-communist Left party, who were projected to get 11% of the vote — a record low in the state.

The Social Democrats also fared worse than five years ago and were expected to get about 8.4%, while the Greens made modest gains to take 6%. Projections also showed that the pro-business Free Democrats entered the state assembly again after missing out five years ago, receiving 6.5%.

A final result wasn't likely before late Sunday or Monday, as many mail-in ballots had yet to be counted.

Haseloff expressed relief that voters backed centrist parties at the expense of the political fringes, saying the outcome showed a "big, big majority had made a democratic choice and drawn a clear demarcation line to the right." Aside from its core message against immigration, the AfD this year campaigned strongly against pandemic restrictions and its election posters urged voters to demonstrate their "resistance" at the ballot box.

But Karamba Diaby, who chairs the Social Democrats' chapter in the state's biggest city, Halle, said the fact that the far right had again won more than a fifth of the total vote was "very sad for democracy."

Diaby, who also represents his party in the national parliament, said the Social Democrats had failed to capitalize on their achievements in the state government — an argument that has also been used to explain its poor results at the federal level.

"It's clear that we're not going to stick our heads in the sand," he said. "The election campaign for the Bundestag starts tomorrow."

## Normandy commemorates D-Day with small crowds, but big heart

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER, France (AP) — When the sun rises over Omaha Beach, revealing vast stretches of wet sand extending toward distant cliffs, one starts to grasp the immensity of the task faced by Allied soldiers on June 6, 1944, landing on the Nazi-occupied Normandy shore.

The 77th anniversary of D-Day was marked Sunday with several events to commemorate the decisive assault that led to the liberation of France and Western Europe from Nazi control, and honor those who fell.

"These are the men who enabled liberty to regain a foothold on the European continent, and who in the days and weeks that followed lifted the shackles of tyranny, hedgerow by Normandy hedgerow, mile by bloody mile," Britain's ambassador to France, Lord Edward Llewellyn, said at the inauguration of a new British monument to D-Day's heroes.

On D-Day, more than 150,000 Allied troops landed on the beaches code-named Omaha, Utah, Juno, Sword and Gold, carried by 7,000 boats. This year on June 6, the beaches stood vast and nearly empty as the sun emerged, exactly 77 years since the dawn invasion.

For the second year in a row, anniversary commemorations are marked by virus travel restrictions that

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prevented veterans or families of fallen soldiers from the U.S., Britain, Canada and other Allied countries from making the trip to France. Only a few officials were allowed exceptions.

At the newly-built British Normandy Memorial near the village of Ver-sur-Mer, bagpipes played memorial tunes and warplanes zipped overhead trailing red-white-and-blue smoke. Socially distanced participants stood in awe at the solemnity and serenity of the site, providing a spectacular and poignant view over Gold Beach and the English Channel.

The new monument pays tribute to those under British command who died on D-Day and during the Battle of Normandy.

A text carved on the wall writes: "They died so that Europe might be free."

Visitors stood to salute the more than 22,000 men and women, mostly British soldiers, whose names are etched on its stone columns. Giant screens showed D-Day veterans gathered simultaneously at Britain's National Memorial Arboretum to watch the Normandy event remotely. Prince Charles, speaking via video link, expressed regret that he couldn't attend in person.

On June 6, 1944, "In the heart of the mist that enveloped the Normandy Coast ... was a lightning bolt of freedom," French Defense Minister Florence Parly told the ceremony. "France does not forget. France is forever grateful."

Charles Shay, a Penobscot Native American who landed as an U.S. army medic on June 6, 1944 and now calls Normandy home, was the only surviving D-Day veteran at the Ver-sur-Mer ceremony.

Another veteran of the Battle of Normandy, British Capt. David Mylchreest, was also present. He landed with his team in Normandy on June 12, 1944, to replace officers who had died in the first days of the fight.

Shay then took part in a commemoration at the American Cemetery later in the day in Colleville-sur-Mer, on a bluff overseeing Omaha Beach, in the presence of officials from the United States, Canada, Britain, Germany and other allied countries.

The cemetery contains 9,380 graves, most of them for servicemen who lost their lives in the D-Day landings and ensuing operations. Another 1,557 names are inscribed on the Walls of the Missing.

Most public events have been canceled, and the official ceremonies were limited to a small number of selected guests and dignitaries.

Denis van den Brink, a WWII expert working for the town of Carentan, site of a strategic battle near Utah Beach, acknowledged the "big loss, the big absence is all the veterans who couldn't travel."

"That really hurts us very much because they are all around 95, 100 years old, and we hope they're going to last forever. But, you know..." he said.

"At least we remain in a certain spirit of commemoration, which is the most important," he told The Associated Press.

Over the anniversary weekend, many local residents have come out to visit the monuments marking the key moments of the fight and show their gratitude to the soldiers. French World War II history enthusiasts, and a few travelers from neighboring European countries, could also be seen in jeeps and military vehicles on the small roads of Normandy.

Some reenactors came to Omaha Beach in the early hours of the day to pay tribute to those who fell that day, bringing flowers and American flags.

On D-Day, 4,414 Allied troops lost their lives, 2,501 of them Americans. More than 5,000 were wounded. On the German side, several thousand were killed or wounded.

Normandy has more than 20 military cemeteries holding mostly Americans, Germans, French, British, Canadians and Polish troops who took part in the historic battle.

Dignitaries stressed the importance of keeping D-Day's legacy alive for future generations.

"In the face of the threats of today, we should act together and show unity," Parly said, "so that the peace and freedom last."

## Pope voices 'pain' over Canadian deaths, doesn't apologize

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

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VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis on Sunday expressed his pain over the discovery in Canada of the remains of 215 Indigenous students of church-run residential schools and pressed religious and political authorities to shed light on “this sad affair.” But he didn’t offer the apology sought by the Canadian prime minister.

Francis, in remarks to faithful gathered in St. Peter’s Square, also called on the authorities to foster healing but made no reference to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s insistence, two days earlier, that the Vatican apologize and take responsibility.

From the 19th century until the 1970s, more than 150,000 Indigenous children were forced to attend state-funded Christian schools, the majority of them run by Roman Catholic missionary congregations, in a campaign to assimilate them into Canadian society.

The Canadian government has admitted that physical and sexual abuse was rampant in the schools, with students beaten for speaking their native languages.

Ground-penetrating radar was used to confirm the remains of the children at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Kamloops, British Columbia, last month. The school was Canada’s largest such facility and was operated by the Catholic Church between 1890 and 1969.

“I am following with pain the news that arrives from Canada about the upsetting discovery of the remains of 215 children,” Francis said in his customary Sunday noon remarks to the public.

“I join with the Canadian bishops and the entire Catholic Church in Canada in expressing my closeness to the Canadian people traumatized by the shocking news,” Francis said.

“This sad discovery adds to the awareness of the sorrows and sufferings of the past,” he added.

Trudeau on Friday blasted the church for being “silent” and “not stepping up,” and called on it to formally apologize and to make amends for its prominent role in his nation’s former system of church-run Indigenous residential schools.

He noted that when he met with Francis at the Vatican in 2017, he had asked him to “move forward on apologizing” and on making records available. But, Trudeau said, “we’re still seeing resistance from the church, possibly from the church in Canada.”

