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Upcoming Events

Tuesday, Nov. 2

Brookings Novice Debate
Volleyball Region 1A Tourney at Redfield. Redfield vs. Clark/Willow Lake at 6 p.m. followed by Groton Area vs. Sisseton.
NCRC Test at GHS, 8:30 a.m. to noon

Thursday, Nov. 4

Aberdeen Novice Online Debate
Volleyball Region 1A Tourney
Bowdle LDE

Friday-Saturday, Nov. 5-6

Golden Eagle Cup Debate & Oral Interp at Aberdeen Central

	Tuesday on GDILIVE.COM No ticket required!	
	Region 1A Groton Area vs. Sisseton at Redfield Pregame at 6:45 p.m.	

Don't miss out on the pre-game show with interviews with players and Coach Hanson. Livestream starting at 6:45.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.
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Groton Area October Students of the Month



Allyssa Locke
Senior



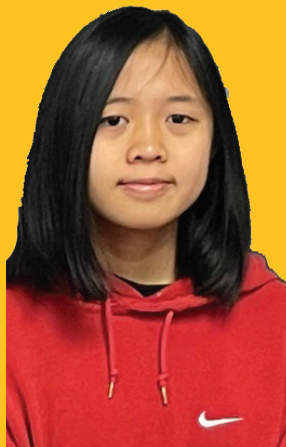
Ashtyn Bahr
Junior



Emily Clark
Sophomore



Gretchen Dinger
Freshman



De Eh Tha Say
8th Grade



Liby Althoff
7th Grade



Makenna Krause
6th Grade

Groton Area School works to ensure that all levels of academic instruction also include the necessary life skills teaching, practicing, and modeling that encourages essential personal life habits that are universally understood to facilitate helping our students become good human beings and citizens.

It is learning with our heads, hearts, and hands to be caring and civil, to make healthy decisions, to effectively problem solve, to be respectful and responsible, to be good citizens, and to be empathetic and ethical individuals.

Students are selected based on individual student growth in the areas of: positive behavior, citizenship, good attendance, a thirst for knowledge, and high academic standards.

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

November 2, 2021 – 7:00pm

120 N Main Street

(NOTICE ADDRESS)

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Todd Gay
 - Changing work hours
 - Time and a half pay when getting called out
 - Electric Lineman Salary
 - Electric Lineman Transformer School – Marshall, MN December 15-17
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Minutes
4. Bills
5. Department Reports
6. Second Reading Ordinance #754 – Certifying 2022 City of Groton Property Tax Levy to Brown County
7. First Reading of Ordinance #756 – 2022 Appropriations
8. Mayor sign the Funding Agreement for Airport Grant
9. Pay Request #11 – Maguire Iron
10. Groton Residential Development Roundtable Meeting – November 15th at Noon – Groton Community Center with guest Casey Crabtree, Heartland Consumer Powers District’s Director of Economic Development
11. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
12. Adjournment

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SENIOR MEALS PROGRAM

NOVEMBER 2021

month/year

SITE: GROTON / CONDE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 DRI-65 Chicken Alfredo Broccoli Spinach Salad Mandarin Oranges Bread Stick	2 Chicken Fried Steak Mashed Potatoes/Gravy Corn Chocolate Cake Fruit Whole Wheat Bread	3 DRI-35 BBQ Beef Sandwich Potato Salad Carrots & Peas Fresh Fruit	4 DRI-3 Turkey & Dressing Mashed Potatoes/Gravy Broccoli Applesauce Pumpkin Bar w/Topping Whole Wheat Bread	5 DRI-39 Tuna Noodle Casserole Peas & Carrots Swedish Apple Pie Square Whole Wheat Bread
8 DRI-66 Sloppy Joe on Wheat Bun Oven Roasted Potatoes Mixed Vegetables Fruit Sauce	9 DRI-13 Hot Turkey Combos Mashed Potatoes/Gravy 7 Layer Salad Blueberry Crisp	10 DRI-16 Hearty Vegetable Beef Soup Chicken Salad Sandwich Mandarin Oranges Oatmeal Raisin Cookie	11 DRI-6 Meatloaf Baked Potato/S.Cream Creamed Peas Fruited Jello Whole Wheat Bread	12 DRI-58 Chicken Tetrastine Mixed Vegetables Honey Fruit Salad Vanilla Pudding Whole Wheat Bread
15 DRI-32 Goulash Green Beans Baked Apples Whole Wheat Bread	16 Honey-Glazed Chicken Breast Parsley Buttered Potatoes Beets Fruit Whole Wheat Bread	17 DRI-9 Baked Fish AuGratin Potatoes 3-Bean Salad Peach Cobbler Whole Wheat Bread	18 DRI-46 Ham Loaf Sweet Potatoes Peas Acini DePepi Fruit Salad Whole Wheat Bread	19 Taco Salad Mexican Rice Seasonal Fresh Fruit Bread Stick
22 DRI-33 Chili Cornbread Coleslaw Lime Pear Jello	23 DRI-19 Baked Chicken Rice Pilaf Cauliflower/Pea Salad Banana Pudding w/ Bananas Whole Wheat Bread	24 Potato Soup Ham Salad Sandwich Tomato Spoon Salad Pineapple Tidbits	25 HOLIDAY THANKSGIVING DAY	26 HOLIDAY
29 DRI-51 Creamed Chicken Buttermilk Biscuit Peas Mandarin Oranges Cookie	30 Beef Tips in Gravy over Noodles Lettuce Salad w/Dressing Peaches Whole Wheat Bread			

MEALS APPROVED BY: REGISTERED DIETITIAN

All meals include milk

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That's Life by Tony Bender

Endurance of the stoics

The calendar reads November. How'd that happen? One minute the bars are overflowing with Halloween costumes—sexy nurse, sexy cop, sexy town drunk—and the next thing you know turkeys are running for their lives.

The great country singer Roger Miller, who philosophized, "You Can't Roller Skate in a Buffalo Herd," said he grew up in a town so small, they didn't even have a town drunk. "We had to take turns."

It's kinda that way with Frederick, SD, where I grew up, only we take turns being the town writer. It started with the late great Dick Pence, who it seemed, was fiction, because I always just heard about him or just missed him—never actually witnessed him.

We finally had "The Great Summit" about 20 years ago with a six-pack under the water tower. Dick passed the baton to me, smacked me over the head with it, metaphorically, and now there's a new kid, Lance Nixon, who I'm pretty sure wants my damn baton. If we grew up in a bigger town, we'd have more batons.

Lance reached out to me last week looking for some thoughts on the differences and similarities between the two Dakotas for an article he's writing for some high highfalutin' magazine, which I dutifully pecked out on my phone in the dentist's waiting room and in the chair between tortures. I'm not going to reveal too much of what I said; you'll have to pay Lance for the work I did by buying the magazine. In case I said anything controversial, I'd like to preemptively denounce Lance and the magazine for misquoting me. Besides, I was hopped up on Novocaine.

It was a good exercise to think about who we are. In two words: enduring stoics. In one: maniacs. As I sit here, having fallen asleep in my sexy Danny DeVito costume, I am where I dreaded I'd be. No, not the third-best writer in Frederick, rather at the dining room table with a laptop, having been up for 90 minutes while it's still black as a lawyer's heart outside.

I fought it every inch of the way. This year, I wrote outside at sunrise and sunset, in searing heat, in drizzle, through mosquitoes, and in perfect weather with a pug rolling in the grass beneath my feet. You drink it in, guzzle it down, because winter is inevitable. I know that because I got a call from Britton, SD, wondering if they should service my stand-by generator, which indeed, sometimes stands by when it should be doing other things. I misheard them when I bought it. I thought they said "auto-start," when in fact it was "ought to start."

I also know winter's coming because subscribers are coming in with their change of address. I've abandoned all pretense of objectivity. I just tell them to their faces that I resent them. "Fine, leave me here to deal with your winter. You think you're so smart. Just like Lance Nixon. I hope you get a sunburn."

Once we've finished flipping off the snowbirds, we settle into our stoic endurance. Frostbite ain't so bad, we tell ourselves, and moving tons of snow out of the driveway gives you a sense of accomplishment until the wind changes and you have to do it again.

Have I cheered you up, yet? Oh, get over it. There you lie on the couch passed out in your sexy nurse outfit while Lance Nixon and I've been slaving away trying to get other people to do our work for us, and let me tell you something, Bob, next time shave your legs.

I know it's over because I finally made myself roll up the hoses this weekend, all the while cursing that I signed a contract for the pipeline when it's clear to me I have enough hose to connect to a spigot in Bismarck myself.

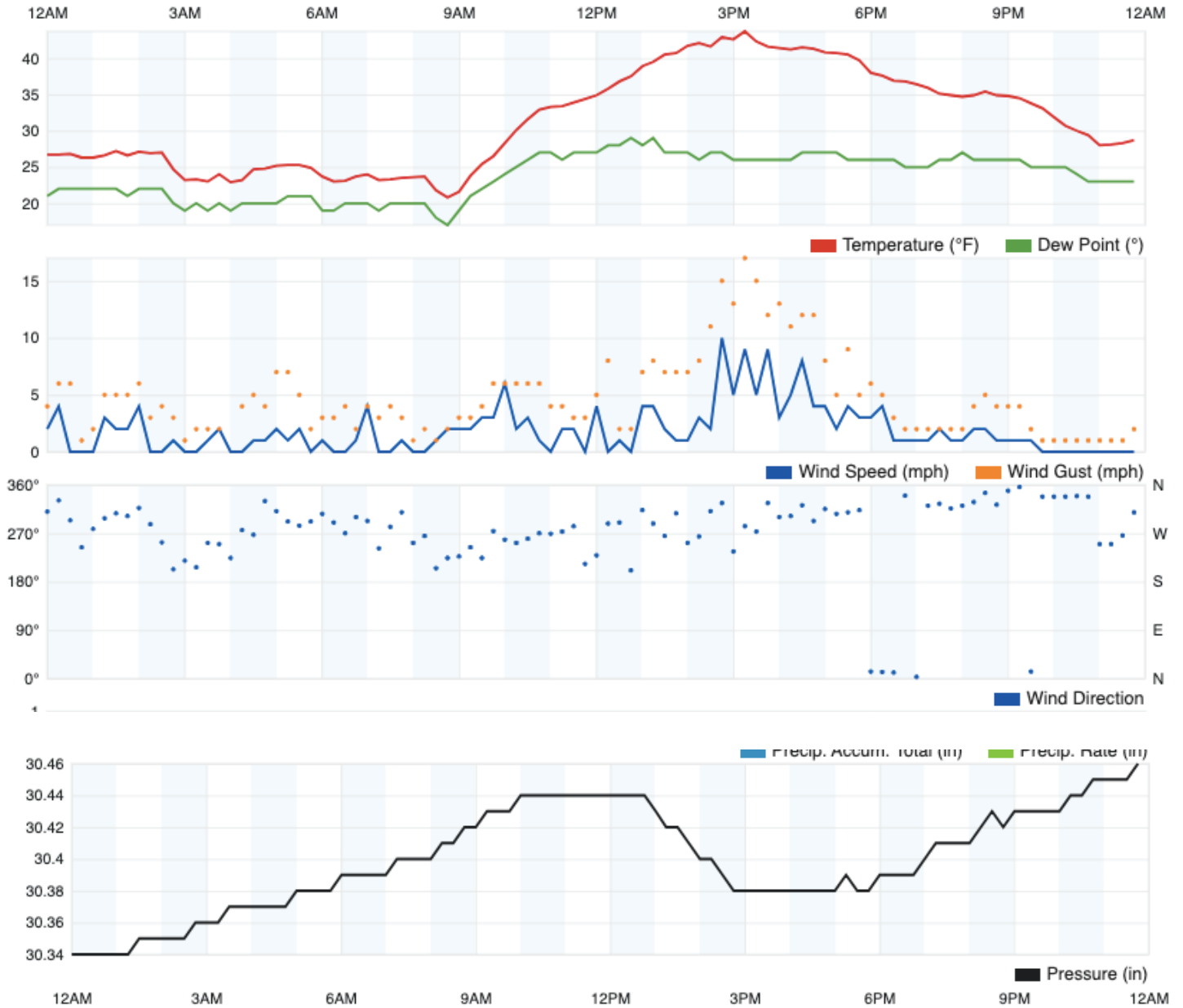
I put away the "zero gravity" outdoor recliner that was grounded up against the fence along with some tumbleweeds. I also dragged in half a dozen planters which I have no room for, but after nursing those plants along all summer, I'm not letting them die. Theoretically, I should put them out in the spring, but I won't. I'll just buy new ones, and eventually, there will be so many oxygen-producing plants in my house it will become a hazard, and one spark will make it look like a Die Hard movie.

This is the part, according to standard column-writing formula, where I write something uplifting and meaningful. Well, it's 20 degrees outside with an expected high of 36. But in two months that'll seem like a heatwave. You're welcome.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
				
Increasing Clouds	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 44 °F	Low: 19 °F	High: 47 °F	Low: 24 °F	High: 50 °F

Warming Trend Ahead



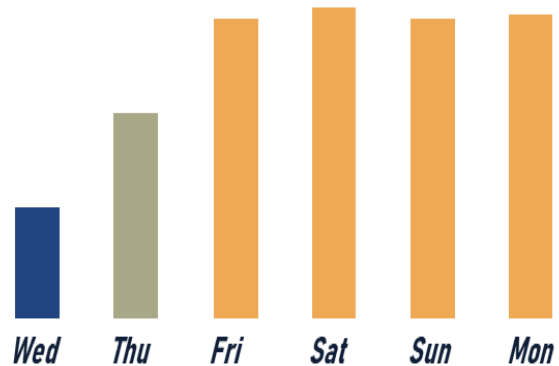
Today

Tuesday, Nov 2nd 2021

Hi: **40-46 F**

Lo: **18-26 F**

Below average temperatures continue today and Wednesday, before warming into the 50s to low 60s for highs across the area by Friday. Mostly dry conditions are anticipated as well.



Chilly temperatures will linger today and tomorrow before moderating by the end of the week. Mostly dry conditions are anticipated through the weekend as well.

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Today in Weather History

November 2nd, 1961: A snowstorm began in western South Dakota and spread to the remainder of the state on November 2nd. Snowfall was relatively minimal, with 1 to 3 inches falling over most of the state's central and eastern parts, but 40 to 50 mph winds accompanied the storm in eastern South Dakota. Also, temperatures fell rapidly with the passage of a cold front with 24-hour changes of 40 to over 50 degrees. Huron dropped from 73 on the 1st to 21 only 24 hours later, a 52-degree drop.

November 2nd, 1972: Freezing rain caused up to 2 inches of ice to form on trees, bushes, wires, cars, and buildings. The ice brought down many trees and utility lines. Some of the most significant damage occurred from Tulare to Redfield and Doland and Troy to Sisseton in Spink, Brown, Day, Grant, and Roberts Counties. Also, heavy snow up to 20 inches fell in south-central South Dakota. Some snowfall amounts include; 5.2 inches in Huron, 10 inches in Wessington Springs; 12 inches in Platte; 12.5 in Bonesteel, and 19.5 inches in Gregory.

November 2nd, 1997: A low-pressure system over the Great Lakes produced 50 to 60 mph winds over much of northern and central South Dakota. In McLaughlin, high winds damaged a catwalk at the McLaughlin livestock auction. The winds tipped over half of the 400-foot walkway. Along with six-foot waves, the winds destroyed an 85-year old 40 x 75-foot dance hall located on Medicine Lake, 15 miles northwest of Watertown. In Aberdeen, brick from a top portion of an abandoned building collapsed. There were also widespread reports of tree limbs blown down.

1743: Benjamin Franklin's "eclipse hurricane" unlocked the key to storm movement. A rainstorm prevented Ben Franklin from viewing a lunar eclipse in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but his brother in Boston saw it, though the rain began an hour later.

1992: Another infamous November Great Lakes Storm brought windy conditions to Minnesota's Lake Superior shoreline. 70 mph winds caused waves to crash over 130-foot walls along the shore.

1946 - A heavy wet snow began to cover the Southern Rockies. Up to three feet of snow blanketed the mountains of New Mexico, and a 31 inch snow at Denver CO caused roofs to collapse. (David Ludlum)

1961 - The temperature at Atlanta, GA, reached 84 degrees to establish a record for November. (The Weather Channel)

1966 - A storm brought 18 inches of snow to Celia KY in 24 hours. It tied the state 24 hour snowfall record first established at Bowling Green. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A dozen cities, mostly in the Ohio Valley, reported record high temperatures for the date. Record highs included 83 degrees at Paducah KY and 84 degrees at Memphis TN. Temperatures reached 70 degrees as far north as southern Lower Michigan. Showers and thundershowers over southern Florida, associated with a tropical depression, produced 4.77 inches of rain at Tavernier, located in the Upper Florida Keys. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A very intense low pressure system brought heavy rain, snow, and high winds, to parts of the northeastern U.S. Portland ME established a record for November with 4.52 inches of rain in 24 hours, and winds along the coast of Maine gusted to 74 mph at Southwest Harbor. Heavy snow blanketed parts of northern Vermont and upstate New York, with 15 inches reported at Spruce Hill NY. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Squalls in the Upper Great Lakes Region the first three days of the month buried Ironwood MI under 46 inches of snow, and produced 40 inches at Hurley WI. Arctic cold invaded the Southern Plains Region. Midland TX reported a record low of 22 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

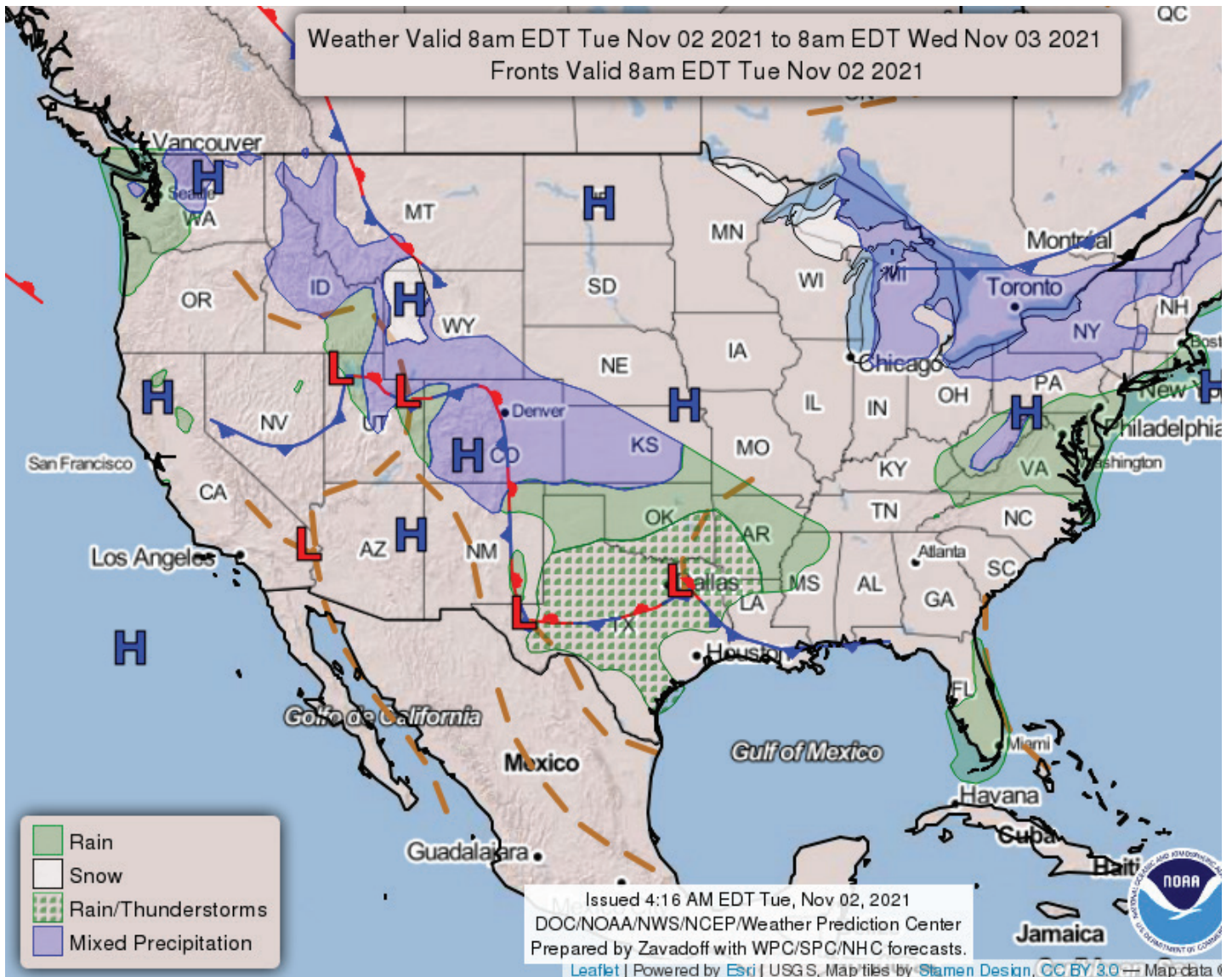
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 43.7 °F at 3:15 PM
Low Temp: 20.8 °F at 8:45 AM
Wind: 17 mph at 3:15 PM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 78° in 1903
Record Low: 0° in 1911
Average High: 50°F
Average Low: 25°F
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.07
Precip to date in Nov.: 4.30
Average Precip to date: 20.54
Precip Year to Date: 19.72
Sunset Tonight: 6:19:33 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:13:44 AM



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OUR WISE AND WONDERFUL GOD

The earth spins around like a top at a speed of about 1,000 miles per hour. This spinning is what makes our days and nights. If it slowed down gradually through the years, our days would become so long that the sun would burn our vegetation during the day or freeze all vegetation during the long nights.

The earth tilts to one side as it goes around the sun. It is this tilt that makes the seasons. If it were not tilted 23½ degrees, vapors from the ocean would move north and south, piling up continents of ice.

Most of the time, the moon is about 237,000 miles from the earth. As it revolves around the earth, it exerts a "pull." This "pull" causes tides - the rise and fall of the oceans. If the moon were not at the exact distance it is from the earth, the tides would completely overflow the land twice a day.

The earth is a great storage facility. Its resources produce the foods we eat. It contains the fuels we need for heating and transportation. It has the minerals we need for survival hidden beneath its soil. It grows the lumber we need for building homes. Its vegetation purifies the air we breathe by removing various impurities that would suffocate us.

Can all this be the result of an accident? Was there a "big bang" that threw "things" up into the air and when things settled down there was form and function? Or was the Psalmist right when he wrote, "How many are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You made them all."

Prayer: It is amazing, Lord, how carefully You planned everything to fit together perfectly to reflect Your wisdom. What a comfort to know that You intentionally made us too. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: How many are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You made them all. Psalm 104:24

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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 **Postponed to Aug. 28th:** 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
08/13/2021 Groton Basketball Golf Tournament
Cancelled Lions Club Crazy Golf Fest 9am Olive Grove Golf Course
08/29/2021 Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day at GHS Parking Lot (4-5 p.m.)
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
10/29/2021 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)
12/04/2021 Olive Grove Tour of Homes
12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Monday:

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$26 million

Powerball

09-25-34-44-45, Powerball: 8, Power Play: 3

(nine, twenty-five, thirty-four, forty-four, forty-five; Powerball: eight; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$123 million

Monday's Scores

The Associated Press undefined

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

SoDak Qualifier First Round=

Class A=

Region 3=

Garretson def. West Central, 25-10, 25-14, 25-18

Region 7=

Bennett County def. Red Cloud, 25-17, 25-23, 14-25, 20-25, 15-13

Pine Ridge def. St. Francis Indian, 25-18, 25-19, 25-14

SoDak Qualifier Play-in=

Class B=

Region 1=

Leola/Frederick def. Waubay/Summit, 25-18, 25-15, 25-18

Region 2=

North Central Co-Op def. Lower Brule, 25-9, 25-17, 25-15

Sully Buttes def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-18, 25-16, 25-15

Region 3=

Lake Preston def. Iroquois, 25-18, 25-20, 25-14

Region 4=

Howard def. Mitchell Christian, 25-7, 25-13, 25-9

Region 5=

Centerville def. Freeman Academy/Marion, 25-21, 25-18, 25-21

Region 6=

Corsica/Stickney def. Marty Indian, 25-9, 25-12, 25-8

Wessington Springs def. Colome, 25-10, 25-15, 28-26

Region 7=

Lyman def. Oelrichs, 30-28, 25-15, 25-20

Wall def. Crazy Horse, 25-1, 25-5, 25-4

Region 8=

McIntosh def. Wakpala, 25-8, 25-9, 25-14

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

Information from: ScoreStream Inc., <http://ScoreStream.com>

South Dakota ethics board wants more information on Noem

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's Government Accountability Board called Monday for more information in at least one ethics complaint against Gov. Kristi Noem as it weighed multiple requests from the attorney general to consider whether the governor twice abused the powers of her office.

Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg asked the board to consider two issues: Whether Noem's use of state airplanes should be investigated for breaking the law and concerns about whether she interfered in a state agency that was evaluating her daughter's application for a real estate appraiser license. The board also considered a third complaint, but the details of who made it or whom it was against were not public.

After meeting for nearly an hour in a closed-door session, the four retired judges on the board dismissed one of the complaints, but did not make public which one. It is sending the other two complaints back to the people who made them with requests for more information.

Attorney general spokesman Tim Bormann said the office had not heard anything from the Government Accountability Board following the meeting.

The board is required to keep the details secret unless it decides the complaints warrant a public hearing. When members of the public were allowed in Monday's meeting, board members said next to nothing about the complaints besides taking a vote on them.

Former Supreme Court Chief Justice David Gilbertson, who was appointed to the board by Noem, abstained from voting on the requests for more information on two of the complaints. He did not give a reason for doing so.

The Legislature is conducting a separate inquiry into the state agency that grants real estate appraiser licenses.

Noem has faced scrutiny over the matter since The Associated Press reported that just days after the Department of Labor and Regulation moved to deny her daughter's application for an appraiser license last year, Noem called a meeting with her daughter, the labor secretary and the then-director of the appraiser certification program. Noem's daughter received her license four months later.

Ravnsborg and Noem are both Republicans but are not allies.

In response to the board's action Monday, Noem's spokesman Ian Fury said, "We're not surprised the Board has apparently sent these baseless attacks back."

Noem, who has positioned herself as a prospect for the GOP presidential ticket in 2024, has defended her conduct by saying she was working to "cut red tape" to solve a shortage of appraisers and calling the report on the meeting a political attack.

She used a similar defense when a report from the news website Raw Story detailed her use of the state's airplane. Noem flew in 2019 to events hosted by political organizations like the National Rifle Association, Turning Point USA, and the Republican Jewish Coalition. Noem called that report politically motivated and explained that she was acting as an ambassador for the state.

South Dakota officials are not allowed to use the planes for anything other than state business, and Democratic Sen. Reynold Nesiba had asked the attorney general to investigate. Ravnsborg referred that request to the Government Accountability Board in September.

The board has not scheduled its next meeting. Former South Dakota Supreme Court Justice Lori Wilbur said it would once it has something to act upon.

Death of man whose body found near Rapid City investigated

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Pennington County Sheriff's Office said it's investigating a suspicious death near Rapid City.

A passerby reported finding a body in a ditch near the intersection of Highway 16 and Wilderness Canyon Road about 7 a.m. Monday, according to officials.

The death of the man is considered suspicious, authorities said. An autopsy will be done to determine a cause of death.

The sheriff's office and Rapid City Police Department are both working on the case.

Midwest Economy: October state-by-state glance

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The Institute for Supply Management, formerly the Purchasing Management Association, began formally surveying its membership in 1931 to gauge business conditions.

The Creighton Economic Forecasting Group uses the same methodology as the national survey to consult supply managers and business leaders. Creighton University economics professor Ernie Goss oversees the report.

The overall index ranges between 0 and 100. Growth neutral is 50, and a figure greater than 50 indicates growth in that factor over the next three to six months. A figure below 50 indicates decline.

Here are the state-by-state results for October:

Arkansas: The overall index for Arkansas declined to 59.0 from 60.0 in September. Components from the survey of supply managers were: New orders at 48.8, production or sales at 69.9, delivery lead time at 72.6, inventories at 49.4, and employment at 54.4. "Over the past 12 months, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Arkansas manufacturing employment expanded by 4.8%, tops in the region, with a gain in average hourly wages of 4.1%, fifth in the region," Goss said.

Iowa: The overall index climbed to 67.8 from 62.8 in September. Components were: New orders at 73.8, production, or sales, at 49.9, delivery lead time at 79.5, employment at 63.3, and inventories at 72.3. "Over the past 12 months, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Iowa manufacturing employment advanced by 4.1%, third in the region, with a gain in average hourly wages of 3.2%, eighth in the region," Goss said.

Kansas: The overall index rose to 66.5 from 62.0 in September. Components were: New orders at 49.8, production or sales at 73.5, delivery lead time at 78.9, employment at 62.5, and inventories at 67.7. "Over the past 12 months, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Kansas manufacturing employment grew by 3.9%, fourth in the region, with a gain in average hourly wages of 5.5%, second in the region," Goss said.

Minnesota: The overall index jumped to a regional high of 70.4 from September's 68.5, also a regional high. Components of the overall October index were: new orders at 75.4, production or sales at 50.3, delivery lead time at 82.3, inventories at 77.3, and employment at 66.8. "Over the past 12 months, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Minnesota manufacturing employment climbed by 3.7%, fifth in the region, with a gain in average hourly wages of 3.9%, seventh in the region," Goss said.

Missouri: The overall index for Missouri rose to 64.4 from 61.4 in September. Components of the index were: New orders at 49.5, production or sales at 72.5, delivery lead time at 77.2, inventories at 62.7, and employment at 60.3. "Over the past 12 months, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Missouri manufacturing employment expanded by 2.0%, eighth in the region, with a gain in average hourly wages of 0.6%, lowest in the region," Goss said.

Nebraska: Nebraska's overall index climbed to 67.5 from 65.5 in September. Components were: New orders at 49.0, production or sales at 49.9, delivery lead time at 79.8, inventories at 70.2, and employment at 74.0. "Over the past 12 months, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Nebraska manufacturing employment expanded by 3.4%, sixth in the region, with a gain in average hourly wages of 3.9%, also sixth in the region," Goss said.

North Dakota: The overall index for North Dakota slumped to 52.4, a regional low, from September's 55.7, also a regional low. Components were: New orders at 47.7, production or sales at 66.0, delivery lead time at 65.8, employment at 45.6, and inventories at 36.8. "Over the past 12 months, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, North Dakota manufacturing employment climbed by 2.8%, seventh in the region, with a gain in average hourly wages of 4.6%, fourth in the region," Goss said.

Oklahoma: The overall index for Oklahoma expanded above growth neutral in October, rising to 63.0 from 58.6 in September. Components were: New orders at 49.3, production or sales at 71.8, delivery lead time at 58.7, inventories at 59.1, and employment at 76.9. "Over the past 12 months, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Oklahoma manufacturing employment rose by 0.7%, slowest in the region,

with a gain in average hourly wages of 4.6%, third in the region," Goss said.

South Dakota: The South Dakota overall index advanced to 62.9 from 59.6 in September. Components were: New orders at 48.9, production or sales at 70.3, delivery lead time at 55.3, inventories at 66.9, and employment at 73.4. "Over the past 12 months, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, South Dakota manufacturing employment expanded by 4.2%, second in region, with a gain in average hourly wages of 6.7%, tops in the region," Goss said.

October survey shows growth, but scant confidence in economy

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Business leaders in nine Midwest and Plains states indicate significant jumps were made in employment and inventories over the last month, but confidence in the economy over the next six months remained at a dismal low, according to a new monthly survey.

The overall index for October of the Creighton University Mid-America Business Conditions released Monday rose to 65.2 from September's 61.6.

Any score above 50 on the survey's indexes suggests growth, while a score below 50 suggests recession.

But the survey's business confidence index, which looks ahead six months, failed to budge from 37 recorded in September. That's the lowest reading the confidence index has reached since March 2020, when the global COVID-19 pandemic began.

The report indicates that the region is adding manufacturing business activity at a positive but somewhat slower pace.

"Almost one-third of supply managers reported that inventory stockpiling has contributed significantly to supply chain bottlenecks," said Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the monthly survey.

Business leaders reported strong job growth, with the employment index rising to 66.1 in October from September's 56.7. Even so, the region has yet to recover all job losses from the pandemic, Goss said.

Wholesale prices continue to climb, with that index registering 96.5 from September's 94.9, indicating growing pressure from inflation.

The monthly survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

High court won't take case involving Hunter Biden ex-partner

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Monday rejected an appeal from a former business partner of presidential son Hunter Biden who was seeking to overturn his criminal conviction for securities fraud.

As is typical, the justices did not comment in leaving in place a federal appeals court ruling that reinstated the fraud conviction of Devon Archer. A lower court judge had earlier set aside a jury verdict that found Archer guilty of fraud and ordered a new trial.

Biden was not involved in the effort to defraud the Oglala Sioux Indian tribe in a scheme that involved the sale of bonds, but participants in the fraud invoked his name to enhance their credentials, according to court records.

Archer was convicted in 2018. His conviction was overturned later that year before the court of appeals in New York reinstated it in 2020.

Biden and Archer had been business partners, and both served on the board of the Ukrainian gas company Burisma.

Three killed in head-on crash in Beadle County

WOLSEY, S.D. (AP) — Three people have died in a weekend crash in eastern South Dakota.

According to the state Highway Patrol, two SUVs collided head-on Saturday afternoon on Highway 14 in Beadle County. A preliminary investigation indicates a 40-year-old man driving a Chevy Tahoe crossed the center line and struck a Toyota Rav4 southeast of Wolsey, the patrol said.

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The Tahoe driver, the 55-year-old woman driving Rav4 and a 78-year-old passenger in her vehicle were killed in the crash. The victims have not been identified.

All three were pronounced dead at the scene of the crash. The patrol said all were wearing seat belts. Traffic was detoured at the crash site for about four hours.

State Crime Lab facing challenging staffing issue

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A declining number of employees at the State Crime Lab in Bismarck has limited what evidence can be processed for law enforcement agencies, according to the attorney general.

Eight of 23 lab employees have left in the last two years, including five in 2021, because they've been offered higher salaries elsewhere, according to Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem.

"The salary disparity is something that makes it much more difficult to attract and retain our forensic scientists," Stenehjem told the Bismarck Tribune.

One worker left for a position in Georgia where the salary was \$30,000 more. Two toxicology scientist finalists both declined job offers due to the pay.

"It's become a situation where it's just not sustainable," the attorney general told the Senate Appropriations Committee recently. The State Crime Lab forensic scientist annual salaries range from \$48,000 to \$85,704.

"Part of the problem is that these are national searches," Stenehjem said. "You have to find people from all over the country, and we're competing with an increasing demand in an area that has a lot of demand for more workforce."

Stenehjem has asked the Legislature this fall to use \$537,000 of leftover Consumer Protection Refund Fund money to increase lab salaries.

The lab has eliminated its firearms and latent fingerprint divisions due to the staffing level. South Dakota was doing firearms analyses for the lab, but is now overwhelmed and unable to help anymore, Stenehjem said.

Yahoo to pull out of China amid 'challenging' environment

By ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Yahoo Inc. on Tuesday said it plans to pull out of China, citing an "increasingly challenging business and legal environment."

The company said in a statement that its services will no longer be accessible from mainland China as of Nov. 1.

"In recognition of the increasingly challenging business and legal environment in China, Yahoo's suite of services will no longer be accessible from mainland China as of November 1," the statement read.

It added that Yahoo "remains committed to the rights of our users and a free and open internet."

The company's withdrawal will coincide with China's Personal Information Protection Law coming into effect on Nov. 1, which curbs what information companies can gather and sets standards for how it must be stored.

Yahoo had previously downsized operations in China, and in 2015 shuttered its Beijing office. Its withdrawal from the country is largely symbolic as at least some of Yahoo's services, including its web portal, have already been blocked.

Chinese authorities maintain a firm grip on Internet censorship in the country, and require companies operating in China to censor content and keywords deemed politically sensitive or inappropriate.

China has also blocked most international social media sites and search engines, such as Facebook and Google. Users in China who wish to access these services circumvent the block by using a virtual private network (VPN).

Yahoo also previously operated a music and email service in China, but both services were also stopped in the early 2010s.

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Yahoo is the second large U.S. technology firm in recent weeks to reduce its operations in China. Last month, Microsoft's professional networking platform LinkedIn said it would shutter its Chinese site, replacing it with a jobs board instead.

Governors and more: What to watch in Tuesday's elections

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

It may be an odd-numbered year but Tuesday's elections aren't sleepy, local contests. Voters in Virginia are weighing in on a governor's race that could rattle President Joe Biden and Democrats in Washington. In Minneapolis, a city still shaken by George Floyd's murder will vote on whether to disband its police department and create a new public safety agency. School board races across the country have become the new battlegrounds for partisan debates over race.

What to watch as returns come in Tuesday:

WILL DEMOCRATS WAKE UP?

Virginia was an early hub of the Democratic resistance to President Donald Trump. Today, it may be the center of Democratic fatigue. Polls have shown that Republicans in Virginia have a sizable enthusiasm advantage over Democrats, jeopardizing Democrats' chances of holding onto the governor's office in a state Biden won by 10 percentage points last year.

Former Gov. Terry McAuliffe has been trying to fire up his voters by casting Republican newcomer Glenn Youngkin as a "Trump wannabe." But it's not clear the label is sticking. Youngkin has avoided being seen with Trump — or any national GOP leaders — and has kept his focus on education, spending and other state issues.

McAuliffe's campaign notes he's running in a tough environment for any Democrat. Biden's approval number have slouched amid a stalemate over his economic agenda in Congress, his pullout from Afghanistan, rising inflation and the persistence of the coronavirus.

Democrats' best bet may be that the unexpectedly tight race — along with the threats to abortion rights and continued messaging on Trump — jolts their base and pushes them to the polls. Even a narrow win for Democrats in a state they won by double digits last year will be little comfort as the party tries to hold onto its incredibly tight congressional majorities in next year's midterms. Just a five-seat swing in the House or a single one in the Senate could flip a chamber.

HAS YOUNGKIN CRACKED THE CODE?

Youngkin, in his first bid for public office, is showing Republicans a potential way forward in the post-Trump era. He positioned himself as a nonthreatening suburban dad in a fleece vest, but steadfastly refused to denounce the former president, who remains popular among Republicans.

Youngkin has stayed on message even as McAuliffe hammered him for being a stalking horse for Trump. Rather than engaging, Youngkin has gone after McAuliffe on taxes and especially education.

It's those education attacks that offer the most encouraging path for Republicans. Seizing on widespread discontent with schools during the pandemic and heated debates about race, Youngkin has criticized schools over hot-button conservative issues like critical race theory. He even waded into a murky sexual assault allegation and resurrected a debate about banning books. That's enabled him to appeal both to suburban voters resentful of their local school districts and to hard-line Trump voters who see the education debate as central to their political identity.

The best sign that Youngkin's gambit works will be how he performs in the affluent northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., once a bastion of the Republican Party but now a key part of the Democratic coalition.

If Youngkin makes inroads in northern Virginia and in the Richmond suburbs, it's a sign he was able to successfully walk the line. Likewise, if Democrats hold the margins from their successful 2017 gubernatorial race there, it'd be a sign of continued trouble for Republicans in highly educated suburbs.

WHEN WILL WE KNOW THE WINNER?

Be wary of early returns in Virginia because they might not resemble the final results.

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In 2020, Trump jumped out to a huge early lead over Biden that lasted until early Wednesday, when heavily Democratic counties in northern Virginia finished counting their mail ballots. Once the Democratic counties reported, the race flipped in Biden's favor and he ultimately won by a comfortable margin.

The late swing in favor of Biden was especially big because most counties, including Fairfax, the state's largest, released the results of their mail ballots at the end of the night, and Virginia's mail ballots heavily favored Democrats.

This year, a new state law requires counties to start processing mail ballots at least seven days before Election Day so they can be counted and released on election night soon after the polls close at 7 p.m. EDT. Counties are expected to release the results of their mail ballots first, followed by early in-person votes and, finally, votes cast at local polling places on Election Day. Fairfax County officials have said they plan to follow this procedure.

If Virginia's mail ballots continue to favor Democrats and the Election Day votes favor Republicans, the vote count could swing back and forth, depending on which type of votes are being released.

Mail ballots can arrive as late as Friday and still be counted, as long as they are postmarked by Election Day. Historically, less than 2% of Virginia's votes are counted after Election Day.

DON'T FORGET NEW JERSEY

The tumult of the Virginia governor's race has overshadowed the only other race for governor Tuesday. In New Jersey, Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy is trying to fight off a challenge from Republican Jack Ciattarelli, a former state legislator.

New Jersey is something of a test case for Democrats' theory of how they can win in 2022 and beyond. Murphy fulfilled his campaign promises and was able to implement vastly expanded government funding for widespread prekindergarten and free community college — policies that Biden is struggling to get through the Democrats' razor-thin majorities in Congress. Murphy has embraced the left wing of the party and hosted Vermont independent Sen. Bernie Sanders for a campaign rally last month.

While Ciattarelli has also tried to walk the line between energizing Trump voters and appealing to suburbanites, he faces a more daunting task than Youngkin. New Jersey is a more Democratic state than Virginia — Murphy won his first election by 14 percentage points in 2018. He also has the power of incumbency on his side, unlike in Virginia, the only state in the nation that doesn't allow governors consecutive terms.

The few public polls in the race have shown Murphy with a steady lead. If he wins easily, it may be a sign of hope for Democrats that they can survive 2022 if they deliver on Biden's plans for a massive expansion of social safety net and climate change programs. If it's closer, that'd be another promising indication for GOP hopes in the midterms.

A NEW URBAN POLITICS

Democrats may firmly control the nation's city halls, but that doesn't mean there's nothing to fight about. Tuesday features a wide array of local and mayoral races that will be the latest installments in the long-running battle between liberals and relative moderates.

The most prominent may be in Minneapolis, where voters will decide whether to disband their police department after the death of George Floyd and replace it with a "Department of Public Safety." The city's mayor, Jacob Frey, a Democrat, opposes the measure and is himself up for reelection against two liberals who contend he hasn't been aggressive enough on reforming the city's police.

In Boston, Michelle Wu, the 36-year-old daughter of Taiwanese immigrants and a protégé of Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, is running against Anissa Essaibi George, the daughter of Tunisian and Polish immigrants who has received support from the city's traditional powerbrokers. In Buffalo, New York, India Walton, a self-described Democratic socialist who won an upset victory in the Democratic primary there in June, will again have to defeat the city's mayor, Byron Brown, who is staging a write-in campaign after losing the primary.

The races may provide a yardstick on whether the liberal wing of the Democratic Party can still dominate in the country's bluest areas. But some mayoral races won't fall into neat ideological categories, such as in Atlanta, where a sprawling field has become a test of whether former Mayor Kasim Reed's ethics turmoil

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when he was in power should bar him for winning office again.

WILL SCHOOL BOARDS LAUNCH A CONSERVATIVE COMEBACK?

National conservative groups are pouring money into an unlikely area — local school board races — hoping to capitalize on frustration over pandemic-related closures, mask mandates and culture wars.

Big players have gotten involved, including some big GOP donors, prominent Republican officeholders and former Vice President Mike Pence, who urged attendees of an Ohio rally last weekend to vote for conservative school board candidates. Republican Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds is backing an anti-masking candidate running for the board in suburban Des Moines. Dozens of other races, from suburban Denver to suburban Philadelphia, have also become heated.

School board races are small and often not representative of larger trends, but conservatives are hoping to change that Tuesday.

Associated Press writer Stephen Ohlemacher in Washington contributed to this report.

Blast near Kabul hospital kills 3, wounds 16, medics say

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — An explosion went off Tuesday at the entrance of a military hospital in Kabul, killing three people and wounding at least 16, health officials said.

The blast went off at the entrance to the Sardar Mohammad Dawood Khan military hospital, the spokesman of the Taliban-run Interior Ministry, Saeed Khosty, wrote in a tweet. He added that special forces were at the scene.

City residents had reported two explosions in the area, of the hospital in Kabul's 10th district, along with the sound of gunfire.

Later Tuesday, Sayed Abdullah Ahmadi, the director of the nearby Wazir Akbar Khan hospital, said his facility had received three bodies and seven people who were injured in the blast.

Another nine injured were taken to the Afghanistan Emergency Hospital.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. In recent weeks, the militant Islamic State group has carried out a series of bombing and shooting attacks. IS is a rival of the Taliban, and has stepped up attacks since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in a swift military campaign in August.

The Latest: 'Fossil of the Day' awards underway at COP26

The latest on U.N. climate summit COP26:

GLASGOW, Scotland — Environmentalists have launched their traditional "Fossil of the Day" awards at the U.N. climate conference, with Britain and Australia the first to receive the questionable honor.

Climate Action Network, an umbrella group of hundreds of non-governmental organizations, said many observers who had traveled long distances to attend the summit were prevented from reaching meetings because of lengthy lines. When they tried to log on from elsewhere, technical problems prevented them from connecting, CAN said.

It urged the host country to improve organization so civil society groups can participate in the talks.

Australia received the second "fossil" for recently approving three new coal projects even as it claimed to be stepping up its efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions, CAN said.

GLASGOW, Scotland — Cyprus' president says his government is working with neighboring countries to come up with a regional action plan aimed at tackling climate change in the east Mediterranean and the Middle East.

Nicos Anastasiades told the U.N. climate conference in Glasgow on Tuesday that 240 scientists from the Middle East and Europe are already working to prepare policy recommendations, measures and "specific solutions" for the region that has been classified a "global climate change hot-spot."

Anastasiades said in the next few months, a meeting of regional ministers will precede a leaders' summit that will endorse the action plan and set up monitoring mechanisms to ensure "implementation of our

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commitments.”