Chief Rosanne Casimir of the Tk’emlups te Secwepemc First Nation in British Columbia has said her nation wants a public apology from the Catholic Church. The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, which ran nearly half of Canada’s residential schools, has yet to release any records about the Kamloops school, she also said.

Francis’ comments spoke of healing but not of apology.

“May the political and religious authorities continue to collaborate with determination to shed light on this sad affair and to commit humbly to a path of reconciliation and healing,” Francis said.

“These difficult moments represent a strong call to distance ourselves from the colonial model and from today’s ideological colonizing and to walk side by side in dialogue, in mutual respect and in recognizing rights and cultural values of all the daughters and sons of Canada,” the pope said.

“Let’s entrust to the Lord the souls of all those children, deceased in the residential schools of Canada,” the pontiff added. “Let us pray for the families and for the indigenous Canadian communities overcome by sorrow.” Francis then asked the public in the square below his window to join him in silent prayer.

Last week, the Vatican spokesman didn’t respond to requests for comment about the demands for a formal apology from the pope.

On Wednesday, Vancouver Archbishop Michael Miller tweeted his “deep apology and profound condolences to the families and communities that have been devastated by this horrific news.” The churchman, who leads Catholics in that British Columbia archdiocese, added that the church was “unquestionably wrong in implementing a government colonialist policy which resulted in devastation for children, families and communities.”

The United, Presbyterian and Anglican churches have apologized for their roles in the abuse, as has the Canadian government, which has offered compensation.

Among the many recommendations of a government-established Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a papal apology.

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In 2009, then Pope Benedict XVI met with former students and survivors and told them of his "personal anguish" over their suffering. But his words weren't described as an apology.

## Manchin's opposition clouds future of Dems' elections bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — A key Democratic senator says he will not vote for the largest overhaul of U.S. election law in at least a generation, leaving no plausible path forward for legislation that his party and the White House have portrayed as crucial for protecting access to the ballot.

"Voting and election reform that is done in a partisan manner will all but ensure partisan divisions continue to deepen," Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia wrote in a home-state newspaper, the Charleston Gazette-Mail.

He wrote that failure to bring together both parties on voting legislation would "risk further dividing and destroying the republic we swore to protect and defend as elected officials."

The bill would restrict partisan gerrymandering of congressional districts, strike down hurdles to voting and bring transparency to a murky campaign finance system. Among dozens of other provisions, it would require states to offer 15 days of early voting and allow no-excuse absentee balloting.

Democrats have pushed the legislation as the antidote to a wave of restrictive state voting laws sweeping the country, many inspired by former President Donald Trump's false claims of fraud in his 2020 election loss. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has pledged to bring the election bill to a vote the week of June 21, testing where senators stand. But without Manchin's support, the bill has no chance of advancing. Republicans are united against it.

In appearances on two Sunday news shows, Manchin stressed his reasons for opposing the bill, including his view that it is too broad.

"I think it's the wrong piece of legislation to bring our country together and unite our country and I'm not supporting that because I think it would divide us further," Manchin said. He also said he believes Republicans will see the need for a bipartisan deal.

"And if they think they're going to win by subverting and oppressing people from voting, they're going to lose. I assure you they will lose," he said.

Manchin said lawmakers should instead focus their energies on revitalizing the landmark Voting Rights Act, which was weakened by a Supreme Court decision in 2013. Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska has joined him in calling for that approach.

Manchin's opposition to the broader elections bill is just the latest challenge facing Democrats as they debate how to deliver their promises to voters. Manchin reiterated he would not vote "weaken or eliminate the filibuster," a route that many Democrats see as the only realistic path forward. The filibuster rule requires 60 votes to pass most bills, and in today's Senate, which is split 50-50, that means many of the Democrats' biggest priorities, from voting rights to gun control, are dead on arrival.

Manchin and Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., have frustrated their party by their defense of the filibuster. But they aren't alone, with as many as 10 Democratic senators also reluctant to change the rules.

President Joe Biden this past week used the 100th anniversary of Tulsa's race massacre to make a plea for legislation to protect the right to vote, which comes as Republican-led administrations in Texas and other states pass new restrictions making it tougher to cast ballots. Biden also seemed to call out Manchin and Sinema for stalling action on voting measures, though he has not said he wants to end the filibuster.

Biden said the right to vote was "precious" and must be protected, and pledged that June would be a "month of action" on Capitol Hill. "We're not giving up," Biden said. "I'm going to fight like heck with every tool at my disposal for its passage."

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky has promised to block the elections bill, which he characterizes as undue government overreach into state election systems. He said no GOP senators support it.

"I believe that partisan voting legislation will destroy the already weakening binds of our democracy, and for that reason, I will vote against the For the People Act," Manchin wrote. "Furthermore, I will not vote to weaken or eliminate the filibuster."

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In March, House Democrats passed the voting bill by a near party-line 220-210 vote. The legislation would restrict partisan gerrymandering of congressional districts, eliminate hurdles to voting and bring transparency to a campaign finance system that allows wealthy donors to anonymously bankroll political causes.

The measure has been a priority for Democrats since they won their House majority in 2018. But it has taken on added urgency in the wake of President Donald Trump's false claims about the 2020 election, which incited the Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol.

Manchin was interviewed Sunday on "Fox News Sunday" and "Face the Nation" on CBS.

## 'Conjuring 3' tops 'A Quiet Place 2' as moviegoing returns

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

The domestic box office is getting back to normal, with moderate wins and sizable second weekend drops. After its triumphant first weekend, "A Quiet Place Part II" fell 59% at the North American box office leaving room for the third movie in the "Conjuring" franchise to take first place. Warner Bros.' "The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It" earned an estimated \$24 million, according to studio estimates Sunday, making it the biggest R-rated opening of the pandemic. Paramount's "A Quiet Place" sequel meanwhile earned \$19.5 million in ticket sales, bringing its domestic total to \$88.6 million.

"You normally don't see two horror movies at the top of the chart. But it was a solid weekend for both movies," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "The movie theaters are coming back and Memorial Day was no flash in the pan ... It feels like summer again."

"The Conjuring 3" has Patrick Wilson and Vera Farmiga returning as paranormal investigators Ed and Lorraine Warren. Although there's a whole extended universe set around these films that have thus far grossed over \$1.8 billion, this is the first "Conjuring" since 2016, and the first to be helmed by someone other than James Wan (Michael Graves directed). With an additional \$26.8 million from international territories, globally, the R-rated pic has grossed over \$57.1 million.

"It's a terrific result," said Jeff Goldstein, the head of domestic distribution for Warner Bros. "We're continuing to see a ramp up of return to life outside of our homes. It was never going to be a light switch."

In a pre-pandemic world, "The Conjuring 3" might have been considered a bit disappointing—the previous installments both opened around \$40 million. But, as Goldstein noted, the third films in a horror franchise often take a hit. It has another caveat too: The film is also currently streaming free for subscribers on HBO Max. Warner Media did not say how many people watched it on streaming over the weekend or how many new customers signed up for the service.

It has become more normal than not for films to embrace a hybrid day-and-date release strategy, with the major studios using their biggest titles to drive potential subscribers to their streaming services. "A Quiet Place Part II" had the rare distinction of being exclusively in theaters, but even so it will be a shorter stint than usual before it hits Paramount+.

The Walt Disney Co.'s "Cruella," which opened in theaters last weekend, was also made available to rent on Disney+ for \$29.99. The Emma Stone and Emma Thompson pic added \$11.2 million from 3,922 theaters this weekend to take third place. Disney also did not say how much it earned from streaming rentals, but the company did note the drop from last weekend was only 48%. Globally, "Cruella" has earned \$87.1 million thus far.

The animated family film "Spirit Untamed" also opened wide theatrically this weekend in 3,211 theaters to an estimated \$6.2 million. The DreamWorks Animation film features the voices of Isabela Merced, Eiza González, Julianne Moore, Marsai Martin and Jake Gyllenhaal.

Most family films have gone straight to streaming over the past year and many big studios are opting to continue with the strategy for the near future. Disney and Pixar's "Luca" is skipping theaters and going straight to Disney+, where it will be free for subscribers on June 16. DreamWorks Animation's "Boss Baby" sequel is also debuting on Peacock Kids and in theaters on July 2.

The North American theatrical landscape is still a bit hobbled by the pandemic. Most Canadian theaters remain closed and around 27% of U.S. locations are still shuttered too. Many chains have also said vac-

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cinated customers can now go mask free in theaters.

Hollywood titles have also started performing better than they have been internationally during the pandemic over the past few weekends. In particular, Universal's latest in the "Fast & Furious" franchise, "F9," continued to pick up speed prior to its U.S. debut on June 25. This weekend "F9," which has already grossed \$256 million from eight territories, became one of only 19 U.S. movies to have earned more than \$200 million in China.

And although release strategies continue to differ company by company in unprecedented ways, Dergarabedian said the numbers are promising for the theatrical business even with the at-home viewing options.

"Over the past two weeks, the industry has been able to test out theatrical only ("A Quiet Place Part II"), a day and date with a (pay) subscription model ("Cruella") and a day and date that's part of a subscription ("The Conjuring 3"). The numbers have been solid," Dergarabedian said. "As long as we keep getting solid movies released, we're going to see the box office ramp up week after week."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It," \$24 million.
2. "A Quiet Place Part II," \$19.5 million.
3. "Cruella," \$11.2 million.
4. "Spirit Untamed," \$6.2 million.
5. "Raya and the Last Dragon," \$1.3 million.
6. "Wrath of Man," \$1.3 million.
7. "Spiral," \$890,000.
8. "Godzilla vs. Kong," \$463,000.
9. "Demon Slayer the Movie: Mugen Train," \$450,000.
10. "Dream Horse," \$230,053.

## Elise Stefanik, No. 3 House GOP member, announces pregnancy

SARATOGA, N.Y. (AP) — U.S. Rep. Elise Stefanik, whose loyalty to former president Donald Trump won her a leadership post in the House Republican caucus, announced on Twitter that she is expecting her first child.

The fourth-term Congress member from upstate New York tweeted Saturday, "We are absolutely overjoyed to announce that our small family of 2 will soon be 3! We're excited to share that we are expecting a baby this fall & we cannot wait to meet our precious bundle of joy."

The post on Twitter and Instagram included a photo of Stefanik and her husband, Matthew Manda, patting her baby bump.

Stefanik, 36, was first elected to Congress in 2014. She was elevated to the No. 3 position in the Republican caucus last month when party members ousted Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney from the position for pushing back against Trump's false claims that voting fraud cost him the 2020 presidential election.

After initially distancing herself from Trump, Stefanik has become one of the former president's fiercest defenders in the House.

## Trump's grievances cloud Republican agenda heading into 2022

By STEVE PEOPLES and GARY D. ROBERTSON Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Republicans are fighting to seize control of Congress. Just don't ask what they'd do if they win.

Look no further for evidence of the GOP's muddled governing agenda than battleground North Carolina, where party leaders packed into a convention hall Saturday night to cheer former President Donald Trump. Even with a high-stakes U.S. Senate election looming, the Republicans there were united not by



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any consistent set of conservative policies or principles, but by Trump's groundless grievances about the 2020 election and his attacks against critics in both parties.

The lack of a forward-looking agenda stands in stark contrast to successful midterm elections of past years, particularly 1994 and 2010, when Republicans swept into power after staking clear positions on health care, federal spending and crime, among other issues. Without such a strategy heading into 2022, Republicans on the ballot risk allowing themselves to be wholly defined by Trump, who lost his last election when he drew 7 million fewer votes nationally than Democrat Joe Biden and who has seen his popularity slide further, even among some Republicans, since leaving office in January.

"I'm unaware of a GOP agenda. I would love to see one," said Texas-based conservative activist and former tea party leader Mark Meckler.

"Nobody knows what they're about," he said of today's Republicans. "They do this at their own peril."

The GOP's embrace of Trump's self-serving priorities has almost completely consumed the party's long-standing commitment to fiscal discipline, free markets and even the rule of law. That leaves Republican candidates from North Carolina to North Dakota unwilling or unable to tell voters how they would address the nation's biggest challenges if given the chance.

Party leaders acknowledge it could be another year or more before Republicans develop a clear governing agenda. In the meantime, Trump, who is focused on the past far more than the future, plans to become a regular campaign fixture again. Building on Saturday's North Carolina appearance, his advisers are eyeing potential rallies in states with top Senate races in 2022, including Ohio, Florida, Alabama and Georgia.

In an interview, Florida Sen. Rick Scott, who leads the Senate Republican political arm, offered a lukewarm response when asked about Trump's role in the upcoming campaign.

"We both want to take back the majority in 2022. I tell him what I'm doing, and I'd love to get his support," Scott said of Trump.

He balked when asked whether Trump should serve as the face of the Republican Party for the midterms, when control of the House, Senate and dozens of governorships are at stake.

"The face of the party is each individual race," Scott said, noting that there will be hundreds of Republican candidates on midterm ballots. "The party is those people, it's not one person, it's not one person's agenda."

For now, when Republicans are not aligning themselves with Trump, they're focusing much of their energy on culture wars and railing against Biden's agenda. The president, backed by narrow Democratic majorities in the House and Senate, has already adopted a \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief package that was widely popular among voters. Now, he's pushing a massive infrastructure package that polls suggest could be equally popular.

Gov. Larry Hogan, R-Md., worries that Republicans could squander built-in advantages in their quest to win back control of Congress and expand their advantage with governorships. In recent history, the party out of the White House has almost always made significant gains in the first midterm election of a new presidency.

Democrats will lose control of Congress if Republicans flip just five seats in the House and only one in the Senate.

"The only way we can screw it up is with Donald Trump," Hogan told The Associated Press, lamenting that Republicans in Washington are consumed by infighting and "swearing fealty to one individual."

The two-term governor and frequent Trump critic continued: "I'm really kind of frustrated with the fact that the Republican Party doesn't seem to be focused on an agenda. It doesn't seem to be focused on putting up coherent arguments for what people care about."

Some Republican leaders close to Trump are encouraging him to look to the future.

The former president is set to meet this week with the chairman of the Republican Study Committee, Rep. Jim Banks of Indiana, to begin discussing the party's policy prescriptions should the GOP retake the House majority next year.