Cyprus hosted a regional climate change conference last month that underscored the need for a speedy switch in the Middle East and the east Mediterranean from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources because greenhouse gas emissions are helping to drive up regional temperatures faster than in many other inhabited parts of the world.

GLASGOW, Scotland — Ecuador’s president has announced that his country is expanding the marine reserve around the Galapagos Islands by almost half.

President Guillermo Lasso told the U.N. climate conference in Glasgow on Tuesday that the government has agreed with the fishery, tourism and conservation sectors to establish a new marine reserve in the Galapagos Islands of 60,000 square kilometers (more than 23,000 square miles).

Lasso said this would be added to an existing marine reserve of about 130,000 square kilometers (50,000 square miles).

Experts says oceans are particularly vulnerable to climate change and the Galapagos Islands are considered one of the world’s biodiversity jewels.

GLASGOW, Scotland — More than 100 countries are pledging to end deforestation, which scientists say is a major driver of climate change.

Britain hailed the commitment as the first big achievement of the United Nations climate conference in Glasgow.

But campaigners say they need to see the detail -- such promises have been made, and broken, before.

The U.K. government said it has received commitments from leaders representing more than 85% of the world’s forests to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030.

More than \$19 billion in public and private funds have been pledged toward the plan, which is backed by countries including Brazil, China, Colombia, Congo, Indonesia, Russia and the United States.

GLASGOW, Scotland — The mayors of Seattle and Freetown in Sierra Leone greeted each other like long lost sisters on a train hurtling toward Glasgow.

They have been bonded by years of Zoom calls and collaboration in the fight against climate change. They lead cities on different sides of the economic and climate divide.

One is in the cool and northwestern corner of the one of the world’s richest nations. The other is the capital of an impoverished country in the tropics of west Africa.

But Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan and Freetown counterpart Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr are both on the front lines of global warming and they are working to ensure their cities are prepared for rising sea levels, torrential rains and extreme heat.

POINTE-AUX-CHENES, Louisiana — Faith leaders and activists across the world are increasingly joining the fight against climate change driven by a moral imperative to preserve creation for future generations.

Christian pastors have joined forces with Native American tribes to protect their hurricane-prone coastal lands as climate change contributes to rising sea levels.

Hindu groups joined river cleanups. And mosques organized tree-planting campaigns. But they believe systemic change to protect those most vulnerable to the climate crisis must also come from world leaders.

BEIJING — China is the largest contributor to global warming and China’s people are already suffering the brunt of climate change.

Historic floods that destroyed farms this summer in the country’s agricultural heartland are a preview of the kind of extreme conditions the country is likely to face as the planet warms.

Chinese government reports also predict rising sea levels will threaten major coastal cities while melting glaciers imperil western China’s water supply. Those with the least resources to adapt are often on

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the frontlines of suffering in a common pattern around the world. As one farmer in Henan province said, "Ordinary people suffer most."

GLASGOW, Scotland — President Joe Biden is seeking to whip up climate change-fighting efforts abroad at a time when his own climate legislation at home is again in limbo.

Biden is attending a U.N. climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland, for a second and final day Tuesday. He's due to promote global efforts to preserve forests and stem methane leaks before flying home to Washington.

But Biden's climate efforts on the global stage are playing out as Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia has again raised doubts about Biden's social spending package, including its \$555 billion in climate provisions.

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration is launching a wide-ranging plan to reduce methane emissions, targeting a potent greenhouse gas that contributes significantly to global warming.

Methane packs a stronger short-term climate punch than even carbon dioxide. The plan was being announced as President Joe Biden wraps up a two-day appearance at a U.N. climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland. It would tighten methane regulations for the oil and gas sector and crack down on leaks from pipelines.

A proposed rule would for the first time target emissions from existing oil and gas wells nationwide, rather than focus only on new wells.

Over 100 countries vow to end deforestation at climate talks

By FRANK JORDANS and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

GLASGOW, Scotland (AP) — More than 100 countries pledged Tuesday to end deforestation in the coming decade — a promise that experts say would be critical to limiting climate change but one that has been made and broken before.

Britain hailed the commitment as the first big achievement of the U.N. climate conference known as COP26 taking place this month in the Scottish city of Glasgow. But campaigners say they need to see the details to understand its full impact.

The U.K. government said it has received commitments from leaders representing more than 85% of the world's forests to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030. Among them are several countries with massive forests, including Brazil, China, Colombia, Congo, Indonesia, Russia and the United States.

More than \$19 billion in public and private funds have been pledged toward the plan.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that "with today's unprecedented pledges, we will have a chance to end humanity's long history as nature's conqueror, and instead become its custodian."

Forests are important ecosystems and provide a critical way of absorbing carbon dioxide — the main greenhouse gas — from the atmosphere. Trees are one of the world's major so-called carbon sinks, or places where carbon is stored.

But the value of wood as a commodity and the growing demand for agricultural and pastoral land are leading to widespread and often illegal felling of forests, particularly in developing countries.

Experts cautioned that similar agreements in the past have failed to be effective.

Alison Hoare, a senior research fellow at political think tank Chatham House, said world leaders promised in 2014 to end deforestation by 2030, "but since then deforestation has accelerated across many countries."

"This new pledge recognizes the range of actions needed to protect our forests, including finance, support for rural livelihoods, and strong trade policies," she said. "For it to succeed, inclusive processes and equitable legal frameworks will be needed, and governments must work with civil society, businesses and Indigenous peoples to agree, monitor and implement them."

Luciana Tellez Chavez, an environmental researcher at Human Right Watch, emphasized that strengthening Indigenous people's rights would help prevent deforestation and should be part of the agreement.

About 130 world leaders are in Glasgow for what host Britain says is the last realistic chance to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels — the goal the

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world set in Paris six years ago.

Increased warming over coming decades would melt much of the planet's ice, raise global sea levels and greatly increase the likelihood and intensity of extreme weather, scientists say.

On Monday, the leaders heard stark warnings from officials and activists alike about those dangers. Britain's Johnson described global warming as "a doomsday device" strapped to humanity. U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres told his colleagues that humans are "digging our own graves." And Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley, speaking for vulnerable island nations, warned leaders not to "allow the path of greed and selfishness to sow the seeds of our common destruction."

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II urged the leaders "to rise above the politics of the moment, and achieve true statesmanship."

"Of course, the benefits of such actions will not be there to enjoy for all of us here today: We none of us will live forever," she said in a video message played at a Monday evening reception in Glasgow's Kelvingrove museum. "But we are doing this not for ourselves but for our children and our children's children, and those who will follow in their footsteps."

The 95-year-old monarch had planned to attend the meeting, but she had to cancel the trip after doctors said she should rest and not travel.

The British government said Monday it saw positive signs that world leaders understood the gravity of the situation. On Tuesday, U.S. President Joe Biden was due to present his administration's plan to reduce methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes significantly to global warming. The announcement was part of a broader effort with the European Union and other nations to reduce overall methane emissions worldwide by 30% by 2030.

But campaigners say the world's biggest carbon emitters need to do much more. Earth has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit). Current projections based on planned emissions cuts over the next decade are for it to hit 2.7C (4.9F) by the year 2100.

Climate activist Greta Thunberg told a rally outside the high-security climate venue that the talk inside was just "blah blah blah" and would achieve little.

"Change is not going to come from inside there," she told some of the thousands of protesters who have come to Glasgow to make their voices heard. "That is not leadership, this is leadership."

Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>

Troubles at home shadow Biden's climate efforts abroad

By JOSH BOAK, ELLEN KNICKMEYER AND ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

GLASGOW, Scotland (AP) — President Joe Biden is joining other world leaders in highlighting the importance of preserving forests as a force against global warming, whipping up ambitions at a U.N. climate summit abroad even as a coal-state U.S. senator is again threatening Biden's landmark climate legislation at home.

Comments by Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin that he still has doubts about Biden's \$1.75 trillion domestic policy proposal, which includes \$555 billion in provisions to combat climate change, come at an unfortunate time for the president.

They landed as Biden and his aides are exhorting, coaxing and deal-making with government heads for faster action on cutting climate-wrecking fossil fuel emissions at a summit with more than 100 other world leaders in Glasgow, Scotland, in its second day Tuesday.

Manchin holds a key vote in the Senate, where Biden has the slimmest of Democratic majorities, and he has successively killed off key parts of the administration's climate proposals. He said Monday he was uncertain about the legislation's impact on the economy and federal debt and was as "open to voting against" it as for it.

Biden has been determined to demonstrate to the world that the U.S. is back in the global effort against climate change, after his predecessor Donald Trump pulled the U.S. — the world's largest economy and

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second-biggest climate polluter — out of the landmark 2015 Paris climate accord.

Putting the U.S. on the path to halve its own output of coal, oil and natural gas pollution by 2050, as his climate legislation seeks to do, “demonstrates to the world the United States is not only back at the table, it hopefully can lead by the power of our example,” Biden told delegates and observers on Monday.

“I know that hasn’t always been the case,” he added, in a reference to Trump.

Biden has essentially bet that the right mix of policies on climate change and the economy are not only good for the country but will help Democrats politically. But there are open questions about whether he has enough political capital at home to fully honor his promises to world leaders about shifting the U.S. toward renewable energy.

Gubernatorial elections on Tuesday in Virginia and New Jersey — states Biden won in last year’s election — will provide the first ballot-box test of how Americans view his presidency.

Biden joined other leaders Tuesday for an initiative to promote safeguarding the world’s forests, which pull vast amounts of carbon pollution from the air. As part of a broader international effort, the administration is attempting to halt natural forest loss by 2030 and intends to dedicate up to \$9 billion of climate funding to the issue, pending congressional approval.

“Forests have the potential to reduce — reduce — carbon globally by more than one third,” Biden said.

After discussions on methane, infrastructure and technology, Biden will hold a final news conference before returning to Washington. Crucial for his time in Scotland is that he’s emphasizing several policies that can be achieved without approval from Congress, such as methane pledges and private partnerships.

Back home, his administration chose Tuesday to launch a wide-ranging plan to reduce methane emissions, targeting a potent greenhouse gas that contributes significantly to global warming.

Biden was upbeat Monday, smiling and back-patting with allied leaders — though briefly resting his eyes while in the audience for climate speeches. He came to the summit saying he hoped to see his legislation pass this week.

But the latest objections from Manchin threaten to close the narrow window Biden may have to pass his spending bill. The senator is eager to preserve his state’s declining coal industry despite coal’s falling competitiveness in U.S. energy markets.

If Biden’s climate legislation falters, he could be limited to regulatory projects on climate that could easily be overturned by the next U.S. president, and turn his stirring cries for climate action abroad into wistful talk at home.

Manchin’s statements are a possible sign that one of two key Democratic votes in the Senate wants to delay any votes on the president’s agenda until the bill is fully vetted. But House Democrats are still taking steps this week to pass Biden’s \$1 trillion infrastructure package, which includes efforts to address climate change. The White House is seeking to turn both measures into law, linking them in hopes of appeasing a diverse and at times fractious Democratic caucus.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki issued a statement that the administration is confident the spending package already meets the criteria set by Manchin.

“It is fully paid for, will reduce the deficit, and brings down costs for health care, childcare, elder care, and housing,” Psaki said. “We remain confident that the plan will gain Senator Manchin’s support.”

Biden hinted at the challenge of trying to lead globally on climate at a time of political divisions at home. In seemingly impromptu comments on the Glasgow summit sidelines Monday, Biden referred to the collapse of U.S. climate efforts under Trump.

“I shouldn’t apologize, but I do apologize for the fact the United States, the last administration, pulled out of the Paris accords and put us sort of behind the eight ball a little bit,” he said.

Associated Press writer Matthew Daly in Washington contributed to this report.

Biden climate plan aims to reduce methane emissions

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

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WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration is launching a wide-ranging plan to reduce methane emissions, targeting a potent greenhouse gas that contributes significantly to global warming and packs a stronger short-term punch than even carbon dioxide.

The plan was being announced Tuesday as President Joe Biden wraps up a two-day appearance at a United Nations climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland. Biden pledged during the summit to work with the European Union and other nations to reduce overall methane emissions worldwide by 30% by 2030.

The centerpiece of U.S. actions is a long-awaited rule by the Environmental Protection Agency to tighten methane regulations for the oil and gas sector, as laid out in one of Biden's first executive orders.

The proposed rule would for the first time target reductions from existing oil and gas wells nationwide, rather than focus only on new wells as previous regulations have done.

EPA Administrator Michael Regan said the new rule, established under the Clean Air Act, would lead to significant reductions in methane emissions and other pollutants and would be stricter than an Obama-era standard set in 2016. Congress reinstated the Obama standard last summer in a rare effort by majority Democrats to use the legislative branch to overturn a regulatory rollback under President Donald Trump.

"As global leaders convene at this pivotal moment in Glasgow for COP26, it is now abundantly clear that America is back and leading by example in confronting the climate crisis with bold ambition," Regan said, referring to the climate summit.

EPA's "historic action" will "ensure robust and lasting cuts in pollution across the country," Regan said. The new rule will protect communities near oil and natural gas sites and advance U.S. climate goals under the 2015 Paris Agreement, he said.

The oil and natural gas industry is the nation's largest industrial source of methane, a highly potent pollutant that is responsible for about one-third of current warming from human activities.

The oil and gas sector also is a leading source of other harmful air pollutants, including volatile compounds that contribute to ground-level ozone, or smog, and air toxins such as benzene that are emitted along with methane.

Environmental groups call methane reduction the fastest and most cost-effective action to slow the rate of global warming. Current rules for methane emissions from U.S. oil and gas wells only apply to sources that were built or modified after 2015, leaving more than 90% of the nation's nearly 900,000 well sites unregulated.

The American Petroleum Institute, the oil and gas industry's top lobbying group, has said it supports direct regulation of methane emissions from new and existing sources but opposes efforts in Congress to impose fees on methane leaks, calling them punitive and unnecessary. The industry says leaks of methane, the main component of natural gas, have decreased even as natural gas production has gone up as a result of the ongoing fracking boom. Technological advancements in recent years have made finding and repairing natural gas leaks cheaper and easier.

The administration's plan includes new safety regulations by the Transportation Department to tighten requirements over methane leaks from the nation's 3 million miles of pipelines.

The Interior Department, meanwhile, is preparing to crack down on methane waste burned at drilling sites on public lands. And the Agriculture Department is working with farmers to establish so-called climate-smart standards to monitor and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon storage.

The plan focuses on cutting pollution from the largest sources of methane emissions and uses financial incentives, public disclosure and private partnerships to reduce leaks and waste, protect workers and communities and create union-friendly jobs, a senior administration official said at a briefing Monday. The official asked not to be named because the person was not authorized to speak before the actions were publicly announced.

Biden has previously announced plans to step up efforts to plug leaks at old gas wells and clean up abandoned coal mines. A bipartisan infrastructure bill approved by the Senate includes billions to reclaim abandoned mine land and cap orphaned wells.

The administration also is taking aim at methane emissions from landfills, with emphasis on food loss

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and waste that serves as a major contributor. EPA has set a voluntary goal of capturing 70% of methane emissions from U.S. landfills.

Saudi Arabia wants businesses and families to pick Riyadh

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Upon arrival at Dubai's international airport, travelers can pick up a free guide to the city's top attractions and events. Curiously, the cover of this month's "Time Out-DXB" beckons visitors to Saudi Arabia. Emblazoned with an image of the kingdom's ancient Diriyah fort near the Saudi capital, it reads: "Welcome to Arabia. A Journey You've Never Imagined".

The landlocked, once ultraconservative capital of Riyadh is pitching itself as a city of concerts, movie theaters, world class sporting events and deal-making; a city where revamped cultural heritage sites wait to be discovered, distinguishing Saudi Arabia from other Gulf Arab capitals defined by sprawling malls and high-rise hotels.

The pitch is part of Saudi Arabia's plan to grab the limelight and title as the region's top place to do business. Currently, the more glamorous emirate of Dubai is seen as the region's hub for finance and tourism. No longer does the kingdom want consultants and executives flying in for a few days, only to fly right back out and spend those earnings elsewhere.

There are incentives — or, some say, penalties — for businesses to consider: Saudi Arabia has told companies they have until the beginning of 2024 to relocate their regional headquarters to the country or lose out on lucrative government contracts that keep the region's biggest economy humming.

It's the latest move by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's day-to-day leader, who's been empowered by his father, King Salman, to overhaul the economy and reduce its dependence on oil for revenue. The 36-year-old prince wants companies, their employees and their families to move to the capital, Riyadh.

Some investors and their shareholders, however, remain wary of the prince. Four years ago — at the very same Ritz-Carlton hotel where a key investment forum took place last week and where 44 multinational companies announced their plans to establish regional headquarters in Riyadh — Prince Mohammed oversaw the unprecedented detention of Saudi business leaders, princes and officers in a purported anti-corruption sweep. The campaign, described by critics as a shakedown, largely took place outside of the courts and public view. It also cemented the crown prince's grip on power.

Some of the companies now moving headquarters to Riyadh had already signed agreements to do so earlier this year, while others were announced for the first time. In all, the list includes multinational names like PepsiCo, Siemens Mobility, Unilever, Deloitte, Halliburton, Schlumberger and Baker Hughes.

"We're convinced that this is win-win," Saudi Investment Minister Khalid al-Falih told The Associated Press in an interview on the sidelines of the forum. "It's important for us, but it's even more important for the companies because they will get the benefits of being closer to decision makers."

He said the intent "is not to penalize companies" but to show them access to "the biggest market in the region." Saudi Arabia is the only Arab nation among the Group of 20 countries representing 80% of the world economy.

Al-Falih was in Los Angeles and Washington D.C. shortly before the Riyadh summit attempting to woo more U.S. investments in Saudi Arabia. He is well-known internationally, having once served as Saudi energy minister and as oil giant Aramco's CEO and chairman.

The government hopes the "Regional Headquarters Attraction Program" will add \$18 billion to the local economy and create 30,000 new jobs over the next decade.

Creating jobs and diversifying the economy sit at the heart of Prince Mohammed's Vision 2030 blueprint for transforming the country. He is to inherit a nation where over a third of the population is under 14, and more than 60% are under 35. No longer can the public sector absorb or afford the wages of most Saudis. The prince is partly looking to the \$450 billion Public Investment Fund, the kingdom's sovereign wealth fund, to generate jobs and non-oil economic growth through state-backed mega-projects, like the \$50

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billion heritage project in Diriyah just outside Riyadh featured on the cover of Dubai's airport magazine. Prince Mohammed is also attempting to diversify the Saudi economy amid a global push to transition away from burning fossil fuels to cleaner forms of energy. The kingdom has pledged "net zero" emissions by 2060, but has no plans to phase out its production and export of oil and gas to other nations.

Some investors remain concerned about doing business in the kingdom, said Ayham Kamel, head of the Middle East division at Eurasia Group, a political risk consultancy that advises businesses.

He said there is little clarity on tax incentives for businesses that will relocate or whether they will need to adhere to a Saudi hiring quota.

The investment minister said the kingdom is working on providing answers, after a rocky start over the past five years. "We did not have the opportunities well-defined and we did not have the regulations in place," al-Falih said. "That is now either done or on its way of being done in the next couple of years."

Al-Falih said Saudi Arabia wants to be seen as a safe place to do business. He said the self-declared anti-corruption campaign should be seen as a sign that the kingdom is "starting a new page" where foreign investors can find a "level playing field."

Investors remain tepid about Saudi Arabia, though the figures are improving. Foreign direct investment to the kingdom plummeted dramatically to \$1.42 billion in 2017, the year Prince Mohammed stunned the nation by sidelining his more experienced, older cousin to become crown prince and the year he launched the purported anti-corruption campaign.

Last year, foreign direct investment climbed to \$4.6 billion, but that's still less than in 2016 when it stood at \$7.5 billion. The figures are dwarfed by inflows to neighboring United Arab Emirates, where FDI reached \$13.8 billion last year.

Some see the kingdom's ambitions as a direct challenge to the UAE's emirate of Dubai, which exudes luxury and flair with its trendy bars and restaurants, five-star hotels, high-end gyms, endless shopping and family-friendly beaches tailored for Western lifestyles and Asian tourists. For many, Riyadh remains lack-luster in comparison.

Dubai is currently hosting the World Fair's Expo. Last week, Saudi Arabia announced Riyadh's bid to play host to the six-month-long fair in 2030.

Al-Falih brushed aside comparisons with Dubai, saying Riyadh is simply claiming what he believes is its "appropriate place as as the capital of the Middle East."

"We are the biggest economy. We are the geopolitical capital of the region," he added. "And we have the biggest ambition. We have the biggest opportunities."

Saudi Arabia is home to around 30 million people, two-thirds of them Saudi nationals. The UAE, with a much smaller territory, is home to nearly 10 million people, a little more than a tenth of them Emirati.

Dubai is working to retain its place as the region's premier tourism, financial and real estate hub. At the departure hall of Riyadh's international airport, a large advertisement hangs from the ceiling, featuring an investment opportunity in a new beachfront development in Dubai. To keep foreigners invested longer, the UAE is also easing visa rules for residents and investors.

Across the Gulf, higher oil prices have improved sentiment. Oil prices, which averaged \$84 per barrel in October, have also buoyed Saudi foreign reserves to almost \$466 billion.

The mood at the investment forum in Riyadh largely reflected that. The three-day forum drew more than 1,000 delegates, including several American billionaires and top U.S. hedge-fund managers. This came just three years after these same business titans canceled their attendance following the international outcry over the killing of Saudi critic Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents who worked for the crown prince.

On the opening night, forum guests attended a gala dinner with an open-air concert by American singer Gloria Gaynor in the King Abdullah Financial District, a complex of skyscrapers where Prince Mohammed hopes firms will set up their regional headquarters.

Kamel, the analyst, said he expects Dubai will retain a large part of the region's global investments. Saudi Arabia, he said, will attract a bit more of the current market share from businesses whose main revenue is generated by the kingdom.

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Any investor interested in setting up operations in Saudi Arabia will have to contend with the fact that Prince Mohammed sits very much at the top of important decision-making.

"In this kind of emerging market, you're making a bet on the leadership and its strategic choices," he said. "There's no way to escape it."

Follow Aya Batrawy on twitter at <https://twitter.com/ayaelb>

Census analysis finds undercount but not as bad as predicted

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

The 2020 census missed an estimated 1.6 million people, but given hurdles posed by the pandemic and natural disasters, the undercount was smaller than expected, according to an analysis by a think tank that did computer simulations of the nation's head count.

The analysis, done by the Urban Institute and released Tuesday, found that people of color, renters, noncitizens, children and people living in Texas — the state that saw the nation's largest growth — were most likely to be missed, though by smaller margins than some had projected for a count conducted in the midst of a global pandemic. Still, those shortfalls could affect the drawing of political districts and distribution of federal spending.

The analysis estimates there was a 0.5% undercount of the nation's population during the 2020 census. If that modeled estimate holds true, it would be greater than the 0.01% undercount in the 2010 census but in the same range as the 0.49% undercount in the 2000 census.