Trump has met privately with former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., and Sen. Lindsey Graham,

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R-S.C., in recent weeks to discuss the creation of policy document in line with Gingrich's famous "Contract With America," which outlined a clear and concise Republican agenda before the GOP's 1994 midterm success.

Trump adviser Jason Miller said it's "a bit of an overreach" to suggest Trump is actively working with Gingrich to create the document.

In the meantime, Republican candidates in key Senate contests, North Carolina among them, are struggling to offer voters a clear vision for what they would do if elected as they fight for Trump's endorsement.

At least three Republicans are competing to succeed retiring North Carolina Sen. Richard Burr, who was censured by state party leaders for supporting Trump's impeachment in February. The Republican nomination fight features former Gov. Pat McCrory, current Rep. Ted Budd and former Rep. Mark Walker.

After Trump's daughter-in-law Lara Trump bowed out of the race over the weekend, Trump formally endorsed Budd, the only candidate in the Republican primary who voted against certifying Trump's 2020 election loss.

Walker had called himself the most "pro-Trump congressman from North Carolina" but that apparently was not enough to win Trump's backing.

Beyond courting Trump, Budd has also played up the GOP's culture wars. In his kickoff video, the gun store owner addressed growing immigration at the border with Mexico and the decision by Dr. Seuss' publisher to stop printing some of the popular children's book author's books because of racist imagery. Budd said he read the books to his children "and they turned out just fine."

Trump slapped at McCrory in Saturday's address by reminding voters, without using his name, that the former Republican governor had previously lost two elections.

McCrory, who hails from the GOP's business wing, has embraced elements of Trump's agenda, but has been critical of Trump's false claims about election fraud.

"I'm not going to be diverted by talking about the past because I care about the future," he told the AP in April.

With 17 months before the 2022 general election and few voters paying close attention to the midterm jockeying, Republicans have time to develop an agenda that moves beyond Trump's grievances and conservative culture wars.

But it's unclear whether there is sufficient political will.

Scott, the Florida senator, said his party must ultimately communicate what it's for — instead of simply what it's against. But he noted that the "Contract With America" was released only two months before the 1994 election.

"I don't know if there will be a real contract for America, or everybody will just be more consistent with what they're talking about," Scott said of the Republican agenda in months ahead.

On Trump, Scott added, "I think he's going to be helpful."

## States rebound from bleak forecasts to pass record budgets

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Just a year ago, the financial future looked bleak for state governments as governors and lawmakers scrambled to cut spending amid the coronavirus recession that was projected to pummel revenue.

They laid off state workers, threatened big cuts to schools and warned about canceling or scaling back building projects, among other steps.

Today, many of those same states are flush with cash, and lawmakers are passing budgets with record spending. Money is pouring into schools, social programs and infrastructure. At the same time, many states are socking away billions of dollars in savings.

"It's definitely safe to say that states are in a much better fiscal situation than they anticipated," said Erica Mackellar, a fiscal analyst with the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Spending plans for the budget year that begins July 1 are up 10% or more in states spanning from

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Florida and Maryland to Colorado, Utah and Washington.

In Oklahoma, pandemic uncertainties last year prompted lawmakers to trim \$1.3 billion from their anticipated general revenue. That resulted in across-the-board cuts for public education and most state services.

This year, the new budget is up nearly 18%. That includes money to reduce class sizes in kindergarten and first grade, funding for a new children's behavioral health center and new incentives for businesses to make movies in Oklahoma. The Republican-led Legislature even set aside money to cut individual and corporate income tax rates and expand tax credits for a school choice program.

"Last year: shaky foundation. This year: solid foundation," said Republican state Sen. Roger Thompson, chairman of the chamber's budget-writing committee.

Many states experienced a similar turnaround. Fiscal analysts cite a variety of reasons.

The federal government poured billions of dollars into state coffers through a series of pandemic relief packages. Federal aid also sent billions more to U.S. households and businesses that, in turn, pumped money into the economy.

State finances also fared better than feared. Consumer spending rebounded to shore up sales tax revenue, and state income taxes were bolstered by a strong stock market and high-wage earners who kept working remotely while others were laid off.

The result is that states now face "a very promising fiscal and economic outlook over the next couple of years," said Justin Theal, a state fiscal research officer at The Pew Charitable Trusts.

A recent Pew report found that after an initial sharp plunge in tax revenue, 29 states recovered to take in as much or more during the peak pandemic period of March 2020 through February 2021 than they did during the same 12 months before the pandemic began.

Idaho, Utah, Colorado and South Carolina posted some of the biggest revenue gains along with South Dakota, which was one of the few states never to shut down. The Pew report also noted modest revenue gains for some states that imposed more aggressive coronavirus precautions on their economy, including California, Massachusetts and New York.

The \$212 billion budget enacted earlier this year in New York is up almost 10% over the previous one. Federal COVID-19 relief provided the bulk of that growth. But state spending alone still is up by 3.8% in the new budget, according to Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo's administration.

New York's bigger budget includes a mixture of ongoing and one-time spending, including a \$1.4 billion boost in basic aid for schools and a \$1.3 billion plan to overhaul Penn Station.

Florida's record \$101.5 billion budget is up roughly 11%, with bonuses for teachers, police and firefighters, and new construction projects at schools and colleges. Lawmakers decided they had money to spare, expanding sales tax breaks for school and hurricane supplies and creating a new tax-free week to buy museum and concert tickets and recreational gear for camping, fishing and surfing.

Florida is among several states that amplified their 2021-22 budgets with at least part of their share of a \$195 billion state aid package from the recent American Rescue Plan Act signed by President Joe Biden.

Shortly after that plan passed, Moody's Investors Service upgraded the outlook for states from negative to stable, citing stronger state finances and continued federal aid. It said the new federal aid equaled nearly 16% of states' own revenue for the 2019 fiscal year.

Many Republicans in Congress had criticized the Biden relief plan as excessive, especially in the amount of money going to state governments. Many states already had been seeing better-than-expected tax revenue even before the plan was signed into law in March.

Some states, such as Colorado, are waiting until later to decide how to use the latest COVID-19 relief funds because they have until the end of 2024 to spend it.

Even without the latest federal aid, Colorado's budget for the fiscal year starting July 1 is up more than 12% from the previous one, which had been pared back because of pandemic concerns.

Sen. Bob Rankin, a Republican member of the Legislature's Joint Budget Committee, said he is concerned about how that additional \$3.8 billion of federal aid will be spent.

"I'm afraid that we are spending money and making commitments that we will not be able to sustain

once that one-time federal money goes away," Rankin said.

In many states, lawmakers are devoting federal COVID-19 relief money to one-time purposes, such as additional aid to workers, expanded access to high-speed internet or replenishing depleted unemployment trust funds.

Missouri is among the states that has yet to decide what to do with the latest federal aid. The general revenue portion of its budget has rebounded from a fiscal 2021 cut to exceed pre-pandemic levels. And Missouri is on pace to shatter a record set in 1998 for its largest end-of-year cash balance.

"Revenues have performed much, much better than I would have ever anticipated during a pandemic," said state Budget Director Dan Haug.

He said he thinks Missouri would have been able to weather the pandemic without this year's Biden relief package.