The 2020 head count of the nation's 331 million residents last year faced unprecedented challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, wildfires in the West, hurricanes on the Gulf Coast and attempts at politicization by the Trump administration. The census is used to determine how many congressional seats each state gets, provides the data used for drawing political districts and helps determine the allocation of \$1.5 trillion in federal spending each year.

"The fact that the undercount wasn't larger is surprising and certainly a good news story," said Diana Elliott, principal research associate at the Urban Institute. "This undercount suggests the 2020 census may not be as close in accuracy as 2010, but it may not be as dire as some had feared."

The official undercount or overcount of the census won't be known until next year when the Census Bureau releases a report card on its accuracy. The bureau's post-enumeration survey measures the accuracy of the census by independently surveying a sample of the population and estimating how many people and housing units were missed or counted erroneously.

The Urban Institute created computer simulations that modeled the count by demographic characteristics and geography. Despite the smaller-than-expected national undercount, it showed wide ranges based on race, ethnic background, age and among U.S. states and metro areas.

In 2020, Black and Hispanic people had net undercounts of more than 2.45% and 2.17%, respectively, according to the Urban Institute estimates, while they were respectively 2.07% and 1.54% in 2010.

There was an overcount of white residents by 0.39%, according to the Urban Institute, and undercounts of Asians, Native Americans and Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders by 0.6%, 0.36% and 1.5%, respectively.

By comparison, 2010 had an overcount of white people by 0.84%. In 2010, there were undercounts of Asians by 0.08% and Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders by 1.34%. Native Americans on reservations were undercounted by 4.88% in 2010, but those off reservations were overcounted by 1.95%. Children under age 5 were undercounted by 4.86%, households with noncitizens by 3.36% and renters by 2.13% in 2020, according to the Urban Institute,

One of the nation's leading civil rights organizations, the National Urban League — not to be confused with the Urban Institute — said recently that an undercount of Black residents could rob African American communities of billions of dollars in federal funding and three congressional seats. National Urban League President and CEO Marc Morial blamed the Trump administration, which attempted but failed to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census form and tried to end the head count early.

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The National Urban League has called for congressional hearings to look into the extent of political interference in the 2020 census.

"This isn't simply an unfortunate accident," Morial said. "It's the result of a deliberate campaign of sabotage intended to steer political influence and public resources away from communities of color."

The Urban Institute's analysis found variations in the accuracy by geography. Among the 20 largest metro areas, the Twin Cities had the nation's highest overcount, more than 1%, and Miami had the largest undercount at about 1.7%.

Mississippi and Texas were undercounted by 1.3% and 1.28%, respectively, in the simulated count. Minnesota, Iowa, New Hampshire and Wisconsin also registered overcounts in the simulation, an unsurprising conclusion since they had among the highest self-response rates in the nation during the actual count.

About a fifth of the U.S. residents not counted in the Urban Institute's simulations, or more than 377,000 people, lived in Texas, and that could have real-life consequences. According to the Urban Institute analysis, Texas stands to miss out on \$247 million in 2021 federal Medicaid reimbursements for being undercounted.

President Joe Biden's choice to head the Census Bureau, Robert Santos, was chief methodologist at the Urban Institute before his nomination last spring. He played an advisory role on the project, Elliott said.

Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>

Mayors take message of local action to UN summit

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

GLASGOW, Scotland (AP) — On a train hurtling toward Glasgow, the mayors of Seattle and Freetown, Sierra Leone, greeted each other like long lost sisters, bonded by years of Zoom calls and collaboration in the fight against climate change.

They lead cities on different sides of the economic and climate divide — one in the cool, northwestern corner of the one of the world's richest nations; the other the capital of an impoverished country in the tropics of west Africa.

But Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan and her Freetown counterpart, Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, are both on the front lines of global warming, working to ensure their cities are prepared for rising sea levels, torrential rains and extreme heat.

On Monday, they traveled to the U.N. climate conference in Scotland with a group of big city mayors to demand that world leaders follow the science and act now to head off a catastrophic increase in global temperatures.

Aki-Sawyer describes herself and other city leaders as the captains of small boats trying to warn an ocean liner of the dangers ahead.

"I'm going to stand on top of the bow and I'll be waving my hands furiously and I'm going to be saying, 'Look over here, you're hitting an iceberg and you need to stop now,'" she said. "And I'm hoping that there'll be enough of us doing the same thing for it to make a difference."

Aki-Sawyerr and Durkan are part of a delegation from the C40 group of big city mayors who are demanding that they be included in decisions about how to combat global warming and mitigate its effects. City leaders will be asked to implement many of the decisions made by presidents and prime ministers, so they should be consulted and receive funds to do the job, the group says.

The delegation included the mayors of Los Angeles, Paris and London, as well as the Nordic cities of Oslo and Stockholm, and Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh.

The mayors sought to underscore their environmental credentials by making the 645-kilometer (400-mile) journey from London to Glasgow by rail. The electric train they traveled on generates about seven times less greenhouse gas emissions per passenger than flying.

Together, the C40 group's 97 members are home to more than 700 million people, or almost 10% of the world's population.

The mayors aren't alone in saying that cities will play a big part in the fight against climate change.

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More than half the world's population now live in urban areas, after crossing that threshold in 2007, and the trend is only going to continue. Despite the economic shock caused by COVID-19, cities are still seen as gateways to a better life because density and diversity lead to creativity and innovation, said Bernice Lee, director of futures at Chatham House think tank in London.

"Crucially, around 80% of emissions come from the planet's cities so they really have to be part of the solutions, and decisions made in major cities really matter," Lee said. "They can be great environments for both testing and piloting the next generation of solutions as there is both density and scale on offer in cities."

The U.N. climate conference, known as COP26, comes just two months after an international panel of climate scientists said time was running out to meet the goal of limiting global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) and avert catastrophic climate change. While organizers say Glasgow is the last best chance for an agreement to slash greenhouse gas emissions, some world leaders, including Presidents Xi Jinping of China and Vladimir Putin of Russia, have decided not to attend.

China is the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions, followed by the U.S., European Union, India and Russia, according to the International Energy Agency.

Freetown is already seeing a chain reaction of impacts as a changing economy collides with global warming.

Increased migration from the countryside is forcing people to build informal settlements near coastal mangroves and on hillsides around the city, which destroys forests and worsens floods during heavy rains. More than 1,000 people were killed by a mudslide in 2017.

In response, the city is planting trees and working to improve sanitation and flood mitigation projects, Aki-Sawyerr told the U.N. Environment Program last year. One program gave tricycles to youth groups who collect household waste that is then composted and returned to urban farmers.

"There are billions of people in the global south for whom climate change impacts are happening today. Now. Those livelihoods are being destroyed," Aki-Sawyerr said. "These are the smaller, smaller emitters ... and yet the consequences are dire."

But the fight against climate change is also taking place 6,700 miles (10,800 kilometers) away in Seattle.

Temperatures in Seattle, known for cloudy skies and drizzling rain, rose above 100 F (38 C) on three consecutive days in late June as a mass of hot air sat over the western U.S. and Canada. On June 28, the temperature reached 108 degrees (42 C), the highest in 151 years of detailed record-keeping.

The state of Washington recorded 138 heat-related deaths during the summer of 2021, compared with seven the previous year.

While scientists are hesitant to link any single weather event to global warming, Seattle officials are preparing for rising sea levels, higher tides and more frequent and longer-lasting heat waves.

Seattle maintained its commitment to the Paris Climate Accord after former President Donald Trump pulled out of the deal. The city promotes public transportation, cycling and walking as alternatives to solo car journeys and is working to increase energy efficiency in public and private buildings.

"Mayors are the front line in their cities for everything from who picked up the garbage or didn't," Durkan said. "Policy at the national level and central government level — their biggest challenge is how to implement it? What does that mean? Boots on the ground? Our first thought is, how do you implement and what does it mean to real people?"

Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>

Faith groups fight against climate change ahead of UN summit

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO and JESSIE WARDARSKI Associated Press

POINTE-AUX-CHENES, Louisiana (AP) — On a boat ride along a bayou that shares the name of his Native American tribe, Donald Dardar points to a cross marking his ancestors' south Louisiana burial ground — a place he fears will disappear.

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He points to the partly submerged stumps of oak trees killed by salt water on land where he rode horses as a kid, and to his mother's home, gutted by Hurricane Ida. He and his wife have a mission: protecting Pointe-aux-Chenes and other communities at risk in a state that loses about a football field's worth of wetlands every 100 minutes.

For years, Donald and Theresa Dardar have joined forces with the Rev. Kristina Peterson. Working with scientists and members of Pointe-au-Chien and two other tribes, they've set out thousands of oyster shells to protect sacred mounds, obtained financing to refill abandoned oil field canals and built an elevated greenhouse to save their plants and medicinal herbs from flooding.

"It's saving what we know that's going to be destroyed from both the change of the heat and the rising of the water," said Peterson, the pastor of Bayou Blue Presbyterian Church in Gray, Louisiana, and a former professor of environmental planning at the University of New Orleans.

Their vital work to save their bayou home and heritage is part of a broader trend around the world of faith leaders and environmental activists increasingly joining the fight against climate change. From Hindu groups joining river cleanups and Sikh temples growing pesticide-free food, to Muslim imams and Buddhist monks organizing tree-planting campaigns, the movement knows no denominational boundaries but shares as a driving force a moral imperative to preserve what they see as a divinely given environment for future generations.

But some of them believe systemic change to protect those most vulnerable to the climate crisis must also come from world leaders meeting at the U.N. climate conference in Glasgow, Scotland.

"It's up to them to step up to the plate and do what they're supposed to do," Theresa Dardar said at the tribal center where she handed out supplies to members of her tribe and others who lost their homes after Hurricane Ida hit the small fishing community 80 miles (about 130 kilometers) southwest of New Orleans.

"It's up to you not to just give lip service, but to take action against climate change and sea level rise," said Dardar, a longtime religion teacher at a local Catholic church and head of the environmental nonprofit Lowlander Center.

Pope Francis and dozens of religious leaders recently signed a joint appeal to governments to commit to targets at the Oct. 31-Nov. 12 summit in Glasgow. The summit aims to secure more ambitious commitments to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius with a goal of keeping it to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels. The event also is focused on mobilizing financing and protecting threatened communities and natural habitats.

Louisiana holds 40% of U.S. wetlands, but they're disappearing fast — about 2,000 square miles (5,180 square kilometers) of the state have been lost since the 1930s. That's about 80% of the nation's wetland losses, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Peterson arrived in Pointe-aux-Chenes in 1992 after Hurricane Andrew, following a call to link scientists with communities hit by storms, sinking land and sea rise from climate change. Through the Lowlander Center that she co-founded, she worked to protect sacred sites from coastal erosion, refill canals dug by oil companies that allow for saltwater intrusion and build the greenhouse set to open in October. Instead, it was repurposed as a food pantry supply room after Ida.

"There's been so much that has been interrupted ... and these are all critical, critical things," Peterson said.

"We're not going to wait on world leaders to take action. We're doing it now," she said. With Theresa Dardar, they're part of the Greater New Orleans Interfaith Climate Change Coalition, which includes Buddhist, Baha'i, Christian, Jewish and other faith leaders.

They've also worked closely with Chief Shirell Parfait-Dardar of the Grand Caillou/Dulac Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Indians. She's the first woman to lead her tribe and the only Indigenous woman on the Louisiana governor's climate change task force. Last year, her tribe and Pointe-au-Chien were among those that filed a formal complaint to the U.N. in Geneva, saying the U.S. government violated their human rights by failing to act on climate change.

"We should be caring for Mother Earth, not abusing her. This is a result of all of the abuse that we've done to her," she said, tearing up and pointing to her home, destroyed by Ida. "If we don't listen to the

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science, if we don't listen to the wisdom of the elders, we're going to ... keep seeing these massive amounts of destruction."

Religious communities are crucial in the fight against climate change, said Nathan Jessee, a researcher at Princeton's High Meadows Environmental Institute who has worked with the area's Indigenous communities.

"There's a long history of faith-based leaders and Indigenous peoples being at the forefront of these struggles for environmental justice," Jessee said. Together, he said, they've demonstrated the fight for clean air and water is a moral and spiritual struggle.

For many faith leaders, preserving the environment is part of their mandate to care for communities most vulnerable to climate change. It's a call that Pope Francis has made often, most broadly in a 2015 encyclical, "Praised Be." It has been echoed by imams, rabbis, patriarchs and pastors who share how their faith traditions interpreted the call.

People of color, the poor, women, children and the elderly suffer the worst climate change impacts, said the Rev. Fletcher Harper, an Episcopal priest, and executive director of GreenFaith, a global multi-faith environmental organization based in New York. "For religious people, that is utterly unacceptable," he said.

On the invitation of Indigenous communities, more than 150 faith leaders gathered in Washington last month to pressure President Joe Biden to stop new fossil fuel projects.

GreenFaith organized other actions across the globe: In Fiji, the leader of the Pacific Council of Churches was photographed on an island which goes underwater at high tide because of rising sea levels. In Jakarta, Indonesia, the largest mosque in Southeast Asia unfurled a banner that read: "Destroying the planet is haram" — forbidden. In Australia, religious groups protested against coal production and urged the prime minister to undertake bold climate action.

"The biggest plus in terms of where we are now is that there is an impatient, feisty, unstoppable grass-roots movement," Harper said.

Religious groups including the World Council of Churches also have joined the fossil fuel divestment movement. "This isn't just a stunt," said Harper, whose organization has backed such faith-based efforts since 2013. He said it evolved from a symbolic gesture to a key road map into the future.

Not all religious decision makers are on board with divestment nor is every member of a faith tradition of like mind. In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the general assembly voted in 2018 to continue engaging with fossil fuel companies it holds stock in.

The issue is expected to be raised again in the 2022 general assembly. "The concern with divestment was that there wasn't anything in there for the transition of workers — to go into alternative energies," Peterson said.

Not all the faithful believe in renewable energy or even accept the science behind global warming.

"White evangelical Christians are some of the most suspicious of climate science and the least accepting of solutions to address it," said the Rev. Kyle Meyaard-Schaap, vice president of the Evangelical Environmental Network. His ministry navigates that suspicion by connecting climate science to faith rather than politics, emphasizing authority of scripture and sanctity of human life.

"We don't do this because we're Democrats or Republicans. We don't even do this some of us because we're environmentalists," Meyaard-Schapp said. "We're doing this because we're Christians and we think that this is just part of what it means to follow Jesus in the 21st century."

That same belief guided volunteers from Churches of Christ who recently brought boxes of food to the tribal center in Pointe-aux-Chenes. A month after Ida, piles of debris, wrecked boats and destroyed homes lined the bayou that runs through the town. Many were living in cars and tents.

"The scripture tells us that we're supposed to be good stewards of what God gave us," said Jaime Green, a volunteer from New Orleans who often speaks about climate change at the Elysian Fields Church of Christ led by her husband.

"As a faith community, we have to be teaching our congregations and our children, generations to come that they need to take care of what we have, and preserve it as much as we can — and even work to undo some of the damage."

AP journalists Holly Meyer in Nashville, Tennessee, Nicole Winfield in Rome, and Janet McConnaughey in New Orleans, contributed to this report. Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through The Conversation U.S. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

Ethiopia tried to limit rare UN report on Tigray war abuses

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — The findings of the only human rights investigation allowed in Ethiopia's blockaded Tigray region will be released Wednesday, a year after war began there. But people with knowledge of the probe say it has been limited by authorities who recently expelled a U.N. staffer helping to lead it.

And yet, with groups such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International barred from Tigray, along with foreign media, the report may be the world's only official source of information on atrocities in the war, which began in November 2020 after a political falling-out between the Tigray forces that long dominated the national government and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's current government. The conflict has been marked by gang rapes, mass expulsions, deliberate starvation and thousands of deaths.

The joint investigation by the U.N. human rights office and the government-created Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, or EHRC, is a rare collaboration that immediately raised concerns among ethnic Tigrayans, human rights groups and other observers about impartiality and government influence.

In response to questions from The Associated Press, the U.N. human rights office in Geneva said it wouldn't have been able to enter Tigray without the partnership with the rights commission. Although past joint investigations occurred in Afghanistan and Uganda, the U.N. said, "the current one is unique in terms of magnitude and context."

But Ethiopia's government has given no basis for expelling U.N. human rights officer Sonny Onyegbula last month, the U.N. added, and without an explanation "we cannot accept the allegation that our staff member ... was 'meddling in the internal affairs' of Ethiopia."

Because of those circumstances, and the fact that the U.N. left the investigation to its less experienced regional office in Ethiopia, the new report is "automatically suspect," said David Crane, founder of the Global Accountability Network and founding chief prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, an international tribunal.

"What you need when you go into an atrocity zone is a clean slate so outside investigators can look into it neutrally, dispassionately," Crane said. "You want to do these things where you don't build doubt, distrust from the beginning," including among people interviewed.

The investigation might be the international community's only chance to collect facts on the ground, he said, but because of its setup, it may disappear "in the sands of time."

People close to the investigation, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation, asserted that the head of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, Daniel Bekele, underplayed some allegations that fighters from the country's Amhara region were responsible for abuses in Tigray and pressed instead to highlight abuses by Tigray forces.

That's even though witnesses have said the perpetrators of most abuses were soldiers from neighboring Eritrea, Ethiopian forces and Amhara regional forces.

In response to AP's questions, Bekele asserted his commission's independence, saying it is "primarily accountable to the people it is created to serve." Attempts to influence the investigation, he added, can come from "many directions" in such a polarized environment.

Bekele said he and the commission have consistently cited "serious indications that all parties involved in the conflict have committed atrocities."

Observers say a major shortcoming of the investigation is its failure to visit the scene of many alleged massacres in Tigray, including the deadliest known one in the city of Axum, where witnesses told the AP

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that several hundred people were killed.

Bekele said the investigation lacked the support of the Tigray authorities now administering the region after Tigray forces retook much of the area in June, about midway through the joint team's work.

The U.N. human rights office, however, said the government's subsequent severing of flights and communications from Tigray during the planned investigation period made it difficult to access key locations, both "logistically and from a security point of view."

Even the interim Tigray authorities hand-picked by Ethiopia's government to run the region earlier in the war rejected the joint investigation, its former chief of staff, Gebremeskel Kassa, told the AP.

"We informed the international community we wanted an investigation into human rights but not with the EHRC because we believe this is a tool of the government," he said.

The U.N. has said Ethiopia's government had no say in the report's publication, though it was given the chance to read the report in advance and to point out "anything it believes to be incorrect."

Late last week, Ethiopia's government and a diaspora group released the results of their own investigations focusing on alleged abuses by Tigray forces after they entered the neighboring regions of Amhara and Afar four months ago in what they called an effort to pressure the government to end its blockade on Tigray.

The ministry of justice said it found 483 non-combatants were killed and 109 raped in parts of Amhara and Afar that were recaptured by federal forces in recent weeks. It also found "widespread and systematic looting" of schools, clinics, churches, mosques and aid groups' offices.

A separate report by the Amhara Association of America said it found that 112 people were raped in several districts covered by the ministry's findings. The diaspora group drew on data from offices of women's and children's affairs as well as interviews with witnesses, doctors and officials.

The diaspora group asserted that the Tigray forces "committed the rapes as revenge against ethnic Amharas, whom they blame as responsible for abuses in their home region."

The spokesman for the Tigray forces, Getachew Reda, said the allegations aren't worth "the paper they're written on." Accusations of rapes and killings by Tigray forces are "absolutely untrue, at least on a level these organizations are alleging," he said.

'Ordinary people suffer most': China farms face climate woes

By CHRISTINA LARSON and EMILY WANG FUJIYAMA Associated Press
JIAOZUO, China (AP) — Wang Yuetang's sneakers sink into the mud of what was once his thriving corn and peanut farm as he surveys the damage done by an unstable climate.

Three months after torrential rains flooded much of central China's Henan province, stretches of the country's flat agricultural heartland are still submerged in several inches of water. It's one of the many calamities around the world that are giving urgency to the U.N. climate summit underway in Glasgow, Scotland.

"There is nothing this year. It's all gone," Wang said. "Farmers on the lowland basically have no harvest, nothing." He lost his summer crop to floods, and in late October the ground was still too wet to plant the next season's crop, winter wheat.

On other nearby farms, shriveled beanstalks and rotted cabbage heads bob in the dank water, buzzing with flies. Some of the corn ears can be salvaged, but because the husks are moldy, they can be sold only as animal feed, bringing lower prices.

The flooding disaster is the worst that farmers in Henan like Wang can remember in 40 years — but it is also a preview of the kind of extreme conditions the country is likely to face as the planet warms and the weather patterns growers depend upon are increasingly destabilized.

"As the atmosphere warms up, air can hold more moisture, so when storms occur, they can rain out more extreme precipitation," said Richard Seager, a climate scientist at Columbia University. "Chances are extremely likely that human-induced climate change caused the extreme flooding you saw this summer in places like China and Europe."

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China, the most populous country in the world, with 1.4 billion people, is now the planet's largest contributor to climate change, responsible for around 28% of carbon dioxide emissions that warm the Earth, though the United States is the biggest polluter historically.

As world leaders take part this week in the climate summit, China is being criticized for not setting a more ambitious timeline for phasing out fossil fuels.

President Xi Jinping, who has not left China since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and will not be attending the summit but sent a veteran negotiator, has said the country's carbon emissions will level off before 2030. Critics say that's not soon enough.

Chinese government projections paint a worrying vision of the future: rising sea levels threatening major coastal cities, including Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hong Kong, and melting glaciers and permafrost imperiling western China's water supply and grand infrastructure projects such as the railroads across the Tibetan plateau.

Top government scientists also predict an increase in droughts, heat waves and extreme rainfall across China that could threaten harvests and endanger reservoirs and dams, including Three Gorges Dam.

Meanwhile, China's people are already suffering the brunt of climate change. And in a common pattern around the world, those who have contributed least to the warming and have the fewest resources to adapt often feel the pain most acutely.

In late July, Chinese news broadcasts carried startling footage of torrential rains swamping Henan's provincial capital, Zhengzhou — at one point, 8 inches (20 centimeters) fell in a single hour — with cars swept away, subways flooded and people struggling through waist-deep water. More than 300 people died as the megacity turned into an accidental Venice, its highways transformed into muddy canals.

Even after the most dramatic storms ceased, the water continued to pool in much of the surrounding countryside, a flat and fertile region.

Here the economy depends on corn, wheat and vegetables, and other regions of China depend on Henan for food. The local government reported that nearly 3 million acres (1.2 million hectares) of farmland were flooded — an area about the size of Connecticut — with damage totaling \$18 billion.

"All I could do at the time was to watch the heavens cry, cry and cry every day," said Wang, the peanut farmer.

A limited number of rudimentary pumps were shared among farmers in Henan. Soft plastic tubes were stretched across fields to drain water, but they periodically burst, sending farmers running to patch holes.

A 58-year-old farmer who gave only her last name, Song, said everything she owned was submerged by the floods — her home, furniture, fields, farming equipment.

"Nothing was harvested. This year, the common people have been suffering all year long," she said. "Ordinary people suffer most."

"We have been working so hard, breaking our backs ... without even a penny back, my heart aches," said Hou Beibei, a farmer whose simple vegetable greenhouses — plastic tarps covering plots of eggplant, garlic and celery — remain flooded, her hard work washed away.

She is worried about her two young children. "The tuition fees of the children and the living expenses of the whole family rely on this land," she said.

The summer also saw another climate-linked natural disaster in China. In July, the hottest month on Earth in 142 years of record-keeping, according to U.S. weather experts, a vast and toxic blue-green algae bloom spanning 675 square miles (1,748 square kilometers) engulfed coastal waters off the prosperous city of Qingdao, threatening navigation, fishing and tourism. State broadcasts carried footage of people using dump trucks to remove the mounds of algae.

Another threat to China's coastal provinces is sea level rise. Government records show that coastal water levels have already risen around 4.8 inches (122 millimeters) between 1980 and 2017 and project that within the next 30 years, waters could rise an additional 2.8 to 6.3 inches (70 to 160 millimeters).

Because China's coastal areas are largely flat, "a slight rise in the sea level will aggravate the flooding of a large area of land," erasing expensive waterfront properties and critical habitats, a government report

projects.

"I think these impacts are triggering a national awakening. I think people are increasingly asking, 'Why have extreme weather events like this happened? What are the root causes?'" said Li Shuo, a climate policy expert at Greenpeace East Asia in Beijing.

"I think this is bringing the Chinese policymakers and the general public to a realization that we are indeed in a climate emergency."

AP researcher Chen Si contributed research from Shanghai.

Follow Christina Larson on Twitter: @larsonchristina

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Drug companies win in California opioid crisis lawsuit

By ROBERT JABLON and DONALD THOMPSON Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A California judge has ruled for top drug manufacturers as local governments seek billions of dollars to cover their costs from the nation's opioid epidemic.

Orange County Superior Court Judge Peter Wilson issued a tentative ruling on Monday that said the governments hadn't proven the pharmaceutical companies used deceptive marketing to increase unnecessary opioid prescriptions and create a public nuisance.

"There is simply no evidence to show that the rise in prescriptions was not the result of the medically appropriate provision of pain medications to patients in need," Wilson wrote in a ruling of more than 40 pages.

"Any adverse downstream consequences flowing from medically appropriate prescriptions cannot constitute an actionable public nuisance," the ruling said.

Los Angeles, Orange and Santa Clara counties and the city of Oakland argued that the pharmaceutical companies misled both doctors and patients by downplaying the risks of addictions, overdoses, deaths and other health complications while overstating the benefits for long-term health conditions.

The plaintiffs said they were disappointed by the ruling but planned to appeal to "ensure no opioid manufacturer can engage in reckless corporate practices that compromise public health in the state for their own profit."

The lawsuit names Johnson & Johnson, along with AbbVie Inc's Allergan subsidiary, Endo International, Teva Pharmaceutical Industries and others.

The companies had argued in court filings "that opioid medications are an appropriate treatment for many chronic-pain patients" and that much of their marketing mimicked approved warnings by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Historically, the local jurisdictions say, the powerful drugs had been used only immediately after surgeries or for other acute, short-term pain, or for cancer or palliative care.

The drugmakers "successfully transformed the way doctors treat chronic pain, opening the floodgates of opioid prescribing and use," the lawsuit contended. "This explosion in opioid prescriptions and use has padded Defendants' profit margins at the expense of chronic pain patients."

The federal government says nearly a half-million Americans have died from opioid abuse since 2001.

All sides have acknowledged that there is an opioid abuse epidemic.

Wilson said drug abuse hospitalizations and overdose deaths "starkly demonstrate the enormity of the ongoing problem."

In a statement, Johnson & Johnson said the "crisis is a tremendously complex public health issue," but the decision showed it engaged in "appropriate and responsible" marketing of its prescription painkillers.

Endo International said the decision was "thorough and thoughtful" following months of testimony and that the company's "lawful conduct did not cause the widespread public nuisance at issue" in the lawsuit.

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Teva said it was pleased with the ruling but "a clear win for the many patients in the U.S. who suffer from opioid addiction will only come when comprehensive settlements are finalized and resources are made available to all who need them."

The plaintiffs projected that, based on experts' estimates, it could cost \$50 billion to provide comprehensive opioid abatement programs in the four jurisdictions that filed the lawsuit. The money would go for things like ongoing opioid abuse prevention and treatment programs in Los Angeles and Santa Clara counties.

The California case was the first such U.S. lawsuit when it was filed in 2014, prosecutors said at the time. But thousands of similar lawsuits have since been filed nationwide by cities, counties and states.

It was just the second such case to go to trial, after an Oklahoma judge ordered Johnson & Johnson to pay \$465 million in 2019. The company is appealing that decision.

A similar trial is underway in federal court in West Virginia, where local governments sued the nation's three biggest drug-distribution companies: AmerisourceBergen Drug Co., Cardinal Health Inc. and McKesson Corp. Other lawsuits have resulted in massive settlements or proposed settlements.

Johnson & Johnson and those three companies in July were in the final stages of negotiating a \$26 billion settlement covering thousands of government lawsuits, though it could take months to get final approval from state and local governments.

New York state separately has a \$1 billion-plus deal involving the three drug distributors. But it is going to trial against are Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, Endo International and AbbVie Inc., the same defendants as in the California case.

Without admitting wrongdoing, Johnson & Johnson previously settled with New York for \$230 million before a trial started there against manufacturers, regional distribution companies and pharmacies. Johnson & Johnson has said it is prepared to contribute up to \$5 billion to a national settlement.

The deals did not stop the trials in West Virginia and California. The weeklong California trial started April 19.

Thompson reported from Sacramento, California.

Elections across US showcase security steps, new voting laws

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Elections taking place across the U.S. on Tuesday will be the first to test new voting restrictions in some Republican-controlled states and give elections officials a chance to counter a year's worth of misinformation about voting security.

Officials said demonstrating secure, consistent and fair practices could help reassure those who still have doubts about last year's presidential election as they begin preparations for next year's midterms.

"It is a great dress rehearsal for 2022," said Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon.

Much of the attention will be on Virginia and New Jersey, where voters are casting ballots for governor and other statewide races. For the rest of the country, voters were making selections on a variety of local races, ranging from mayor and city council to school board and bond measures. Voters in Maine, New York, Texas and a few other few states were considering ballot initiatives on a wide array of topics.

For some, the voting experience will be different from last year, when officials implemented pandemic-related changes to make it easier for voters to avoid crowded polling places. Some states have made those changes permanent, while others have rolled some of them back.

In Virginia, lawmakers last year expanded absentee voting permanently by no longer requiring an excuse. But a requirement for a witness signature on absentee ballots that was waived last year is back, and officials have been working to contact voters who have been turning in ballots without them. Those voters will have until Friday to fix the issue or their ballots will not be counted.

In a few states, voters were encountering tighter voting rules because of laws enacted in states controlled politically by Republicans. Among them are Florida and Georgia, where voters face new ID requirements for using mail ballots.

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Republicans have said their changes were needed to improve security and public confidence following the 2020 presidential election. They acted as former President Donald Trump continued his false claims that the election was stolen despite no evidence of widespread fraud.

These claims were rejected by judges and election officials of both parties who certified the results and Trump's own attorney general, who said federal law enforcement had not seen fraud "on a scale that could have effected a different outcome in the election."

Voting rights groups said various hotlines would be available to assist voters who have questions or encounter problems at the polls or with their mail ballots. Damon Hewitt, whose group the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law leads the effort, said Tuesday presented an important test.

"It's a test of voters to run the gauntlet, to figure out these new rules and restrictions," Hewitt said. "And frankly, it's also a test of our democracy: How strong can it be, and are we willing to tolerate these efforts to make it harder for people to vote."

Tuesday also will be an opportunity for election officials to educate voters about how the system works and counter the misinformation that still surrounds the 2020 presidential vote. False claims have led to harassment and even death threats against state and local election officials.

"We have to do more to combat it, get in front of it and frankly educate the public about the voting process," said Amber McReynolds, former Denver elections clerk and CEO of the National Vote at Home Institute. "Because part of the reason that there is disinformation and it has been able to flow as it has, is that the vast majority of Americans don't understand how the election process works."

Izaguirre reported from Tallahassee, Florida.

California judge rules for opioid makers in damages lawsuit

By ROBERT JABLON and DON THOMPSON Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A California judge has ruled for top drug manufacturers as local governments seek billions of dollars to cover their costs from the nation's opioid epidemic.

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The plaintiffs said they were disappointed by the ruling but planned to appeal to "ensure no opioid manufacturer can engage in reckless corporate practices that compromise public health in the state for their own profit."

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Historically, the local jurisdictions say, the powerful drugs had been used only immediately after surgeries or for other acute, short-term pain, or for cancer or palliative care.

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Thompson reported from Sacramento, California.

Robots hit the streets as demand for food delivery grows

By DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writer

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) — Robot food delivery is no longer the stuff of science fiction. But you may not see it in your neighborhood anytime soon.

Hundreds of little robots ___ knee-high and able to hold around four large pizzas ___ are now navigating college campuses and even some city sidewalks in the U.S., the U.K. and elsewhere. While robots were being tested in limited numbers before the coronavirus hit, the companies building them say pandemic-related labor shortages and a growing preference for contactless delivery have accelerated their deployment.

"We saw demand for robot usage just go through the ceiling," said Alastair Westgarth, the CEO of Starship Technologies, which recently completed its 2 millionth delivery. "I think demand was always there, but it was brought forward by the pandemic effect."

Starship has more than 1,000 robots in its fleet, up from just 250 in 2019. Hundreds more will be deployed

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soon. They're delivering food on 20 U.S. campuses; 25 more will be added soon. They're also operating on sidewalks in Milton Keynes, England; Modesto, California; and the company's hometown of Tallin, Estonia.

Robot designs vary; some have four wheels and some have six, for example. But generally, they use cameras, sensors, GPS and sometimes laser scanners to navigate sidewalks and even cross streets autonomously. They move around 5 mph.

Remote operators keep tabs on multiple robots at a time but they say they rarely need to hit the brakes or steer around an obstacle. When a robot arrives at its destination, customers type a code into their phones to open the lid and retrieve their food.

The robots have drawbacks that limit their usefulness for now. They're electric, so they must recharge regularly. They're slow, and they generally stay within a small, pre-mapped radius.

They're also inflexible. A customer can't tell a robot to leave the food outside the door, for example. And some big cities with crowded sidewalks, like New York, Beijing and San Francisco, aren't welcoming them.

But Bill Ray, an analyst with the consulting firm Gartner, says the robots make a lot of sense on corporate or college campuses, or in newer communities with wide sidewalks.

"In the places where you can deploy it, robot delivery will grow very quickly," Ray said.

Ray said there have been few reports of problems with the robots, other than an occasional gaggle of kids who surround one and try to confuse it. Starship briefly halted service at the University of Pittsburgh in 2019 after a wheelchair user said a robot blocked her access to a ramp. But the university said deliveries resumed once Starship addressed the issue.

Patrick Sheck, a junior at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio, gets deliveries from a Starship robot three or four times a week as he's leaving class.

"The robot pulls up just in time for me to get some lunch," Sheck said. Bowling Green and Starship charge \$1.99 plus a service fee for each robot delivery.

Rival Kiwibot, with headquarters in Los Angeles and Medellin, Columbia, says it now has 400 robots making deliveries on college campuses and in downtown Miami.

Delivery companies are also jumping into the market. Grubhub recently partnered with Russian robot maker Yandex to deploy 50 robots on the campus of Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. Grubhub plans to add more campuses soon, although the company stresses that the service won't go beyond colleges for now.

U.S. delivery orders jumped 66% in the year ending in June, according to NPD, a data and consulting firm. And delivery demand could remain elevated even after the pandemic eases because customers have gotten used to the convenience.

Ji Hye Kim, chef and managing partner of the Ann Arbor, Michigan, restaurant Miss Kim, relied heavily on robot delivery when her dining room was closed last year. Kim had partnered with a local robot company, Refraction AI, shortly before the pandemic began.

Kim prefers robots to third-party delivery companies like DoorDash, which charge significantly more and sometimes cancel orders if they didn't have enough drivers. Delivery companies also bundle multiple orders per trip, she said, so food sometimes arrives cold. Robots take just one order at a time.

Kim said the robots also excite customers, who often post videos of their interactions.

"It's very cute and novel, and it didn't have to come face to face with people. It was a comfort," Kim said. Delivery demand has dropped off since her dining room reopened, but robots still deliver around 10 orders per day.

While Kim managed to hang on to her staff throughout the pandemic, other restaurants are struggling to find workers. In a recent survey, 75% of U.S. restaurant owners told the National Restaurant Association that recruiting and retaining employees is their biggest challenge.

That has many restaurants looking to fill the void with robot delivery.

"There is no store in the country right now with enough delivery drivers," said Dennis Maloney, senior vice president and chief digital officer at Domino's Pizza.

Domino's is partnering with Nuro, a California startup whose 6-foot-tall self-driving pods go at a maximum

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speed of 25 mph on streets, not sidewalks. Nuro is testing grocery and food delivery in Houston, Phoenix and Mountain View, California.

Maloney said it's not a question of if, but of when, robots will start doing more deliveries. He thinks companies like Domino's will eventually use a mix of robots and drivers depending on location. Sidewalk robots could work on a military base, for example, while Nuro is ideal for suburbs. Highway driving would be left to human workers.

Maloney said Nuro delivery is more expensive than using human drivers for now, but as the technology scales up and gets more refined, the costs will go down.

For cheaper sidewalk robots __ which cost an estimated \$5,000 or less __ it's even easier to undercut human delivery costs. The average Grubhub driver in Ohio makes \$47,650 per year, according to the job site Indeed.com.

But robots don't always cost delivery jobs. In some cases, they help create them. Before Starship's robots arrived, Bowling Green didn't offer delivery from campus dining spots. Since then, it has hired more than 30 people to serve as runners between kitchens and robots, Bowling Green dining spokesman Jon Zachrich said.

Brendan Witcher, a technology analyst with the consulting firm Forrester, says it's easy to get excited about the Jetsons-like possibility of robot delivery. But ultimately, robots will have to prove they create an advantage in some way.

"It's possible that we see this emerge into something else," he said. "But it's the right time and place for companies considering robots to test them and learn from them and do their own evaluation."

AP Video Journalist Mike Householder contributed from Bowling Green, Ohio.

Tiny seedlings of giant sequoias rise from ashes of wildfire

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

SEQUOIA CREST, Calif. (AP) — Ashtyn Perry was barely as tall as the shovel she stomped into barren ground where a wildfire last year ravaged the California mountain community of Sequoia Crest and destroyed dozens of its signature behemoth trees.

The 13-year-old with a broad smile and a braid running to her waist had a higher purpose that — if successful — she'll never live to see: to plant a baby sequoia that could grow into a giant and live for millennia.

"It's really cool knowing it could be a big tree in like a thousand years," she said.

The bright green seedling that barely reached Perry's knees is part of an unusual project to plant offspring from some of the largest and oldest trees on the planet to see if genes that allowed the parent to survive so long will protect new growth from the perils of climate change.

The effort led by the Archangel Ancient Tree Archive, a Michigan nonprofit that preserves the genetics of old-growth trees, is one of many extraordinary measures being taken to save giant sequoias that were once considered nearly fire-proof but are at risk of being wiped out by more intense wildfires.

The giant sequoia is the world's largest tree by volume and closely related to the redwood, the world's tallest. Sequoias grow naturally only in a 260-mile (420 kilometers) belt of forest on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountains. They have a massive trunk and can grow over 300 feet (90 meters) tall. The coast redwood is more slender and is native near the Pacific Ocean in Northern California.

Giant sequoias — and redwoods — are some of the best fire-adapted plants. Thick bark protects their trunks, and their canopies can be so high they are out of reach of flames. Sequoias even rely on fire to help open their cones to disperse seeds, and flames clear undergrowth so seedlings can take root and get sunlight.

In recorded history, large sequoias had never incinerated before 2015. Destruction of the majestic trees hit unprecedented levels last year when 10% to 14% of the estimated 75,000 trees larger than 4 feet (1.2 meters) in diameter burned. Thousands more potentially were lost this year during fires that burned into 27 groves — about a third of all groves — in Sequoia National Park and the adjacent Sequoia National

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Forest. Scientists are still tallying the damage.

Climate change and a century of policies emphasizing extinguishing wildland blazes rather than letting some burn to prevent bigger future fires are to blame, said Christy Brigham, chief of resource management and science at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Hotter droughts have led to more intense fires that have burned through fuels accumulated through fire suppression.

Last year's destruction to the sequoias brought Brigham to tears.

"They're so big and so old and so individual and iconic and quirky that even people who don't love trees, love them. They speak for all the trees," Brigham said. "The fact that we've now created fires that they can't survive is very heartbreaking."

To save the trees this year, extreme measures were taken, including wrapping trunks of the largest trees in a fire-resistant foil, setting up sprinklers, raking the flammable matter from around the trees and even using gel in the canopies to repel flames.

But those labor-intensive measures are not practical, Brigham said. More needs to be done before fire approaches, including thinning vegetation and using prescribed burns to reduce the buildup of vegetation. They are also thinking about replanting.

One of the areas that burned intensely last year was the Alder Creek grove, where the Sequoia Crest community has stood since the middle of last century. Half the 100 homes and cabins were destroyed, leaving empty concrete foundations next to charred tree stumps. Some blackened giants still stand sentry on steep hillsides in the area, 150 miles (241 kilometers) north of Los Angeles.

It was in that grove, one of the few privately owned, that Archangel had gathered cones and taken clippings over the past decade to clone and preserve the genes of two of the oldest and largest trees. One of those trees, named Stagg, the world's fifth-largest, survived while the fire killed one named Waterfall.

"Talk about divine providence," said David Milarch, co-founder of Archangel. "Little did we know that Waterfall would burn down two years ago and we'd have the only seedlings of that tree."

Milarch's mission is to archive the genetics of ancient trees, breed them and replant them. He believes the oldest trees have superior genes that enabled them to live through drought, disease and fire and will give their offspring a better chance of survival.

When Milarch took clippings and cones from Stagg and Waterfall, the grove was still privately owned. But it was bought two years ago by Save the Redwoods League.

The league is already replanting in the grove to study if seedlings can survive where high-severity fire destroyed any ability for trees to naturally reproduce, said Joanna Nelson, science director for the organization.

While Nelson wouldn't rule out using seedlings from Stagg, estimated to be 3,000 years old, the project is designed to find the best genetic diversity to increase their survival.

"That genetic makeup served that tree very well for the past 3,000 years," Nelson said. "However, we know that the next 3,000 years are going to be more difficult -- in terms of warming and drying land and air and bigger wildfires that are more frequent. We have conditions coming that these trees haven't experienced."

Nelson applauded the effort by Sequoia Crest to replant.

Residents who lost homes and those who were spared banded together to excavate water pipes to provide irrigation for the seedlings and, along with Archangel workers and volunteers, dug holes under a thin coat of snow last week and planted small green flags to mark planting locations.

Uta Kogelsberger, whose cabin was destroyed, said she doesn't plan to rebuild but wants to leave a legacy she will probably never see.

"We are all in some ways responsible for these fires — the way we've been treating our planet," Kogelsberger said. "The loss of the cabin was absolutely devastating, but the loss of the amazing ecosystem that surrounds it is just beyond compare. You know, you can replace a house, but you cannot replace a 2,000 to 3,000-year-old sequoia tree."

Residents were joined last week by a science class of 7th and 8th graders from Springville, which sits

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at the bottom of the mountain, to help plant 150 of the 7-year-old seedlings.

Teacher Vicki Matthews drove the school bus up the cliff-hanging road above the Tule River canyon and into an evergreen forest that first turned a rusty shade from drought or fire damage and then gave way to entire stands of black trees silhouetted against the snow.

The 35 students fanned out across an area once known as "downtown" Sequoia Crest, where the original homes were built and now a sad scene of destruction with stumps poking from the snow like tombstones.

Ashtyn and two friends carefully removed the little tree from its pot, untangled the roots and planted it near a charred rock, packing the soil around it. They named it "Timmy the Tree."

Ashtyn said she'd like to return once a year to see how it's growing. She hopes it becomes a giant.

Ohio, Florida voters cast ballots in 3 congressional races

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Both Democrats and Republicans brought out their heavy hitters in the runup to the special congressional election in central Ohio, as the parties sought to boost turnout in one of three off-year contests on the ballot Tuesday.

President Joe Biden and former Vice President Mike Pence swung into action to help their parties' candidates in the race for Ohio's 15th Congressional District, a seat vacated by Republican Steve Stivers in May, when he left to lead the state Chamber of Commerce.

Pence stumped Saturday for Republican coal lobbyist Mike Carey, endorsed by former President Donald Trump and favored in the GOP-leaning district. Biden endorsed two-term Democratic state Rep. Allison Russo on Monday. Her bid for the open seat is considered the party's most competitive in years, though she remains a long shot.

A second special congressional election is taking place in the Cleveland-area 11th Congressional District. That contest pits Democratic Cuyahoga County Councilmember Shontel Brown against Republican Laverne Gore, a business owner, consultant and trainer, for Democrat Marcia Fudge's old seat. Fudge stepped down in March to become Biden's housing secretary after nearly 13 years in Congress.

Brown, who bested firebrand progressive Nina Turner in the August primary, is considered a shoo-in to win in the heavily Democratic district.

In Florida, 11 Democrats are on the ballot in Tuesday's primary special election for the seat of Democratic Rep. Alcee Hastings, who died in April after suffering from pancreatic cancer. One of the candidates is state Rep. Omari Hardy, who was 3 years old when Hastings was elected in 1992. Hastings was the longest-serving member of Florida's congressional delegation.

While two Republican candidates are also seeking the nomination to run for the 20th Congressional District seat, the district is heavily Democratic. The winner of the Democratic primary is considered a lock for January's general election.

Turnout is expected to be low Tuesday, and it's conceivable the next U.S. House member to represent the South Florida district can win the primary with 10% of the vote. The district is 61% Democratic and about 13% Republican. In the 2020 election, Hastings won 78.7% of the vote against Republican Greg Musselwhite. Musselwhite is again running for the GOP nomination, facing Jason Mariner.

State Sen. Perry Thurston and former state Rep. Priscilla Ann Taylor are also seeking the seat for Democrats, along with Broward County Commissioners Dale Holness and Barbara Sharief, both of whom previously served as county mayor. Others on the Democratic ballot are Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick, Elvin Dowling, Phil Jackson, Emmanuel Morel and Imran Uddin Siddiqui.

The district is a majority Black and covers parts of Broward and Palm Beach counties. Heading into Election Day, out of the more than 345,000 eligible primary voters, nearly 33,000 Democrats and more than 4,000 Republicans had already cast votes.

Associated Press writer Brendan Farrington in Tallahassee, Fla., contributed to this report.

Competitive Virginia governor's race to test Biden's appeal

By WILL WEISSERT and SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — The first major test of how voters feel about Joe Biden's presidency is unfolding in Virginia, where a governor's race that was supposed to be a comfortable win for Democrats is instead ending in suspense.