Lawmakers in Maryland used words like "stunning" and "unique" to describe how federal aid helped reshape their budget situation. The state's record \$52.4 billion budget for its new fiscal year provides bonuses to state workers, boosts payments to the poor, builds parks and playgrounds in every county, and still sets aside about \$2 billion for savings.

"After spending almost the entire part of last year in sleepless nights trying to figure out what in the world we were going to do, to find yourselves in that position was pretty amazing," said Democratic state Sen. Guy Guzzone, chairman of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee.

## No mass protests after Honolulu police shoot, kill Black man

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER and MOGOMOTSI MAGOME Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Lindsay Myeni and her South African husband moved to Hawaii, where she grew up, believing it would be safer to raise their two Black children here than in another U.S. state.

Three months after they arrived, Honolulu police shot and killed her husband, 29-year-old Lindani Myeni, who was Black.

"We never thought anything like this would ever happen there," Lindsay Myeni, who is white, told The Associated Press in an interview from her husband's hometown, Empangeni in Kwazulu-Natal province.

To some, Lindani Myeni's death and the muted reaction from residents, is a reminder that Hawaii isn't the racially harmonious paradise it's held up to be.

The couple moved to Honolulu from predominately white Denver in January.

Hawaii, where white people are not the majority and many people identify as having multiple ethnicities, felt right: "We were refreshed to be back to somewhere that is so diverse."

Of Hawaii's 1.5 million residents, just 3.6% are Black, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. Yet in Honolulu alone, Black people made up more than 7% of the people police used force against, according to Honolulu police data for 2019.

While there have been some local gatherings and small protests decrying Myeni's death, it hasn't inspired the passionate outrage seen elsewhere in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd, a Black man killed last year by a white officer in Minnesota, and other killings by police.

Myeni's death "would have generated mass protests in any other American city," said Kenneth Lawson, a Black professor at University of Hawaii's law school.

"When you're told you live in a paradise and you point out that it's not paradise for people of color, that makes people uncomfortable," he said.

One reason for a lack of outrage, he said, is that police have released limited details of what happened. "What's being revealed is what they want us to see," he said.

According to police's account of the fatal shooting, Myeni entered a home that wasn't his, sat down and took off his shoes, prompting a frightened occupant to call 911. Outside the house, he ignored commands to get on the ground and physically attacked officers, leaving one with a concussion, police said.

Police released two brief clips from body camera footage, but it's difficult to make out what is happening in the dark. Three shots ring out and then an officer exclaims, "Police."

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A wrongful death lawsuit Lindsay Myeni filed against Honolulu alleges police were “motivated by racial discrimination towards people of Mr. Myeni’s African descent.”

Simply by being Black, he was seen as an “immediate threat,” that the Asian woman who called 911 needed to be protected from, she said.

Now-retired police Chief Susan Ballard, who is white, said at the time that officers reacted to Myeni’s behavior, not his race. “This person seriously injured the officers and their lives were in jeopardy,” she said.

Myeni’s widow thinks he mistook the home for a Hare Krishna temple next door. Earlier in the day, the family had visited culturally significant places as they drove to Oahu’s north shore. At one point, the couple prayed together, she recalled, because something felt off. He seemed stressed.

Because of that, she thinks her husband, who was Christian and connected to his Zulu culture, was seeking out a spiritual place in his new neighborhood.

Shortly before the shooting, she spoke to him by phone. He was on his way home, some five blocks away.

He was wearing his umqhele when he was shot, his widow said. The traditional Zulu headband, along with taking his shoes off at the door, meant he went to the house with respectful intentions, she said.

She believes their races contributed to a waning of shocked sentiment over his death. “White people don’t come from Hawaii, stereotypically. Black people don’t come from Hawaii, stereotypically. So even though I’m three generations of being there, if you look at my skin, you’ll say, ‘Oh must be a haole,’” she said using the Hawaiian word for foreigner.

But Myeni was indeed a newcomer to Hawaii, which might have contributed to the general reaction to his death, said Daphne Barbee-Wooten, former president of the African American Lawyers Association of Hawaii.

“Whereas if it was someone who people knew for a long period of time who got shot or killed, I think there might be more outrage because they would have been neighbors, gone to the same church,” she said.

“And I think a lot of African Americans who live here are outraged,” she said. “But do they take to the street about it? Not really.”

There are various reasons for that, she said, including people with military jobs who might not be allowed to protest publicly or those who are waiting to see results of an investigation into the shooting.

Ethan Caldwell, who is of Black and Asian descent and an assistant professor of ethnic studies at the University of Hawaii, said he can personally relate to the Myeni family feeling Hawaii would be relatively safer.

“I always ask the question to my students, safer for who?” he said. “Black folks have been present in the Hawaiian Kingdom since prior to the illegal annexation, but rarely do we see, hear, or disassociate them with the military in Hawaii in the present.”

Even though Hawaii is one of the few places where people of color are the majority, there are still anti-Black sentiment — at institutional and individual levels — he said, noting how businesses in Waikiki boarded up their windows ahead of a peaceful Black Lives Matter march last summer.

“We may not necessarily feel the same level of racism, anti-Blackness, discrimination, prejudice here as we do on the continent, but that doesn’t mean we still don’t face micro-aggressions on a daily basis, more so for some people,” Caldwell said. “I think some people might be more willing to deal with those because it doesn’t necessarily mean that their lives are at-risk.”

“But I think when it comes to seeing the more recent cases and the distance closing, the fact that it even happens here also puts some of that into question as well,” he said, referring to Honolulu police shooting and killing a 16-year-old Micronesian boy on April 5.

Another possible reason the death hasn’t prompted mass protests is because Hawaii strives to be seen as being different from the strife on the U.S. mainland, said Akiemi Glenn, founder and executive director of the Popolo Project, whose group name uses the Hawaiian word for a plant with dark purple or black berries that has also come to refer to Black people.

Acknowledging that Hawaii experiences racial bias in law enforcement like other parts of the country “explodes the myth that this is a paradise — whether it’s a racial paradise or vacation paradise — from all of your troubles on the mainland,” she said.

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Before his death, Lindsay Myeni said her husband didn't encounter racist incidents in Hawaii. She remembers that after a month here, he hugged her one day when he returned from the gym and thanked her for bringing him to Hawaii.

"And people are warm and friendly and they they're outgoing," she said. "And all the things he loved about South Africa, Hawaii has a lot of those."

In Denver, police stopped him while walking because he matched the description of a crime suspect. In South Africa, she would get "ugly stares" from some white people who saw her with a Black man.

"But we live among Black people in South Africa and they've always been welcoming to me," she said.

Lindsay Myeni is trying to extend her visa to stay in South Africa and will try to apply for permanent residency through her son.

"Hawaii is my home, so I really feel like I broke up with my country and my state and like maybe I'll go back there one day," she said. "It's really hard to say, but right now I just can't fathom even visiting."

## Haitians in Mexico see bleak choices as they seek protection

By CEDAR ATTANASIO Associated Press

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (AP) — Adrián is trying to settle in to his third new city since 2016, when his wife was raped and mother was killed in Haiti. He will go anywhere but home.