Terry McAuliffe, one of the most prominent figures in Democratic politics and a former Virginia governor, is in a tight race Tuesday for his old job against Republican rival and political newcomer Glenn Youngkin. The bruising, costly campaign has centered on issues including Youngkin's ties to former President Donald Trump, the future of abortion rights and culture war battles over school curricula.

But the results may ultimately be interpreted as an early judgment of Biden. A year after he easily captured Virginia by 10 percentage points, the competitive nature of the governor's race is a sign of how his political fortunes have changed. The White House has been shaken in recent months by the chaotic withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan, a sometimes sluggish economic recovery amid the pandemic and a legislative agenda at risk of stalling on Capitol Hill.

A loss in a state that has trended toward Democrats for more than a decade would deepen the sense of alarm inside the party heading into next year's midterm elections, when control of Congress is at stake.

"Tomorrow will be a statement. A statement that will be heard across this country," Youngkin told a large crowd that chanted "USA! USA!" during his final rally late Monday night. "The future of this commonwealth, the future of this country is going to be decided."

McAuliffe countered that a GOP win would roll back all the progress his party had made while buoying Trump. "Folks, the stakes are huge," McAuliffe said, adding of Youngkin, "He doesn't know anything about governance."

Elsewhere on Tuesday, New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy is trying to win reelection against Republican former State Assembly member Jack Ciattarelli. If successful, Murphy would be the first Democrat reelected as the state's governor in 44 years, though New Jersey hasn't voted Republican for president since 1988.

Mayor's offices in many of the nation's largest cities are also up for grabs. A ballot question in Minneapolis, meanwhile, could reshape policing in that community, where the killing of George Floyd last year touched off sweeping demonstrations for racial justice across the nation.

But no other race in this off-year election season received the level of attention as the governor's campaign in Virginia. That's in part because previous races have sometimes foreshadowed voter frustration with the party newly in power.

In 2009, during President Barack Obama's first year in office, Republican Bob McDonnell's victory in Virginia previewed a disastrous midterm cycle for Democrats, who lost more than 60 House seats the following year.

Heading into Tuesday, some voters similarly said they wanted to send a powerful message to Washington.

Dan Maloy, a 53-year-old small-business owner and Youngkin supporter, said he would grade Biden's performance as worse than an F.

"Unfortunately, everything he touches has turned to stone," Maloy said, adding he was particularly worried about securing the U.S.-Mexico border.

Brooke Hall-Ewell, a 50-year-old nurse who lives in Richmond and attended a McAuliffe event in the campaign's final hours, acknowledged, "It's scary to see things so close."

"We have a huge opportunity to take advantage of right now with Biden's presidency," she said, adding that she wished the Democratic-controlled Congress would move with more urgency. "I just wish we could come together as a unit."

Both candidates ended their campaigns with Monday evening rallies in northern Virginia, where they hope fast-growing suburbs can propel them to victory.

Youngkin drew a large crowd in Loudoun County, which encompasses Washington suburbs that have become the epicenter of parent activist groups who object to classroom curricula that include instruction about institutional racism as "un-American." His pledge to ensure parents have greater say in what their

kids are taught has become a centerpiece of his campaign — possibly foreshadowing similar arguments GOP candidates will use across the country in races next year.

“This is a moment, a defining moment,” Youngkin declared, “where we get to stand up and say no to this left, liberal, progressive agenda.”

McAuliffe has accused his opponent of using children “as pawns.”

The Democrat has spent months trying to put Youngkin on defense by casting him as an ally of Trump, who remains unpopular in Virginia. Youngkin has responded by delicately trying to appeal to the former president’s most ardent supporters without moving so close to Trump that he might alienate moderates.

Youngkin has noted support for “election integrity,” a nod at Trump’s lies that the 2020 presidential election was stolen, while also focusing on education and business-friendly policies. But the GOP candidate has never campaigned in person with Trump. The former president instead called into a tele-rally late Monday, without Youngkin’s participation.

“Tomorrow I’d like to ask everyone to get out and vote for Glenn Youngkin,” Trump told an invited group of supporters by phone. “He’s a fantastic guy.”

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin in New York contributed to this report.

EXPLAINER: What charges does Kyle Rittenhouse face?

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Opening statements were expected Tuesday in the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse, who shot three men, killing two of them and wounding the third, during a protest against police brutality in Kenosha, Wisconsin, last year. Rittenhouse has argued he fired in self-defense after the men attacked him. Here’s a look at the charges:

FIRST-DEGREE RECKLESS HOMICIDE, USE OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON

This felony charge is connected to the death of Joseph Rosenbaum, the first man Rittenhouse shot. Bystander video shows Rosenbaum chasing Rittenhouse through a parking lot and throwing a plastic bag at him. Rittenhouse flees behind a car and Rosenbaum follows. No video of the moment Rittenhouse pulled the trigger has surfaced yet, if any exists. Richard McGinnis, a reporter who was trailing Rittenhouse, told investigators that Rosenbaum tried to grab Rittenhouse’s gun, according to the criminal complaint.

Reckless homicide differs from intentional homicide in that prosecutors aren’t alleging Rittenhouse intended to murder Rosenbaum. Instead, they’re alleging Rittenhouse caused Rosenbaum’s death by showing an utter disregard for human life.

Former Waukesha County District Attorney Paul Bucher said prosecutors’ decision to charge reckless instead of intentional homicide shows they don’t know what happened between Rittenhouse and Rosenbaum and what might have been going through Rittenhouse’s mind when he pulled the trigger.

The charge is a felony punishable by up to 60 years in prison. The dangerous weapon modifier carries another five years.

FIRST-DEGREE RECKLESSLY ENDANGERING SAFETY, USE OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON

This felony charge is also connected to the Rosenbaum shooting. McGinnis told investigators he was in the line of fire when Rittenhouse shot Rosenbaum. The charge is punishable by 12 1/2 years in prison. The weapons modifier carries another five years.

FIRST-DEGREE INTENTIONAL HOMICIDE, USE OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON

This charge is connected to Anthony Huber’s death. Video shows Rittenhouse running down the street after shooting Rosenbaum when he falls to the street. Huber leaps at him and swings a skateboard at his head and neck and tries to grab Rittenhouse’s gun before Rittenhouse fires. The criminal complaint alleges Rittenhouse aimed the weapon at Huber.

Intentional homicide means just that — a person killed someone and meant to do it. Bucher said that if Rittenhouse pointed the gun at Rosenbaum and pulled the trigger that would amount to intentional homicide. However, self-defense would trump the charge.

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"Why I intended to kill this individual makes the difference," Bucher said.

The count carries a mandatory life sentence. The weapons modifier would add up to five years.

ATTEMPTED FIRST-DEGREE INTENTIONAL HOMICIDE, USE OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON

This is the charge for Rittenhouse shooting Gaige Grosskreutz in the arm seconds after he shot Huber, and as Grosskreutz came toward him holding a pistol. Grosskreutz survived. Video shows Rittenhouse pointing his gun at Grosskreutz and firing a single round.

The charge carries a maximum sentence of 60 years. The weapons modifier would add up to five more years.

FIRST-DEGREE RECKLESSLY ENDANGERING SAFETY, USE OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON

Video shows an unknown man leaping at Rittenhouse and trying to kick him seconds before Huber moves his skateboard toward him. Rittenhouse appears to fire two rounds at the man but apparently misses as the man runs away.

This charge is a felony punishable by 12 1/2 years in prison. The weapons modifier again would add up to five more years.

POSSESSION OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON BY A PERSON UNDER 18

Rittenhouse was armed with an AR-style semiautomatic rifle. He was 17 years old on the night of the shootings. Wisconsin law prohibits minors from possessing firearms except for hunting.

The charge is a misdemeanor punishable by up to nine months behind bars.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH AN EMERGENCY ORDER FROM STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Kenosha officials imposed an 8 p.m. curfew the night of the shootings. Rittenhouse was still on the streets as midnight approached. The offense is punishable by up to \$200 in forfeitures.

Find AP's full coverage on the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse at: <https://apnews.com/hub/kyle-rittenhouse>

Manchin wavers on Biden's plan, Democrats vow to push ahead

By LISA MASCARO and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pivotal Sen. Joe Manchin wavered on his support for President Joe Biden's sweeping \$1.75 trillion domestic policy proposal, but Democratic leaders vowed to push ahead, with initial voting possible on the bill and a related \$1 trillion infrastructure package in the House this week.

The West Virginia Democrat's announcement Monday came as Democrats wanted assurances from Manchin that he will support Biden's big package. He's one of two key holdout senators whose votes are needed to secure the deal and push it toward passage.

Instead, the conservative Manchin rebuffed progressive Democrats, urging them to quit holding "hostage" the smaller public works bill as negotiations continue on the broader package.

"Enough is enough," Manchin said at a hastily called news conference at the Capitol.

Manchin said he's open to voting for a final bill reflecting Biden's big package "that moves our country forward." But he said he's "equally open to voting against" the final product as he assesses the sweeping social services and climate change bill.

Democrats have been working frantically to finish up months of negotiations, and it's unclear whether Manchin's resistance will deliver a debilitating blow to those efforts or have the opposite effect of propelling Democrats to start taking votes on Biden's signature domestic proposal. His comments infuriated some Democrats but energized others, particularly progressives eager to force his hand.

The White House swiftly responded that it remains confident Manchin will support Biden's plan, and the congressional leaders said it all remained on track.

"Senator Manchin says he is prepared to support a Build Back Better plan that combats inflation, is fiscally responsible, and will create jobs," said press secretary Jen Psaki in a statement. "As a result, we remain confident that the plan will gain Senator Manchin's support."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer both echoed the White House. And progressives insisted it's time to vote.

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Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., the leader of the progressive caucus said, "I don't know what Sen. Manchin is thinking, but we are going to pass both bills through the House and we are going to deliver transformative change to the people."

The stakes are high with Biden overseas at a global climate change summit and his party fighting in two key governors' races this week — in Virginia and New Jersey — that are seen as bellwethers in the political mood of the electorate.

With Republicans staunchly opposed and no votes to spare, Democrats have been trying to unite progressive and centrist lawmakers around Biden's big vision.

Biden unveiled a framework for the package last week, a sizable investment in social service programs and climate change strategies, but Democrats are trying to negotiate a provision to lower prescription drug prices for seniors with Medicare, among other final changes.

At a leadership meeting late Monday, Pelosi said the House Rules Committee could meet as soon as Tuesday evening or Wednesday, which would allow for votes midweek, according to a person who requested anonymity to discuss the private talks. The Senate would still have to vote, likely later in the month.

Progressives had been refusing to vote on the smaller public works bill, using it as leverage as they try to win commitments from Manchin and Democratic Sen. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, the other key holdout, for Biden's broader bill.

Manchin, though, in a direct response to the progressives' tactic, said "holding this bill hostage won't work to get my support" for the broader one. The public works bill of roads, highways and broadband projects has already been approved by the Senate but is being stalled by House progressives as the broader negotiations are underway.

About Biden's big package, Manchin said he will "not support a bill that is this consequential without thoroughly understanding the impact" it has on the economy and federal debt.

"This is not how the United States Congress should operate," Manchin said. "It's time our elected leaders in Washington stop playing games."

Many Democrats were livid at Manchin for hitting the brakes yet again, particularly because they argued that Biden's plan is expected to be fully paid for with new taxes on companies and the wealthy, and not add to the debt.

"I think he just betrayed his lack of seriousness," said Rep. John Yarmuth, D-Ky., the chairman of the Budget Committee.

Biden's top domestic priorities have been a battlefield between progressive and moderate Democrats for months, and it was unclear if this week's timetable for initial House votes could be met.

The \$1.75 trillion package is sweeping in its reach, and would provide large numbers of Americans with assistance to pay for health care, education, raising children and caring for elderly people in their homes. It also would provide some \$555 billion in tax breaks encouraging cleaner energy and electrified vehicles, the nation's largest commitment to tackling climate change.

Much of its costs would be covered with higher taxes on people earning over \$10 million annually and large corporations, which would now face a 15% minimum tax in efforts to stop big business from claiming so many deductions they end up paying zero in taxes.

Over the weekend, Democrats made significant progress toward adding provisions curbing prescription drug prices to the massive package, two congressional aides said Sunday. They requested anonymity to discuss the ongoing negotiations.

According to a senior Democratic aide, one proposal under discussion would let Medicare negotiate lower prices with pharmaceutical companies for many of their products. Excluded would be drugs for which the Food and Drug Administration has granted initial protection against competition, periods that vary but last several years.

There would be a cap on seniors' out-of-pocket drug costs under Medicare Part D, the program's outpatient prescription drug benefit, said the senior aide, who did not provide a figure. And pharmaceutical makers would have to pay a rebate if their prices rise above certain markers.

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"You put these things together and you're moving towards a financial reality where a prescription is no longer a financial ball and chain for American families," said Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., the chairman of the Finance Committee.

Talks were continuing and no final agreement had been reached. But the movement raised hopes that the party's 10-year, \$1.75 trillion measure would address the longtime Democratic campaign promise to lower pharmaceutical costs, though more modestly than some wanted.

Some moderate Democrats in the House said they want to see the final assessment from the Congressional Budget Office, which will offer a nonpartisan assessment of the overall bill's entire budgetary costs, before taking the vote.

Associated Press writers Kevin Freking and Alan Fram contributed to this report.

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By LISA MASCARO and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

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Associated Press writers Kevin Freking and Alan Fram contributed to this report.

Jury seated for homicide trial of Kyle Rittenhouse

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By SCOTT BAUER, MICHAEL TARM and AMY FORLITI Associated Press

KENOSHA, Wis. (AP) — A jury was selected in a single day Monday for the homicide trial of Kyle Rittenhouse, the young, aspiring police officer who shot three people while they were out on the streets of Kenosha during a protest against racial injustice last year.

Opening statements are set to begin Tuesday morning.

The jury in the politically charged case must decide whether Rittenhouse acted in self-defense, as his lawyers claim, or was engaged in vigilantism when the 17-year-old opened fire with an AR-15-style semi-automatic rifle in August 2020, killing two men and wounding a third.

In an all-day session that ran well past dark, 20 people — 12 jurors and eight alternates — were selected. The judge said he would decide at the end of the trial which ones are alternates and which ones will deliberate. The 20 consist of 11 women and nine men.

Jurors were not asked to identify their race during the selection process, and the court did not immediately provide a racial breakdown of the group.

The seating of a jury moved along rapidly, given the sharp polarization caused by the shootings. About a dozen prospective jurors were dismissed because they had strong opinions about the case or doubts they could be fair.

Rittenhouse had traveled to Kenosha from his home in Illinois during unrest that broke out after a white Kenosha police officer shot Jacob Blake, a Black man, in the back. Rittenhouse said he went there to protect property after two previous nights marked by arson, gunfire and the ransacking of businesses.

The now-18-year-old Rittenhouse faces life in prison if convicted of first-degree homicide, the most serious charge against him.

Rittenhouse has been painted by supporters on the right — including foes of the Black Lives Matter movement — as a patriot who took a stand against lawlessness by demonstrators and exercised his Second Amendment gun rights. Others see him as a vigilante and police wannabe.

He is white, as were those he shot, but many activists see an undercurrent of race in the case, in part because the protesters were on the streets to decry police violence against Black people.

As jury selection got underway, Circuit Judge Bruce Schroeder stressed repeatedly that jurors must decide the case solely on what they hear in the courtroom, and cautioned: "This is not a political trial."

"It was mentioned by both political campaigns and the presidential campaign last year, in some instances very, very imprudently," he said.

The judge said Rittenhouse's constitutional right to a fair trial, not the Second Amendment right to bear arms, will come into play, and "I don't want it to get sidetracked into other issues."

One of the jurors is a gun-owning woman with a high school education who said she was so afraid during the protests that she pulled her cars to the back of her house and made sure her doors were locked. She said she went downtown in the aftermath and cried.

Another woman chosen is a special education teacher who expressed anxiety about being on the jury: "I figure either way this goes you're going to have half the country upset with you and they react poorly."

Another juror said he owns a gun and has it for "home defense."

One juror is a pharmacist who said that she was robbed at gunpoint in 2012 but that it would have no effect on her ability to weigh the evidence in this case.

Among those dismissed were a man who said he was at the site of the protests when "all that happened" and a woman who said she watched a livestream video of the events and wasn't sure if she could put aside what she saw.

One person was dropped from the case after she said she believes in the Biblical injunction "Thou shall not kill" even in cases of self-defense.

Prosecutor Thomas Binger also moved to dismiss a woman who said that she has a biracial granddaughter who participated in some of the protests and that she could not be impartial. Rittenhouse's attorneys had no objection.

Rittenhouse's attorney got a prospective juror dropped after she said she would find Rittenhouse guilty

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of all charges just because he was carrying an assault-style weapon. "I don't think a weapon like that should belong to the general public," the woman said.

The start of jury selection was briefly delayed in the morning for unexplained reasons. During the delay, the judge played a mock game of "Jeopardy!" with prospective jurors in the courtroom, something he sometimes does as attorneys get organized.

Rittenhouse fatally shot Joseph Rosenbaum, 36, after Rosenbaum chased Rittenhouse across a parking lot and threw a plastic bag at him shortly before midnight on Aug. 25. Moments later, as Rittenhouse was running down a street, he shot and killed Anthony Huber, 26, a protester from Silver Lake, Wisconsin, and wounded Gaige Grosskreutz, 27, a demonstrator from West Allis, Wisconsin.

Bystander video captured Rosenbaum chasing Rittenhouse but not the actual shooting. Video showed Huber swinging a skateboard at Rittenhouse before he was shot. Grosskreutz had a gun in his hand as he stepped toward Rittenhouse.

Rittenhouse faces two homicide counts and one of attempted homicide, along with charges of reckless endangering and illegal possession of a dangerous weapon by a person under 18.

___ Bauer reported from Madison, Wisconsin, Forliti from Minneapolis. Associated Press writer Tammy Webber contributed from Fenton, Michigan.

Find AP's full coverage on the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse at: <https://apnews.com/hub/kyle-rittenhouse>

Tight Virginia race becomes referendum on Biden presidency

By SARAH RANKIN and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — A closely contested race for governor in Virginia entered its final hours Monday with Democrat Terry McAuliffe and Republican Glenn Youngkin both hoping for last-minute momentum amid a contest that's emerging as a referendum on Joe Biden's presidency.

McAuliffe, who served as governor from 2014 to 2018, is scrambling to stave off disaster in a state that has become reliable Democratic territory in recent years. Biden carried Virginia by a comfortable 10 percentage points last year, but Youngkin's campaign is optimistic about his prospects of becoming the first Republican to win a statewide race since 2009.

"This is a moment for Virginians to push back on this left, liberal, progressive agenda," Youngkin, a former private equity executive, told a rally at an airport hangar outside Richmond.

Voters were also poised to decide a New Jersey governor's race Tuesday, as well as mayoral elections in many of the nation's top cities. Also, a ballot question that could remake policing in Minneapolis, after George Floyd's death there last summer, could have national implications.

But the political repercussions were farthest reaching in Virginia, where McAuliffe again offered the message he's repeated throughout the campaign — that his opponent will bring former President Donald Trump's divisive style of politics to an increasingly blue state.

"I'm closing my campaign with you in Richmond," McAuliffe said during his own swing through the state capital. "He is closing his campaign with Donald Trump. Really?"

That was a reference to the former president holding a Virginia tele-rally Monday night — though Youngkin himself didn't participate.

"Tomorrow I'd like to ask everyone to get out and vote for Glenn Youngkin. He's a fantastic guy," Trump told an invited group of supporters by phone. "The future of this commonwealth — this great, great commonwealth — is on the ballot tomorrow."

Trump, who slammed McAuliffe as part of what he called the radical Democratic Party that is out of touch with the state's voters, said a GOP victory would send "a great, great, strong message" to President Joe Biden and other Democratic leaders in Washington. He said it would also show the media, which the former president accused of playing up a gulf between himself and Youngkin "because they'd like our big, giant, beautiful base — like there's never been before — to not vote as much as they're going to."

Not everyone agrees. Bennie Pressley, who attended Youngkin's Richmond rally, described herself as a

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"Trump fan" but said she worried that the last-minute Trump appearance could "turn people against Glenn."

"The country is nuts when it comes to Trump," she said.

Indeed, except for promises to safeguard "election integrity" — a nod to Trump's lies about last year's presidential race being stolen — Youngkin has done his best to eschew help not only from Trump but also most top national GOP leaders. Doing so has allowed him to court moderate Republicans and swing voters.

Another name not appearing on Tuesday's ballot is Biden's, yet his approval ratings have fallen in recent weeks and his administration will likely get a lot of the blame nationally if its party doesn't prevail in Virginia. The Democratic-controlled Congress has yet to approve a major public works bill or a sweeping spending package that would dramatically increase government support for the social safety net — providing still more potential political headwinds against McAuliffe.

Still, some Youngkin supporters credited their preferred candidate with keeping the race focused on Virginia, not Washington.

"He's a straight shooter," said Dan Maloy, a 53-year-old small business owner. "He cares about the issues that we care about. You know, it's food on the table. What's the cost of groceries? What's the cost of gas? What do we need to do to move Virginia forward?"

Early voting in Virginia, which has been dramatically expanded during the past two years of unified Democratic control of state government, ended this past weekend. Legislation passed in 2020 eliminated the need to provide one of a certain number of limited excuses to vote absentee — allowing any qualified voter to cast a ballot starting 45 days before the election.

More than 1.1 million out of the state's approximately 5.9 million registered voters cast early ballots. That's down sharply from the 2.8 million early votes in last year's presidential election but marks a dramatic increase when compared with about 195,000 early votes during the last gubernatorial cycle, before the voting reforms were instituted.

McAuliffe's campaign has pointed to what it considered "strong" early voting numbers in blue-leaning localities, but also says it expects many Democrats to revert to their pre-coronavirus pandemic voting habits this year, preferring to cast in-person, Election Day ballots.

Republicans, despite generally opposing the Democrats' election reforms, have also encouraged their supporters to vote early this year, and Youngkin's team said it has seen encouraging signs. Virginia voters don't register by party, so the partisan split of the early vote wasn't clear.

"It's scary to see things so close," said Brooke Hall-Ewell, a 50-year-old nurse who lives in Richmond and attended McAuliffe's Monday event.

She said abortion was a key issue for her and McAuliffe has promised to defend reproductive rights. "We've got to keep Virginia blue," Hall-Ewell added.

Youngkin was ending Monday in Loudoun County, which encompasses Washington suburbs that have become the epicenter of parent activist groups who object to school curriculums that include instruction about institutional racism as "un-American." He has made pledges to ensure parents have greater say in what their kids are taught a centerpiece of his campaign — possibly foreshadowing similar arguments GOP candidates will use across the country in races next year.

McAuliffe, who preceded Democrat Ralph Northam as governor in the only state that doesn't allow its executive to serve consecutive terms, countered by accusing his opponent of using children "as pawns." Polls began to tighten, however, after a late September debate when the Democrat said he didn't think "parents should be telling schools what they should teach."

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin in New York contributed to this report.