"Why do they send us back to Haiti?" he said outside a cheap Mexican hotel blocks from the border with El Paso, Texas, where he was living with his wife and about 20 other Haitians last month. "We don't have anything there. There's no security. ... I need a solution to not be sent back to my country."

Haitians rejoiced when U.S. Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas announced last month an 18-month extension of protections for Haitians living in the United States, citing "serious security concerns, social unrest, an increase in human rights abuses, crippling poverty, and lack of basic resources, which are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic."

The reprieve benefits an estimated 100,000 people who came after a devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti and are eligible for Temporary Protected Status, which gives a temporary haven to people fleeing countries struggling with civil strife or natural disasters.

Mayorkas noted that it doesn't apply to Haitians outside the U.S. and said those who enter the country may be flown home. To qualify, Haitians must have been in the United States on May 21.

The Biden administration has dismayed some pro-immigration allies by sharply increasing repatriation flights to Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital. The government chartered 14 flights in February and 10 in March, more than any other destination, before tapering off to six flights in April, according to Witness at the Border, an advocacy group that tracks U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement flights.

Removals have continued despite Haiti's political and humanitarian crises cited by U.S. officials in their decision to extend Temporary Protected Status. Kidnappings have become commonplace. UNICEF expects child malnutrition to double this year as an indirect consequence of the pandemic in a country where 1.1 million are already going hungry.

Adrián, who spoke on condition that his last name not be published to protect his wife's identity, is among legions of Haitians who fled the Caribbean nation sometime after the 2010 earthquake. Many initially escaped to South America. He went to Chile, while others went to Brazil.

As construction jobs for the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro ended and Brazil descended into political turmoil, many Haitians crossed 10 countries by plane, boat, bus and foot to get to San Diego, where U.S. authorities let them in on humanitarian grounds. But then-President Barack Obama shifted course and began deporting Haitian arrivals in 2016. Many then started calling Mexico home.

Haitian restaurants opened in Tijuana, across the border from San Diego, serving mangoes and mashed plantains. Factories that export to the U.S. recruited Haitians, who also wait tables and worship at congregations that have added services in Creole.

In recent months, some Haitians have moved from Tijuana to Ciudad Juarez, another large border city with jobs at export-driven factories. They're driven by job prospects, hopes of less racial discrimination

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and a temptation to cross what they perceive to be less-guarded stretches of border.

The shift was evident Feb. 3 when U.S. authorities expelled dozens of Haitians to Ciudad Juarez, an apparent violation of pandemic-related powers that deny a right to seek asylum. Under the public health rules, only people from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador can quickly be sent back to Mexico.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has acknowledged the Haitian expulsions but not explained why they were done.

"They are in transit," said Nicole Phillips, legal director of Haitian Bridge Alliance, an advocacy group. "It's very much a transitory population. They may start out in Tijuana and shift eastward. Other times they start east and shift to Tijuana."

Adrián, 34, said he saw racial discrimination in Chile and Tijuana, where he worked in data entry for a company that assembled neck braces and other medical devices. He said he saw Mexicans getting paid more than twice as much for the same work.

He lost his job when his temporary work visa expired and heard that Ciudad Juarez had work. A straight shot by bus, he decided to take another chance on a new life.

During his first week in Ciudad Juarez last month, Adrián asked downtown merchants to let him sell items on the streets, which are still half-empty amid COVID-19. No one let him. Factories are known to hire foreigners, but he no longer had a work permit.

Adrián wants to settle in Ciudad Juarez and save money, saying he may try to get to the U.S. one day. For now, he fears being sent back Haiti too much to risk applying for asylum or enter the country illegally.

A scar on the back of his head is from being pistol-whipped by an attacker in 2016, he says, and one on his left hand is from being tied up. He said his mother was targeted at her home and killed because she refused to participate in rallies for the Tet Kale party, whose presidential candidate, Jovenel Moïse, won the 2016 election.

Adrián believes the men who killed her and assaulted his wife worked for party bosses. He recognized one and went to the police, but nothing came of it.

Haiti has long been wracked by poverty and violence. In April, then-Prime Minister Joseph Jouthe resigned amid a spike in killings.

Other Haitians staying at the hotel with Adrián also had left Tijuana. Some said they would stay and try to find work; others said they wanted to go to the United States.

Some people who have been sent back to Haiti simply save for another attempt to cross into the U.S.

"I've been back in Haiti over nine months now. I'm struggling to stay alive," said a mechanic in Port-au-Prince who was caught by border agents in South Texas. "Soon as I crossed into the U.S., police picked us up, and the guide was nowhere to be found."

The 27-year-old man spoke on the condition of anonymity because he plans on crossing the border again. He said his training as a mechanic hasn't gotten him work in Haiti, though he plied his trade from Chile to Guatemala on his journey to the U.S.

Jean-Piere, another Haitian migrant who was trained as a mechanical engineer and spoke on condition that his last name not be published for safety reasons, spent two years in Tijuana. After moving to Ciudad Juarez and failing to find a job, he said he wants to go to the United States. He carries a folder with documents for an eventual asylum case.

He said his father died due to "political problems" stemming from his work for Haiti's governing party. "I can't go back to my country," Jean-Piere said.

## UK urges commitment to vaccinate the world by end of 2022

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will use the Group of Seven wealthy democracies' summit next week to urge world leaders to commit to vaccinating the global population by the end of 2022.

Johnson is expected to stress the importance of a global vaccination drive when he meets with fellow world leaders on Friday in Cornwall, on England's southwestern coast, for the first face-to-face G-7 summit since the pandemic hit.

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"The world is looking to us to rise to the greatest challenge of the postwar era: defeating COVID and leading a global recovery driven by our shared values," he said in a statement Sunday. "Vaccinating the world by the end of next year would be the single greatest feat in medical history."

U.S. President Joe Biden and the leaders of Canada, France, Italy and Japan will arrive in Cornwall from Friday for three days of talks focusing on the global recovery from the pandemic.

Britain's government pledged in February to give most of the country's surplus vaccine supply to COVAX, the U.N.-backed program aiming to supply poorer countries with jabs.

But the U.K. hasn't yet put a figure on how many doses it will donate. The country, with a population of about 70 million people, has ordered around 400 million doses of vaccines. Health Secretary Matt Hancock has said that the U.K. doesn't have any excess doses at the moment and that "we're just getting them into arms as quickly as possible."

The Sunday Times reported that Johnson is set to announce at the summit that the U.K. will pledge to donate over 2 billion pounds' worth of jabs this year, with further donations in 2022.

The U.S. has said it plans to share 80 million doses of its surplus vaccine globally by the end of June, most of them through COVAX.

## High court asked to review men-only draft registration law

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is being asked to decide whether it's sex discrimination for the government to require only men to register for the draft when they turn 18.

The question of whether it's unconstitutional to require men but not women to register could be viewed as one with little practical impact. The last time there was a draft was during the Vietnam War, and the military has been all-volunteer since. But the registration requirement is one of the few remaining places where federal law treats men and women differently, and women's groups are among those arguing that allowing it to stand is harmful.

The justices could say as soon as Monday whether they will hear a case involving the Military Selective Service Act, which requires men to register for the draft.

Ria Tabacco Mar, the director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Women's Rights Project, who is urging the court to take up the issue, says requiring men to register imposes a "serious burden on men that's not being imposed on women."