Military weighs penalties for those who refuse COVID vaccine

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As deadlines loom for military and defense civilians to get mandated COVID-19 vaccines, senior leaders must now wrestle with the fate of those who flatly refuse the shots or are seek-

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ing exemptions, and how to make sure they are treated fairly and equally.

The vast majority of the active duty force has received at least one shot, but tens of thousands have not. For some it may be a career-ending decision. Others could face transfers, travel restrictions, limits on deployments and requirements to repay bonuses.

Exemption decisions for medical, religious and administrative reasons will be made by unit commanders around the world, on what the Pentagon says will be a "case-by-case" basis. That raises a vexing issue for military leaders who are pushing a vaccine mandate seen as critical to maintaining a healthy force, but want to avoid a haphazard, inconsistent approach with those who refuse.

Brig. Gen. Darrin Cox, surgeon general at Army Forces Command, said commanders want to ensure they are following the rules.

"Because of some of the sensitivities of this particular vaccine, I think that we just wanted to ensure that we were consistent and equitable" in meting out a punishment that would be "a repercussion of continuing to refuse a valid order."

Military vaccination rates are higher than those of the general population in the United States and the reasons for objecting – often based on misinformation – are similar to those heard throughout the country. But unlike most civilians, military personnel are routinely required to get as many as 17 vaccines, and face penalties for refusing.

The military services are reporting between 1%-7% remain unvaccinated. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has called for compassion in dealings with those troops, which totals nearly 60,000 active duty service members, according to data released last week. Officials say the numbers change daily, and include those who may have gotten or requested an exemption. They have declined to say how many troops are still seeking an exemption or refused the vaccine.

Asked about possible variations in the treatment of those seeking exemptions or refusing the vaccine, Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said it's up to the services. "Each case is going to be treated specifically and individually as it ought to be," he said.

Kirby said Monday that the secretary doesn't want to tell commanders how to resolve the punitive measures, and instead trusts that they will do what is best for their units.

"So can we promise you that there will be absolute uniformity across the board? No. And we wouldn't want to promise that because it wouldn't be the same way we handle the orders violations for other offenses as well," said Kirby.

It unclear how widely religious exemptions will be granted. Under military rules, commanders can take into account the potential impact on a unit's mission, and reject a religious exemption if it puts performance at risk.

Commanders can also move service members into another job, deny them overseas deployment or limit unit access if they get an exemption or while a request is being reviewed. Those steps may be more common in smaller units such a special operations forces who usually deploy in small numbers.

The Navy has warned that sailors who refuse the shot and don't get an exemption may have to refund bonuses and other financial payments, based on existing military justice procedures for disobeying a lawful order. The other services are expected to follow similar procedures.

Unvaccinated troops will also be subject to routine testing, distancing guidelines and possibly travel restrictions.

The Air Force may be the test case in some instances, because they are the first to hit a deadline. The more than 335,000 airmen and Space Force guardians must be fully vaccinated by Tuesday, and the Air Guard and Reserve by Dec. 2. According to Air Force data, as many as 12,000 active duty airmen and guardians were still unvaccinated as of late last week. Some have requested or gotten exemptions, others have refused outright. They have until Monday to request exemptions.

Air Force Col. Robert Corby, commander of the 28th Medical Group at Ellsworth Air Force Base, said that after the vaccine became mandatory in late August, appointments for shots at the base clinic doubled. He said troops have an array of questions and concerns, and commanders, chaplains and medical personnel

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are providing information.

"I think you also have a segment of the population that probably does not feel that they are really at risk for COVID-19," he added.

Air Force Capt. Molly Lawlor, 28th Bomb Wing chaplain, said a "very small percentage" are seeking a religious exemption at the base. "People are just trying to figure out how this new requirement fits into their belief system and the decisions that they want to make," she said.

The more than 765,000 Defense Department civilians will be close behind the Air Force, with a mandated vaccine date of Nov. 22. Supervisors are grappling with the complex task of checking and recording the vaccine status of their workers, and determining who will be the final exemption arbiter.

Civilians have until Nov. 8 to seek an exemption, and as of last week, fewer than half had provided vaccination proof. Those who refuse the vaccine and don't get an exemption will get five days for counseling. If they still refuse, they will be suspended for up to 14 days without pay, and could then be fired.

Vaccination numbers fluctuate for the military services, and drop off considerably for the National Guard and Reserve.

A bit more than half of the Army National Guard has gotten at least one shot, while the Air Guard is at 87%. Air Guard members must be fully vaccinated by early December, while the Army Guard, which is much larger and more widely scattered around the country, has until June.

The most successful service has been the Navy, which says that only 1% of the force is unvaccinated as of last week — or about 3,500 sailors. The Air Force and Space Force was second, with 3.6% unvaccinated, followed by the Army and Marine Corps at about 7%.

Adm. Michael Gilday, chief of naval operations, told The Associated Press that even before the shots were mandated, some warships were seeing vaccination rates of 98%-99%.

"We feel like we've been leading the way across the services," he said. "We've been promoting the vaccines since we started vaccinating last December, January timeframe." For those who don't want the vaccine, "we'll deal with those on an individual basis as those challenges come up," he said.

Marine Col. Speros Koumparakis, commander of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, said that the number of Marines who have requested exemptions at the base is fewer than two dozen, and most of those are seeking religious exemptions.

He said chaplains and pastors have been made available to discuss the religious issues, and he does the initial review of any request. But ultimately, decisions may be made by personnel leaders at Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia.

The nearly 350,000 Navy sailors and more than 179,000 Marines must be fully vaccinated by Nov. 28, and the reserves by Dec. 28. The Army, the military's largest service at nearly 490,000, has given active duty soldiers until Dec. 15 to be fully vaccinated. Army National Guard and Reserve have until June 30, 2022. There are a total of almost 800,000 Guard and Reserve troops, with the Army accounting for more than 520,000 of them.

Supreme Court questions controversial Texas abortion law

By MARK SHERMAN and JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A majority of the Supreme Court signaled Monday they would allow abortion providers to pursue a court challenge to the controversial Texas law that has virtually ended abortion in the nation's second-largest state after six weeks of pregnancy.

But it was unclear how quickly the court would rule and whether it would issue an order blocking the law that has been in effect for two months, or require providers to ask a lower court to put the law on hold.

Justices Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett, two conservative appointees of former President Donald Trump, voted in September to allow the law to take effect, but they raised questions Monday about its novel structure. The law, written to make it difficult to mount legal challenges, subjects clinics, doctors and any others who facilitate abortions to large financial penalties.

"Millions and millions retroactively imposed, even though the activity was perfectly lawful under all court

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orders and precedent at the time it was undertaken, right?" Kavanaugh asked, one of several skeptical questions he put to Judd E. Stone II, representing Texas.

Barrett, too, pressed Stone about provisions of the law that force providers to fight lawsuits one by one and, she said, don't allow their constitutional rights to be "fully aired."

The justices heard three hours of arguments Monday in two cases over whether abortion providers or the Justice Department can mount federal court challenges to the law, which has an unusual enforcement scheme its defenders argue shields it from federal court review.

The Biden administration filed its lawsuit after the justices voted 5-4 to refuse a request by providers to keep the law on hold. Justice Neil Gorsuch, also a Trump appointee, and two other conservative justices joined Barrett and Kavanaugh in the majority to let the law take effect. Chief Justice John Roberts joined the court's three liberal justices in dissent.

The justices sounded less convinced that the Justice Department lawsuit should go forward, and Justice Elena Kagan suggested that a ruling instead in favor of the providers would allow the court to avoid difficult issues of federal power.

In neither case argued Monday is the right to an abortion directly at issue. But the motivation for the lawsuits is that the Texas law conflicts with landmark Supreme Court rulings that prevent a state from banning abortion early in pregnancy.

Arguing for the United States, Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar told the justices that Texas' law was enacted in "open defiance" of Supreme Court precedent. "It enacted a law that clearly violates this court's precedents," she said.

Under the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision and 1992 *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* decision, states are prevented from banning abortion before viability, the point at which a fetus can survive outside the womb, around 24 weeks of pregnancy.

The justices will hear a separate challenge to those decisions in a case over Mississippi's ban on abortion after 15 weeks. Those arguments are set for Dec. 1.

The most direct reference to the Mississippi case came from Justice Samuel Alito, who asked if the decision by providers to stop doing abortions in Texas "is attributable to the fear of liability if *Roe* or *Casey* is altered?"

But most questions focused on the Texas law and how it has altered abortion in the state even before the high court has made any change in abortion law. Kagan told Stone that until Texas passed its law, "no state dreamed" of trying to make an end-run around Supreme Court precedent in the same way.

If the Supreme Court doesn't do anything about that, she said, it would be inviting states to try to flout precedent: "Guns. Same-sex marriage. Religious rights. Whatever you don't like: go ahead," she said. Kagan, who disagreed with her colleagues' decision to let the law take effect, said Texas' law has prevented women in Texas "from exercising a constitutional right."

Kavanaugh also raised concerns about laws that might affect other constitutional rights.

The Texas law has been in effect since September when the Supreme Court declined to intervene, except for a 48-hour period in early October when it was blocked by a lower court. The high court got involved again less than two weeks ago, moving at extraordinary speed. The court offered no explanation for its decision to hear the cases so quickly.

If the court allows the providers to continue their lawsuit, it would still take a separate order from the justices or a lower court to put the law on hold.

Amy Hagstrom Miller, chief executive of Whole Woman's Health, said her four clinics would resume abortion services if they get a favorable court order.

The Texas ban, signed into law by Gov. Greg Abbott in May, prohibits abortion after cardiac activity is detected in a fetus, usually around six weeks and before some women know they are pregnant.

The law makes exceptions for medical emergencies but not for rape or incest.

A study published by researchers at the University of Texas found that the number of abortions statewide fell by 50% after the law took effect in September, compared to the same month in 2020. The study was based on data from 19 of the state's 24 abortion clinics, according to the Texas Policy Evaluation Project.

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At least 12 other states have enacted bans early in pregnancy, but all have been blocked from going into effect.

Rather than have state officials enforce the law, Texas deputizes private citizens to sue anyone who performs or aids and abets an abortion. If someone bringing suit is successful, they are entitled to at least \$10,000. Women who obtain abortions can't be sued under the law.

During arguments Monday, Roberts at one point asked whether the law could be challenged if Texas had made the entitlement much higher, \$1 million. Texas' lawyer told him no.

The structure of the law threatens abortion providers with huge financial penalties if they violate it. Clinics throughout the state have stopped performing abortions once cardiac activity is found.

The result, both the providers and the Biden administration said, is that women who are financially able have traveled to other states and those without the means must either continue their pregnancies against their will or find other, potentially dangerous ways to end them.

Stone and Jonathan Mitchell, an architect of the law who also argued Monday, defended the law and its unusual structure. They said both the providers and the Justice Department lack the right to go into federal court, and should be asking Congress, not the justices, to expand court access.

Corrects 2nd paragraph, restoring missing "to."

Judge starts Rittenhouse trial with trivia and lectures

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The judge presiding over Kyle Rittenhouse's homicide trial opened jury selection Monday with a round of "Jeopardy!"-like trivia, assured potential jurors he doesn't have COVID-19 and reached back to the fall of the Roman Empire to emphasize the gravity of their duty.

Kenosha County Circuit Judge Bruce Schroeder drew laughs in the courtroom — and some cringes on social media — as he peppered potential jurors with trivia questions, and offered commentary on some. When the answer to one was the movie "Psycho," the 75-year-old Schroeder quipped: "You've heard of it."

One potential juror told Schroeder he had nasal surgery scheduled in 10 days. The judge asked him, "What would you rather do, be here with me or have your nose operated on?" The man responded: "I'll be honest with you, I'm not looking forward to it." The judge laughed and said he would take it under consideration.

The tenor of Monday's hearing was no surprise to one attorney who has appeared before Schroeder.

Michael Cicchini, a Kenosha-based defense attorney, said the beginning of jury selection can be "a logistical nightmare." Attorneys are handed seating charts and other paperwork as jurors are led in, and they need time to get organized. Schroeder traditionally spends that time playing trivia with the jury pool until the attorneys are ready, he said.

Schroeder is presiding over one of the biggest trials of his career. Rittenhouse, 18, of Antioch, Illinois, shot three people during a protest against police brutality in Kenosha, Wisconsin, in August 2020. The protests began after a white police officer shot Jacob Blake, who is Black, in the back during a domestic disturbance. Blake had been fighting with officers and had a knife; the county prosecutor later declined to charge the officer.

Rittenhouse has said he traveled to Kenosha to protect businesses from looting and arson. Two of the men he shot, Joseph Rosenbaum and Anthony Huber, died of their wounds. Rittenhouse also shot and wounded a third man, Gaige Grosskreutz.

Rittenhouse contends he fired in self-defense and conservatives nationwide have rallied behind him, holding him up as a bulwark against chaotic protesters and a symbol of gun rights. Others, including liberals and activists, portray him as a domestic terrorist, saying he made a volatile situation worse by showing up with a gun.

Previously, Schroeder's highest-profile case was the 2008 homicide trial of Mark Jensen, who was accused of poisoning and smothering his wife. Jensen was convicted, but appellate courts and the state Supreme

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Court ruled that Schroeder wrongly admitted as evidence a letter Jensen's wife gave a neighbor saying if anything happened to her Jensen would be responsible. A new trial is set for 2022.

In 2018, Schroeder sentenced a woman convicted of shoplifting to tell the manager of any store she entered that she was on supervision for theft, saying embarrassment can deter criminality. A state appeals court tossed out that sentence.

Schroeder drew scrutiny last week when he told attorneys that Rosenbaum, Huber and Grosskreutz cannot be referred to in court as victims, calling the word "loaded." But he rejected a prosecution request to block any reference to them as "rioters," "looters" or "arsonists," saying the defense can do so if supported by evidence.

On Monday, Schroeder suffered a coughing fit then reassured potential jurors he had been vaccinated three times against COVID-19. He also apologized for being disorganized, saying jury selection doesn't usually occur on Monday mornings.

Schroeder finally began jury selection with a story about the war in Vietnam, comparing jury duty to being drafted, saying no one would be excused for minor reasons. He then asked for a round of applause for any veterans present.

Cicchini said Schroeder traditionally gives brief speeches about the history of trials to impress upon jurors the importance of their task. On Monday, he referenced the fall of Rome when explaining the system's evolution.

"When Rome fell, the world changed dramatically," the judge said, before launching into more history about how cases were decided more than 2,000 years ago. He spoke of priests blessing trials in which defendants had to place their hands on burning coals or in boiling water — if they "didn't come out too badly," that was a sign from God of their innocence.

Schroeder also cautioned that media coverage of the case may have misled potential jurors.

"This case has become very political," he said. "It was involved in the politics of the last election year. ... You could go out now and read things from all across the political spectrum about this case, most of which is written by people who know nothing. I don't mean that that they are know-nothings. I mean that they don't know what you're going to know: those of you who are selected for this jury, who are going to hear for yourselves the real evidence in this case."

This story has been corrected to add the missing word "You've" to judge's quote on movie "Psycho."

Find AP's full coverage on the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse at: <https://apnews.com/hub/kyle-rittenhouse>

Associated Press reporters Amy Forliti in Minneapolis and Scott Bauer in Madison contributed to this report.

Astros' Baker appreciates bench; Bregman to stay in 7-spot

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston manager Dusty Baker appreciates his stars, but this time of year — perhaps more than ever — he's also a big fan of his role players.

He likened his bench players to a third-down running back in football or the sixth man in basketball.

"In every sport, these guys make the difference because you wear your stars out and they can't do it all the time," Baker said. "You have to have other guys on your team that you call upon, especially in a specialty situation."

That quality was on full display in Game 5 when the Astros staved off elimination with a huge assist from pinch-hitter Marwin Gonzalez. The utility infielder spent 2012-18 with the Astros, helping them make the turnaround from baseball's worst team to World Series champs.

He spent two seasons with the Twins before joining the Boston Red Sox this season. But he was released in August, and the Astros brought him back.

On Sunday night, Gonzalez blooped a two-out, two-run single in the fifth to give the Astros a 7-5 lead. It was the first hit of the series for Gonzalez, who also pinch-hit in Games 3 and 4.

"Your extra guys (are) the guys that put you over the top," Baker said.

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DECISIONS, DECISIONS

Baker said he'd likely have third baseman Alex Bregman hit seventh again in Game 6 after moving him down to that spot for Game 5.

Baker dropped Bregman from third to seventh for Game 5 after he went 1 for 14 in the first four games of the series. The shakeup made a difference, with Bregman driving in Houston's first run Sunday night with a double in the second inning. The Astros were down 4-0 after a grand slam by Adam Duvall when Bregman got them on the board.

"He got the biggest hit of the night to me, up to that point, at least, to get us back in the game," Baker. Baker thought Bregman looked better in Game 5, but knows he has more work to do to keep it going Tuesday after starting the series in such a slump.

"You just don't come out of something overnight generally," Baker said. "It didn't take you a day to get in this mess, and it's not going to take you a day to get out."

Baker also said Monday that he doesn't expect Jason Castro to return in this series after the backup catcher was dropped from the roster before Game 4 because of Major League Baseball's COVID-19 protocols.

"I tried to call him today, and he didn't answer his phone," Baker said. "I tried to call him this morning actually, and I left him a message. So no, probably not."

ROUND TRIPPER

World Series visiting teams usually head home on charter flights that take off about 90-120 minutes after the final out, while the home team heading on the road travels on the day off. But this year, both World Series teams travelled on the rest day.

"I think, number one, there's a lot of kids traveling. The games are going until midnight or beyond, and they're going to get home, it's not going to be good sleep," Braves manager Brian Snitker said Monday. "We're just more in tune with letting the guys get a good night's sleep. We're not going to do anything today anyway, most of them. This time of the Series, you're probably not going to work out."

Overnight travel can turn into a lengthy bus trip while teams can plan day-time travel at optimum hours.

"I think it's better than getting in at 5 or 6 in the morning and hitting rush-hour traffic," Snitker said.

The Astros didn't get back to Houston until late Monday afternoon, when manager Dusty Baker addressed reporters on a Zoom call before going home.

"We didn't come back last night. That would have been back too late," Baker said. "Let the guys get semi rest. We came back, actually, right now. So I think that was a good choice."

ON THE CLOCK?

There have already been two games in this World Series that went at least four hours — Game 1, which went six minutes over that, and Game 5, which was exactly four hours. The average game time has been 3 hours, 41 minutes.

Both the Astros and Braves have used at least five pitchers in each game, but no more than six.

Asked if a pitch clock was needed to speed things up, Snitker — who is familiar with those from managing in Triple-A — said that's not really the issue in these long postseason games.

"I know these games are long because the time in between innings is really long and stuff like that that's added to it," Snitker said. "I like the flow when I experienced the pitch clock, but I don't know that's going to solve — I mean, that's not the only thing that's going to solve the problem."

ANOTHER GAME 6

This will be the 69th time in the 117 World Series that a Game 6 will be played, and the third year in a row for there to be one. The last time the Fall Classic went at least six games three years in a row was 2001-03.

In the previous 68 times there has been a Game 6, the team with a chance to clinch in that game did so only 26 times (38.2%), including the Los Angeles Dodgers over Tampa Bay last year. But teams with a 3-2 lead have gone on to championships 45 times overall (66.2%).

Atlanta has had a 3-2 Series lead four other times, and the Braves won Game 6 only once in those situations: against Cleveland in 1995 for their last championship. They overcame a Game 6 loss to win Game 7 against the New York Yankees in 1957, but lost seven-game series to the Yankees in 1958 and Minnesota

in 1991 after falling in Game 6.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/hub/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Robert Durst indicted in 1982 murder of wife Kathie Durst

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Robert Durst was indicted Monday for murder in the death of his first wife, Kathie Durst, whose disappearance nearly four decades ago has long shadowed the incarcerated millionaire, contributing to his increasingly bizarre and violent behavior and leading to an infamous on-camera confession.

A grand jury in the New York City suburbs returned the second-degree murder indictment just weeks after an investigator in the case filed a criminal complaint in town court charging the 78-year-old real estate heir with murder, Westchester District Attorney Mimi Rocah said.

Durst is serving a life sentence in California for killing a confidante who helped him cover up Kathie Durst's slaying. Durst was hospitalized on a ventilator with COVID-19 after his Oct. 14 sentencing in the Los Angeles case and was transferred last week to a state prison hospital. His medical condition was not released but a mug shot showed no sign of a ventilator.

Rocah said a warrant has been issued for Durst's arrest in the New York case.

"When Kathleen Durst disappeared on January 31, 1982, her family and friends were left with pain, anguish and questions that have contributed to their unfaltering pursuit of justice for the last 39 years," Rocah said in a statement announcing the indictment.

Rocah said her office "reinvigorated its investigation" into Robert Durst when she took office in January, launching a cold case unit and dedicating necessary skill and resources. She decided to take the case to a grand jury in early October. Rocah said Durst's indictment is a "huge step forward in the pursuit of justice for Kathie Durst, her family and victims of domestic violence everywhere."

Asked by a reporter if he had any reaction to the indictment, Durst lawyer Chip Lewis replied in an email: "Fake news!" Asked in a subsequent email if he'll be representing Durst in the New York case and whether there are concerns about moving him to New York, given his health issues, Lewis responded, "Not sure he will make it. But if he does, I'll let you know."

A lawyer for Kathie Durst's family said they were still processing the news of the indictment and would speak more about the matter in the coming days.

Kathie Durst's 1982 disappearance garnered renewed public interest after HBO aired a documentary in 2015 in which the eccentric Durst appeared to admit killing people, stepping off camera and muttering to himself on a live microphone: "Killed them all, of course."

The grand jury that indicted Durst kept meeting and hearing witnesses even after State Police Investigator Joseph Becerra filed a criminal complaint in a town court in Lewisboro, New York, on Oct. 19 charging Durst with second-degree murder. He had never previously been charged in her disappearance.

Such filings are often seen as a first step in the criminal process because, in New York, all felony cases require a grand jury indictment to proceed to trial unless a defendant waives that requirement.

Kathie Durst was 29 and in her final months of medical school when she was last seen. She and Robert Durst, who was 38 at the time, had been married nearly nine years and were living in South Salem, a community in Lewisboro. Her body was never found. Robert Durst divorced her in 1990 citing abandonment. At the request of her family, she was declared legally dead in 2017.

Robert Durst's behavior became increasingly erratic as investigators made several attempts over the years to close the case. In 1999, authorities searched a lake and the couple's home but turned up little evidence, with Becerra equating the search to a "a needle in a haystack."

In December 2000, Durst shot and killed his best friend, Susan Berman, as she was preparing to tell police about her involvement in Kathie Durst's death. She had told friends she provided a phony alibi for him after his wife vanished, prosecutors said.

Durst was convicted in September of killing Berman. Afterward, Los Angeles prosecutor John Lewin described him as a "narcissistic psychopath," saying Durst "killed his wife and then he had to keep killing

to cover it up.”

After Berman’s death, Durst went into hiding, disguising himself as a mute woman living in a cheap apartment in Galveston, Texas. There, he killed a neighbor, chopped up his body and tossed it out to sea. Durst claimed self-defense — that he and Black were struggling for control of a gun — and was acquitted. He was convicted of destroying evidence for discarding the body parts.