Men who do not register can lose eligibility for student loans and civil service jobs, and failing to register is also a felony punishable by a fine of up to \$250,000 and five years in prison. But Tabacco Mar says the male-only requirement does more than that.

"It's also sending a tremendously harmful message that women are less fit than men to serve their country in this particular way and conversely that men are less fit than women to stay home as caregivers in the event of an armed conflict. We think those stereotypes demean both men and women," she said.

Even if the draft is never used again, retaining the men-only requirement sends a "really damaging message," said Tabacco Mar, who represents the National Coalition For Men and two individual men challenging the law.

A group of retired senior military officers and the National Organization for Women Foundation are among the others urging the court to take the case.

If the court agrees to hear the case, it wouldn't be deciding whether women have to register, just whether the current system is constitutional. If it isn't, then it would then be up to Congress to decide how to respond, either by passing a law requiring everyone to register or deciding registration is no longer necessary.

The issue of who has to register for the draft has been to the court before. In 1981, the court voted 6-3 to uphold the men-only registration requirement. At the time, the decision was something of an outlier because the court was regularly invalidating gender-based distinctions in cases about other areas of the law. Many of those cases were brought by the founding director of the ACLU's Women's Rights Project, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who became a justice in 1993.



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The last time the high court considered the Military Selective Service Act, then-Justice William Rehnquist explained that the purpose of registration "was to prepare for a draft of combat troops." He said that because women could not serve in combat, the law was not unlawful sex discrimination that violated the Constitution.

But military policy has changed. In 2013, the Department of Defense lifted the ban on women serving in combat. Two years later, the department said all military roles would be open to women without exception.

Just last year, a congressional commission concluded that the "time is right" to extend the obligation to register to women. "The current disparate treatment of women unacceptably excludes women from a fundamental civic obligation and reinforces gender stereotypes about the role of women, undermining national security," the commission said in a report.

The Biden administration is urging the justices not to take the case and to let Congress instead tackle the issue. Administration lawyers wrote in a brief that any "reconsideration of the constitutionality of the male-only registration requirement ... would be premature at this time" because Congress is "actively considering" the issue.

The Selective Service System, the agency that oversees registration, said in a statement that it doesn't comment on pending litigation but that it is "capable of performing whatever mission Congress should mandate."

If the court agrees to take the case, arguments wouldn't happen until the fall at the earliest, after the court's summer break. The court already has high-profile cases awaiting it then. They include a major challenge to abortion rights and an appeal to expand gun rights.

The case about the draft is National Coalition For Men v. Selective Service System, 20-928.

## Another COVID side effect: Many kids head to summer school

By CAROLYN THOMPSON Associated Press

With her three teenagers vaccinated against COVID-19, Aja Purnell-Mitchell left it up to them to decide whether to go back to school during summer break.

The decision was unanimous: summer school.

"Getting them back into it, helping them socialize back with their friends, maybe meet some new people, and, of course, pick up the things that they lacked on Zoom," the Durham County, North Carolina, mother said, ticking off her hopes for the session ahead, which will be the first time her children have been in the classroom since the outbreak took hold in the spring of 2020.

Across the U.S., more children than ever before could be in classrooms for summer school this year to make up for lost learning during the outbreak, which caused monumental disruptions in education. School districts nationwide are expanding their summer programs and offering bonuses to get teachers to take part.

Under the most recent federal pandemic relief package, the Biden administration is requiring states to devote some of the billions of dollars to summer programs.

The U.S. Education Department said it is too early to know how many students will sign up. But the number is all but certain to exceed the estimated 3.3 million who went to mandatory or optional summer school in 2019, before the pandemic.

In Montgomery, Alabama, for example, more than 12,000 of the school system's 28,000 students signed up before the June 1 deadline. Typically about 2,500 go to summer school. Philadelphia had enrolled 14,700 by Friday and was expecting more for the mostly in-person programs, up from the 9,300 students in last summer's all-virtual sessions.

"It's an understatement to say the needs are greater this year," said Kalman Hettleman, an education policy analyst in Maryland.

Hettleman worries most about the reading skills of disadvantaged younger students who were falling behind even before COVID-19 closed schools and were likely to encounter technological hurdles afterward.

"It's not realistic to think that summer school, no matter how good and intense, will close all the gaps because many of these kids had gaps before the pandemic," said Hettleman, who wants to see sessions

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mandatory for low-performing students in Baltimore. "But it will help, and it will at least give them a fighting chance if there are intense interventions during the regular school year."

Las Vegas high school freshman Taylor Dennington never thought she would be in summer school, but there she was starting this past week — along with plenty of friends — after a year of remote learning.

"This year was such an unmotivating school year," she said.

"It got to the point where I wasn't doing ANY work, I was just going to class," Dennington, who is taking biology and math, said in a text exchange. "I learn better in school than online. Being in a classroom where a teacher is present is so much better than waiting hours for an email back from your teacher."

In North Carolina, Purnell-Mitchell's children will have access to five or six weeks of full-day programs that include academics and activities like sports or music. Districts also will provide transportation and meals, thanks to the influx of federal spending.

Under a unanimously passed North Carolina law, the nearly 1 in 4 students deemed to be in danger of falling behind — about 200,000 students statewide — are being given priority for summer school, with extra slots open to others who want them. Some districts are inviting all of their students.

School systems must devote some of the federal funding to deal with COVID-19's disproportionate effect on students from poor families, those whose first language is not English, members of minority groups and those who are homeless or in foster care.

The expanded programs around the country have greatly increased the need not only for teachers but for bus drivers, custodians and cafeteria employees.

Some North Carolina teachers will get a \$1,200 bonus. There are also bonuses for teachers in certain grades whose students show improvement in reading and math.

Elsewhere, a district in Anderson, South Carolina, has nearly doubled teachers' summer school pay to \$60 an hour. Teachers and nurses in Spring Branch, Texas, are getting raises of up to 20%. In Mississippi, the Starkville Oktibbeha school system raised teachers' hourly pay by \$10, to \$35, for the summer.

Connecticut is promising \$4,500 stipends to 500 college students who work at K-12 summer programs.

New York City, the nation's largest school district, with over 1 million youngsters, is offering summer school to all students, not just those falling behind.

"Our kids have been through so much," Mayor Bill de Blasio said in announcing the plans, "and they need our support as we build a recovery for all of us."

Philadelphia and San Diego are among others to announce districtwide eligibility. Chicago plans to vastly expand its programs.

Purnell-Mitchell said her children had different reasons for wanting to go to school this summer. Her older daughter, Kyra Mitchell, who has autism, missed the one-on-one interaction with teachers that helps her learn, while Kyla Mitchell did well remotely but wasn't able to make new friends and socialize. Her son, Cartier Mitchell, said he had had enough time off and was ready to go back.

"I think it's going to give them some of the milestone markers that they might have missed and give them a better outlook for going into the doors" in the fall, Purnell-Mitchell said, "instead of feeling like they've lost a year and a half of knowing what they're doing."

## Trump to GOP: Support candidates who 'stand for our values'

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

Donald Trump on Saturday pushed Republicans to support candidates who are loyal to him in next year's midterm elections as the former president launched a new more active phase of his post presidency.

Trump, 74, teased the prospect of another presidential bid of his own in 2024, but vowed first to be an active presence on the campaign trail for those who share his values in next year's fight for control of Congress.

"The survival of America depends on our ability to elect Republicans at every level starting with the midterms next year," Trump charged early in a rambling speech that spanned nearly an hour and a half.

Trump's speech to hundreds of Republican officials and activists gathered for the North Carolina GOP convention was the opening appearance in what is expected to be a new phase of rallies and public

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events. Out of office for more than four months and banned from his preferred social media accounts, the former president hopes to use such events to elevate his diminished voice ahead of another potential presidential run.

His advisers are already eyeing subsequent appearances in Ohio, Florida, Alabama and Georgia to help bolster midterm candidates and energize voters.

Some party leaders worry that a rise of pro-Trump candidates in the coming months could jeopardize the GOP's fight for control of Congress in 2022. While Trump remains a dominant force within his party, he is deeply unpopular among key segments of the broader electorate. He lost last year to Democrat Joe Biden, drawing about 7 million fewer votes, after alienating Republican-leaning suburban voters.

In contrast to the mega rallies that filled sports arenas when Trump was president, he faced a crowd that organizers estimated at 1,200 seated at dinner tables inside the Greenville convention center Saturday night. Tens of thousands more followed along on internet streams.

Invited to the stage briefly during his remarks, Trump daughter-in-law and North Carolina native Lara Trump announced she would not run for the Senate because of family obligations.

"I am saying no for now, not no forever," Lara Trump said.

Minutes later, Trump announced his endorsement of loyalist Rep. Ted Budd in the crowded Republican primary, adding a slap at former Gov. Pat McCrory, who has been critical of Trump's falsehoods about the 2020 election.

"You can't pick people who have already lost two races and do not stand for our values," Trump said.

McCrory served as the North Carolina governor from 2013 to 2017, but lost elections before and after his term.

The former president waited more than an hour to advance falsehoods about the 2020 election, which he described as "the crime of the century."

Since leaving the White House, Trump has regularly made baseless claims that the last presidential election was stolen. The claims have triggered a wave of Republican-backed voting restrictions in state legislatures across the country, even though Trump's cries of voting fraud have been refuted by dozens of judges, Republican governors and senior officials from his own administration.

Trump focused his early remarks on Biden, which he called "the most radical left-wing administration in history."

"As we gather tonight our country is being destroyed before our very eyes," he said.

Democratic National Committee spokesman Ammar Moussa took a shot at Trump in a statement released ahead of his speech.

"More than 400,000 dead Americans, millions of jobs lost, and recklessly dangerous rhetoric is apparently not enough for Republicans to break with a loser president who cost them the White House, Senate, and House," Moussa said.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, June 6, the 157th day of 2021. There are 208 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 6, 1944, during World War II, Allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy, France, on "D-Day" as they began the liberation of German-occupied Western Europe.

On this date:

In 1816, a snowstorm struck the northeastern U.S., heralding what would become known as the "Year Without a Summer."

In 1918, U.S. Marines suffered heavy casualties as they launched their eventually successful counteroffensive against German troops in the World War I Battle of Belleau Wood in France.

In 1934, the Securities and Exchange Commission was established.

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In 1939, the first Little League game was played as Lundy Lumber defeated Lycoming Dairy 23-8 in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

In 1966, Black activist James Meredith was shot and wounded as he walked along a Mississippi highway to encourage Black voter registration.

In 1968, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy died at Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles, 25 1/2 hours after he was shot by Sirhan Bishara Sirhan.

In 1977, a sharply divided U.S. Supreme Court struck down a Louisiana law imposing an automatic death sentence on defendants convicted of the first-degree murder of a police officer.

In 1978, California voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 13, a primary ballot initiative calling for major cuts in property taxes.

In 1982, Israeli forces invaded Lebanon to drive Palestine Liberation Organization fighters out of the country. (The Israelis withdrew in June 1985.)

In 1989, burial services were held for Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Washington state Democrat Tom Foley succeeded Jim Wright as House speaker.

In 2001, Democrats formally assumed control of the U.S. Senate after the decision of Vermont Republican James Jeffords to become an independent.

In 2005, the Supreme Court ruled, 6-3, that people who smoked marijuana because their doctors recommended it to ease pain could be prosecuted for violating federal drug laws.

Ten years ago: After days of denials, New York Democratic Rep. Anthony Weiner confessed that he had tweeted a photo of his bulging underpants to a woman and admitted to "inappropriate" exchanges with six women before and after getting married; Weiner apologized for lying but said he would not resign (which he ended up doing). The Bowl Championship Series stripped Southern California of its 2004 title after the Trojans were hit with heavy NCAA sanctions for rules violations committed during the 2004 and '05 seasons.

Five years ago: A jury in Los Angeles returned a death sentence for Lonnie Franklin Jr., the serial killer known as the "Grim Sleeper" who murdered nine women and a teenage girl over several decades. Theresa Saldana, the "Raging Bull" actor who survived a stalker's brutal attack to become a crime victims' advocate and reclaimed her acting career with "The Commish" and other TV shows, died in Los Angeles at 61.

One year ago: Tens of thousands rallied in cities from Australia to Europe to honor George Floyd and voice support for the Black Lives Matter movement. Massive, peaceful protests took place nationwide to demand police reform, as services for George Floyd were held in North Carolina, near his birthplace. Thousands of people again took to the streets and parks of New York City to protest police brutality; police pulled back on enforcing an 8 p.m. curfew that had led to confrontations. Police in Seattle used flash bang devices and pepper spray to disperse a crowd of protesters on the ninth consecutive day of George Floyd protests in the city. Brazil's government stopped publishing a running total of coronavirus deaths and infections; the country's last official numbers showed that it had the third-highest number of deaths in the world. The coronavirus pandemic and its lockdowns left Omaha Beach in Normandy largely deserted for the observance of the D-Day anniversary.

Today's Birthdays: Singer-songwriter Gary "U.S." Bonds is 82. Country singer Joe Stampley is 78. Jazz musician Monty Alexander is 77. Actor Robert Englund is 74. Folk singer Holly Near is 72. Singer Dwight Twilley is 70. Sen. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., is 69. Playwright-actor Harvey Fierstein (FY'-ur-steen) is 69. Comedian Sandra Bernhard is 66. International Tennis Hall of Famer Bjorn Borg is 65. Actor Amanda Pays is 62. Comedian Colin Quinn is 62. Record producer Jimmy Jam is 62. Rock musician Steve Vai is 61. Rock singer-musician Tom Araya (Slayer) is 60. Actor Jason Isaacs is 58. Actor Anthony Starke is 58. Rock musician Sean Yseult (White Zombie) is 55. Actor Max Casella is 54. Actor Paul Giamatti is 54. R&B singer Damion Hall (Guy) is 53. Rock musician James "Munky" Shaffer (Korn) is 51. TV correspondent Natalie Morales is 49. Country singer Lisa Brokop is 48. Rapper-rocker Uncle Kracker is 47. Actor Sonya Walger is 47. Actor Staci Keanan is 46. Jazz singer Somi is 45. Actor Amber Borycki is 38. Actor Aubrey Anderson-Emmons is 14.