Durst was also sentenced in 2016 to over seven years in prison after pleading guilty to a federal weapons charge stemming from a 2015 arrest in New Orleans.

Robert Durst’s family owns more than 16 million square feet of real estate in New York and Philadelphia, including a 10% stake in One World Trade Center, the Manhattan skyscraper formerly known as the Freedom Tower. Family members bought out Robert Durst’s stake in the business for \$65 million in 2006.

In the 2015 HBO documentary “The Jinx: The Life and Deaths of Robert Durst,” Durst appeared to admit killing people and admitted he made up details about what happened the night she disappeared because he was “hoping that would just make everything go away.”

Durst, who has numerous medical issues, sat in a wheelchair for much of the California trial and sentencing hearing. He read his lawyer’s questions from a tablet giving live transcriptions because he struggles with hearing.

Durst, testifying in the Los Angeles trial in August, denied killing Kathie Durst. After her medical school called to report that she hadn’t been going to class, he said he figured she was “out someplace having fun” and suggested that perhaps drug use was to blame.

“It hadn’t occurred to me that anything had happened to her,” Durst said, speaking slowly in a strained, raspy voice. “It was more like: What had Kathie done to Kathie?”

Associated Press writer Brian Melley in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

Follow Michael Sisak on Twitter at twitter.com/mikesisak

Canadian snowbirds head south as US land borders reopen

By ANITA SNOW and TERRY TANG Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Canadians Ian and Heather Stewart are savoring the idea of leaving behind this winter’s subzero temperatures when the U.S. reopens its borders to nonessential land travel next week and they launch a long-delayed drive to their seasonal home in Fort Myers, Florida.

Restrictions imposed by both countries during the coronavirus pandemic and their own concerns kept the retired couple and millions of other Canadians from driving south to warmer climes like Florida, Arizona and Mexico during last year’s freezing winter months.

Now, the Biden administration’s decision to allow vaccinated people to enter the U.S. by land for any reason starting Nov. 8 has many Canadians packing up their campers and making reservations at their favorite vacation condos and mobile home parks. Some are already in the U.S., arriving on flights that never stopped and have required just a negative COVID-19 test.

But many have waited to drive, preferring the convenience of having a vehicle to get around in with rental cars scarce and expensive.

Vacasa, a management company for over 30,000 vacation homes in North America, Belize and Costa Rica, said it saw a major rise in traffic on its online platform after the new rules were announced. Canadian users’ views at rentals in snowbird-popular destinations jumped by 120%.

The Stewarts will board their SUV with two dogs and a cat Nov. 10 for the four-day trek from Ottawa, Ontario, to spend six months on Florida’s Gulf Coast.

“We love it there,” said Ian Stewart, 81, a retired air traffic controller with the Royal Canadian Air Force. “There’s such a nice feel with the good weather that lets you get out and walk and talk to your neighbors. And you don’t have to worry about slipping on the ice and breaking your bones!”

Like the Stewarts, many Canadian snowbirds stay at mobile home parks and luxury RV resorts — with

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swimming pools, pickleball and sometimes golf courses — for people 55 and over. The Stewarts have owned a manufactured home at their Florida park since 2007.

Arizona is also popular for its mild winters.

The Arizona Office of Tourism expects an immediate economic impact in a state where people from Canada and Mexico traditionally make up the largest number of overnight visitors, said Becky Blaine, the office's deputy director.

"The phones have been ringing off the hook since they announced the border will be reopened," said Kate Ebert, manager of the Sundance 1 RV Resort in Casa Grande, halfway between Phoenix and Tucson.

Renée Louzon-Benn, executive director of the Greater Casa Grande Chamber of Commerce, said the desert community last year felt the absence of visitors from Canada and U.S. Midwestern states like Wisconsin and Michigan, with far fewer people spending money locally. Casa Grande Mayor Craig McFarland said the city of about 62,000 people usually swells by another 25,000 each winter.

Wendy Caban of Lake Country, British Columbia, is thrilled she and her husband, Geoffrey, can soon drive to their resort home in the Phoenix suburb of Mesa.

"I'm looking forward to seeing a lot of friends that we made over the last dozen years," Wendy Caban said. "I'm looking forward to the warmth."

But the couple, both 73, are still mulling when to leave.

"I think it's going to be insane on Nov. 8," Caban said. "So, we'll wait a few days and monitor the lineups and the weather."

Arizona's Office of Tourism says close to 1 million Canadian tourists accounted for \$1 billion in spending in 2019. That plunged to 257,000 Canadians who spent \$325 million last year.

R. Glenn Williamson, Canada's Arizona honorary consul and founder and CEO of the Canada Arizona Business Council, said the numbers for tourists don't consider longer term stays by part-time resident Canadians who spend months at a time in homes they own in Arizona — as many as 200,000 additional people spending another \$1.5 billion locally each year.

With some 500 Canadian companies operating in Arizona, a new wave of younger, wealthier Canadian snowbirds work part-time in the state, where they buy upscale homes and play golf, among Canada's most popular sports, Williamson said.

Barbara and Brian Fox of Toronto, both in their 60s, plan to keep working for their strategic communications firm when they return to the Naples area on Florida's Gulf Coast in March and April.

It will be the longest Florida stay so far for the couple, who have canceled at least five planned trips south during the course of the pandemic over restrictions and concerns about possible infection.

Plenty of retirees are planning to head south again as well.

They include Wilf and Lynne Burnett, who haven't made annual trek south from their hometown in Vancouver, British Columbia, to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, since the coronavirus emerged. They typically tow a 15-foot (4.5-meter) boat so they can fish and visit restaurants with docks on the bay.

Now that land border restrictions are being eliminated, the Burnetts have a three-month reservation at a Puerto Vallarta condo starting Jan. 6.

"We'll keep an eye on the virus and if things continue to improve, we'll go," Wilf Burnett said.

Those who decide to travel at the last minute will likely find it hard to book a condo, RV park or campground.

Amid concern restrictions might keep changing, some snowbirds are making reservations for earlier in the season than usual, starting from November through early next year, said Bruce Hoban, co-founder of the 2,000-member Vacation Rental Owners and Neighbors of Palm Springs. Hoban said peak visitor times for snowbirds, who comprise about 15% of vacation rentals, are generally between February and April.

Those who come can also expect prices as much as 20% to 30% higher because of increased demand, he said.

Bobby Cornwell, executive director of the Florida and Alabama RV Parks & Campground Association, said many sites in those states were booked solid from January through March even before the new travel rules were announced. That's because Americans have embraced RV travel during the pandemic, filling

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spots Canadian campers normally would.

Still, it's "wonderful news" Canadians can return, Cornwell said.

"We encourage all snowbirds to plan to come to Florida and make your reservations as soon as possible," he said.

Leaders dial up doomsday warning to kick-start climate talks

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

GLASGOW, Scotland (AP) — World leaders turned up the heat and resorted to end-of-the-world rhetoric Monday in an attempt to bring new urgency to sputtering international climate negotiations.

The metaphors were dramatic and mixed at the start of the talks, known as COP26. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson described global warming as "a doomsday device" strapped to humanity. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres told his colleagues that humans are "digging our own graves." And Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley, speaking for vulnerable island nations, added moral thunder, warning leaders not to "allow the path of greed and selfishness to sow the seeds of our common destruction."

Amid the speeches, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said his coal-dependent country will aim to stop adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere by 2070 — two decades after the United States and at least 10 years later than China. Modi said the goal of reaching "net zero" by 2070 was one of five measures India planned to undertake to meet its commitments under the Paris climate accord.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Joe Biden and German Chancellor Angela Merkel avoided soaring rhetoric and delved into policy.

"There's no more time to sit back," Biden said in a more measured warning that also apologized for his predecessor's decision to temporarily pull the U.S. out of the historic 2015 Paris agreement, something he said put the country behind in its efforts. "Every day we delay, the cost of inaction increases."

In a recorded welcome message, Queen Elizabeth II said she hoped the conference would be "one of those rare occasions where everyone will have the chance to rise above the politics of the moment."

"History has shown that when nations come together in common cause, there is always room for hope," she said in the video, which was recorded on Friday at Windsor Castle.

One of the United Nations' biggest concerns is that some countries are more focused on amorphous long-term net-zero goals instead of seeking cuts this decade that could prevent temperature increases that would exceed the Paris goal.

Modi also outlined shorter-term goals for the world's third-biggest carbon emitter: raising its goal for non-fossil energy production, meeting half of its energy needs with renewable sources, cutting carbon emissions by 1 billion tons compared with previous targets and reducing the carbon intensity of its economy by 45% — all by 2030.

While 2070 sounds far off for India's pledge, four outside experts from think tanks and universities said India's new short- and long-term goals are significant, while not huge, because of that nation's development status. Ulka Kelkar, who directs India climate policy analysis for the World Resource Institute, said a lot depends on details, but the 2070 goal would be similar to the U.S. and Europe adopting net-zero goals 20 years ago.

Still, European officials privately expressed disappointment at India's late target, but declined to comment publicly.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen touted already announced efforts to make Europe "the first net-zero continent" in the long-term and cut emissions 55% in this decade. She pushed for other rich countries to aid poorer nations as much as Europe does and put a price on carbon emissions because "nature cannot pay that price anymore."

Bolivia President Luis Arce said the speeches from developed countries sought to portray them as climate change leaders "but this is far from the truth." He said rich nations need to face their historic responsibilities for causing the warming problem and not fix it by forcing rules on poor countries. The real solution, he said, "is an alternative to capitalism" and "unfettered consumerism."

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Johnson pointed out that the 130-plus world leaders gathered for the leaders' summit portion of the conference had an average age of over 60, while the generations most harmed by climate change aren't yet born.

Outside the negotiations, youth climate activist Greta Thunberg accused world leaders of "pretending to take our future seriously."

"Change is not going to come from inside there," Thunberg said, "We say no more blah, blah, blah."

The conference aims to get governments to commit to curbing carbon emissions fast enough to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels. The world has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit). Current projections based on planned emissions cuts over the next decade are for it to hit 2.7C (4.9F) by the year 2100.

Increased warming over coming decades would melt much of the planet's ice, raise global sea levels and greatly increase the likelihood and intensity of extreme weather, scientists say. With every tenth of a degree of warming, the dangers soar faster, they say.

The other goals for the meeting are for rich nations to give poor nations \$100 billion a year in climate aid and to reach an agreement to spend half of the money to adapt to worsening climate impacts.

But Mottley, of Barbados, warned that negotiators are falling short.

"This is immoral and it is unjust," Mottley said. "Are we so blinded and hardened that we can no longer appreciate the cries of humanity?"

"We are already gasping for survival," chimed in President Wavel John Charles Ramkalawan of the Seychelles, another island nation. "Tomorrow is not an option for it will be too late."

Guterres struck an equally gloomy note.

"We are digging our own graves," said the U.N. secretary-general. "Our planet is changing before our eyes — from the ocean depths to mountaintops, from melting glaciers to relentless extreme weather events."

The speeches will continue through Tuesday, then the leaders will leave.

The idea is that they will do the big political give-and-take, setting out broad outlines of agreement, and then have other government officials hammer out the details. That's what worked to make the historic 2015 Paris climate deal a success, former U.N. Climate Secretary Christiana Figueres told The Associated Press.

"For heads of state, it is actually a much better use of their strategic thinking," Figueres said.

Thousands lined up in a chilly wind in Glasgow on Monday to get through a bottleneck at the entrance to the venue. But what will be noticeable are a handful of major absences.

Xi Jinping, president of top carbon-polluting nation China, is not in Glasgow. Figueres said his absence is not that significant because he isn't leaving the country during the pandemic and his climate envoy is a veteran negotiator.

Biden has chided China and Russia for their less-than-ambitious efforts to curb emissions and blamed them for a disappointing statement on climate change at the end of the meeting of leaders from the Group of 20 major economies in Rome this weekend.

Perhaps more troublesome for the U.N. summit is the absence of several small nations from the Pacific islands that couldn't make it because of COVID-19 restrictions and logistics. That's a big problem because their voices relay urgency, Figueres said.

In addition, the heads of several major emerging economies beyond China are also skipping Scotland, including those from Russia, Turkey, Mexico, Brazil and South Africa. That leaves Modi the only leader present from the so-called BRICS nations, which account for more than 40% of global emissions.

Associated Press writers Jill Lawless, Frank Jordans and Ellen Knickmeyer contributed to this report. Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>. Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears.

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COVID vaccine for younger kids already being packed, shipped

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Anticipating a green light from vaccine advisers, the Biden administration is assembling and shipping millions of COVID-19 shots for children ages 5-11, the White House said Monday. The first could go into kids' arms by midweek.

"We are not waiting on the operations and logistics," said coronavirus coordinator Jeff Zients.

By vaccinating children, the U.S. hopes to head off another coronavirus wave during the cold-weather months when people spend more time indoors and respiratory illnesses can spread more easily. Cases have been declining for weeks, but the virus has repeatedly shown its ability to stage a comeback and more easily transmissible mutations are a persistent threat.

On Tuesday, a special advisory panel to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will meet to consider detailed recommendations for administering the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to younger children. The Food and Drug Administration already cleared the shots, which deliver about one-third of the vaccine given to adults. After CDC advisers make their recommendations, agency director Dr. Rochelle Walensky will give the final order.

Zients said the government has enough of the Pfizer vaccine for all 28 million children in the 5-11 age group. "We're in great shape on supply," Zients said during the White House coronavirus briefing.

The children's vaccination drive is expected to start later this week and go into full swing by next week. Parents will be able to go to [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) and filter on vaccines for children 5-11 to find a location near them that is offering the shot.

Pfizer's vaccine already has been authorized for use in older children.

After the FDA gave its authorization for younger children, the Biden administration asked states, territories and other jurisdictions to place their initial orders. Workers at the drug company and at distribution centers began the process of preparing and packing 15 million doses, said Zients.

"More doses will be packed and shipped and delivered," he added. "More and more vaccine will come on line as we ramp up."

The goal is for parents to have a range of options for getting children vaccinated, from pediatricians' offices to clinics and pharmacies.

Walensky acknowledged both a sense of urgency and concern about getting children vaccinated. She stressed that clinical trials of the Pfizer vaccine for children have found it highly effective in preventing serious disease, with no severe adverse reactions in safety and efficacy trials.

"There has been a great deal of anticipation from parents," Walensky said. "I encourage parents to ask questions."

Separately, Zients announced that about 70% of U.S. adults are now fully vaccinated, while 80% have received at least one vaccine dose.

Americans sour on economy amid inflation woes: AP-NORC Poll

By KEN SWEET and EMILY SWANSON The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Americans' opinions on the U.S. economy have soured noticeably in the past month, a new poll finds, with nearly half expecting economic conditions to worsen in the next year.

Just 35% of Americans now call the national economy good, while 65% call it poor, according to a poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. That's a dip since September, when 45% of Americans called the economy good, and a return to about where views of the nation's economy stood in January and February, when the pandemic was raging across the nation.

The deterioration in Americans' economic sentiments comes as the cost of goods is rising nationwide, particularly gas prices, and bottlenecks in the global supply chain have made purchasing everything from furniture to automobiles more difficult. The Labor Department reported earlier this month that consumer

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prices in September rose 5.4% from a year earlier, the largest one-year increase since 2008.

Nadine Christian, 56, said she's been concerned about the rising cost of living the past year.

"I grew up in the 1970s and I remember it was hard for my parents to make ends meet," Christian said, referring to the last time the U.S. economy was severely impacted by high inflation. "It's not quite as bad as it was back then but I feel like any day we could go off the rails."

Roughly half of Americans — 47% — now say they expect the economy to get worse in the next year, compared with just 30% who think it will get better. In an AP-NORC poll conducted in February and March, the situation was reversed: 44% expected the economy to get better in the year ahead and just 32% said it would get worse.

Earlier this year, 70% of Democrats said they expected the economy to get better. Now, just 51% do. And the share of Republicans who think the economy will get even worse has grown to 74% from 59% earlier in the year.

Joseph Binkley, 34, from Indiana, said he's worried about inflation but thinks the problems in the economy are temporary.

"I think it's mostly a supply-demand issue, as the economy is improving," he said.

Binkley said he supports President Biden's economic policies.

"A lot of the first years of a presidency is dealing with the predecessor's policies. I think Biden is having to work through the problems of the previous administration."

The AP-NORC poll shows a majority of Americans are critical of Biden's handling of the economy, with 58% saying they disapprove and 41% saying they approve.

Despite the deterioration in Americans' economic outlooks, the poll found they remain relatively optimistic about their own financial situations. The poll found that 65% of Americans say their personal financial situation is good, a number that has remained about constant since before the pandemic began. Still, 24% say they think their personal finances will get worse in the next year, up from 13% earlier this year.

The poll also shows signs that the pandemic has helped improve workers' bargaining power: 36% of Americans are very or extremely confident that they could find a good job if they wanted to. In March of 2020, 25% said that, and in June of 2019, 30% said so. Another 35% say they're at least somewhat confident.

About half of Americans, 49%, now say they're highly confident they could pay an unexpected bill of \$1,000, up from 36% in March of 2020 and 40% in June of 2019.

Economic inequalities between Black and Hispanic Americans compared to their white counterparts remain, however. White Americans are much more likely than Black or Hispanic Americans to be highly confident in their ability to pay an unexpected bill or medical expense.

For businesses, the supply chain issues have dampened economic forecasts. Dozens of large companies have said it's been hard to find basic goods for manufacturing, like raw materials and semiconductors.

"Companies keep telling me, 'If I could just get the materials, my business would grow significantly,'" said Steve Steinour, CEO of Huntington Bancshares, a large regional bank chain found primarily in the Midwest.

The AP-NORC poll of 1,083 adults was conducted Oct. 21-25 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Swanson reported from Washington.

This story has been updated to correct Nadine Christian's age. It's 56, not 55.

Biden cites 'overwhelming obligations' of US on climate

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, ZEKE MILLER and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

GLASGOW, Scotland (AP) — In a markedly more humble tone for a U.S. leader, President Joe Biden ac-

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knowledgeed at a U.N. summit Monday that the United States and other energy-gulping developed nations bear much of the responsibility for climate change, and said actions taken this decade to contain global warming will be decisive in preventing future generations from suffering.

"None of us can escape the worst that is yet to come if we fail to seize this moment," Biden declared.

The president treated the already visible crisis for the planet — flooding, volatile weather, droughts and wildfires — as a unique opportunity to reinvent the global economy. Standing before world leaders gathered in Scotland, he sought to portray the enormous costs of limiting emissions from coal, oil and natural gas as a chance to create jobs by transitioning to renewable energy and electric automobiles.

Yet he also apologized for former President Donald Trump's decision to leave the Paris Agreement and the role the U.S. and other wealthy countries played in contributing to climate change.

"Those of us who are responsible for much of the deforestation and all of the problems we have so far," Biden said, have "overwhelming obligations" to the poorer nations that account for few of the emissions yet are paying a price as the planet has grown hotter.

As for Trump's action, Biden said: "I shouldn't apologize, but I do apologize for the fact the United States, the last administration, pulled out of the Paris Accords and put us sort of behind the eight ball a little bit."

His words, in seemingly impromptu comments, appeared a break from past comments of many U.S. leaders, who either made little mention of U.S. responsibility for the warming earth or — as Biden himself did on the eve of the climate summit — blamed China as the world's current biggest emitter of climate-wrecking coal and petroleum fumes.

Over history, scientists say, it's the United States that has pumped out the most climate-damaging pollution of any nation, as coal, diesel and gasoline powered the United States and other developed nations to wealth.

Biden, who briefly closed his eyes at one point during the speeches, used the summit to announce he planned to work with the U.S. Congress to provide \$3 billion annually to help poorer countries and communities cope with climate damage, as developing nations increasingly are demanding of established, wealthier economies.

At Glasgow, the magnitude of the moment is crashing head-first into complicated global and domestic politics. The Biden administration is exhorting other nations to make big, fast emissions cuts to stave off the worst scenarios of global warming. But the president is simultaneously fighting to nail down his own climate investments with Congress that would keep the U.S. on track with Biden's own pledges.

"We'll demonstrate to the world the United States is not only back at the table, but hopefully leading by the power of our example," Biden said. "I know it hasn't been the case, and that's why my administration is working overtime to show that our climate commitment is action, not words."

The summit is often billed as essential to putting into action the landmark 2015 Paris climate accord, which Biden rejoined after becoming president this year. The Trump administration largely withdrew from hands-on diplomacy. Part of Biden's efforts at the climate summit and the gathering of the Group of 20 nations in Rome last weekend was to reestablish the U.S. as a partner.

But Biden and his administration face obstacles in prodding the U.S. and other nations to act fast enough on climate, abroad as at home. In the runup to the climate summit, the administration has tried hard to temper expectations that two weeks of talks involving more than 100 world leaders will produce major breakthroughs.

Rather than a quick fix, "Glasgow is the beginning of this decade race, if you will," Biden's climate envoy, John Kerry, told reporters Sunday.

As the summit opened, the U.S. was still struggling to get some of the world's biggest climate polluters — China, Russia and India — to make stronger pledges to burn far less coal, gas and oil and to move to cleaner energy. China under President Xi Jinping has made firmer commitments to cut back on coal power and make other cuts, but not at the pace that the United States and its allies are asking.

Scientists say massive, fast cuts in fossil fuel pollution over the next several years are essential to having any hope of keeping global warming at or below the limits set in the Paris climate accord.

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Trump before his presidency famously accused China of manufacturing climate change, and Trump's administration invariably pointed to China as the top climate offender in justifying its rollbacks of U.S. climate measures.

Biden, too, said he was disappointed that the Group of 20 summit in Rome before the Glasgow gathering failed to nail down stronger promises on climate.

Russia and China "basically didn't show up" at the Rome meeting with new climate commitments, Biden told reporters Sunday night. Neither Russian President Vladimir Putin nor China's Xi attended the G-20 and climate summits. Xi sent a senior official, his climate envoy, to the Glasgow summit.

The Biden administration on Monday also released its strategy for transforming the U.S. into an entirely clean energy nation by 2050.

The long-term plan, filed in compliance with the Paris agreement, would increasingly run the world's largest economy on wind, solar and other clean energy. More Americans would zip around in electric vehicles and on mass transit. And state-of-the-art technology and wide open spaces carefully preserved could soak up carbon dioxide from the air.

As with much of Biden's climate promises, fulfillment of the long-term strategy depends in part on lawmakers and American voters, both blocs that are now sharply divided.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters traveling with the president that climate change should not be viewed as a rivalry between the U.S. and China, as China, the world's second largest economy, could act on its own.

"Nothing about the nature of the relationship between the U.S. and China, structurally or otherwise, impedes or stands in the way of them doing their part," Sullivan said.

Ugandan kids lose hope in long school closure amid pandemic

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA Associated Press

BUSIA, Uganda (AP) — Dressed in his school uniform, Mathias Okwako jumped into the mud and started his daily search for gold, a commodity that may be closer to his grasp than another precious asset: an education.

His rural school in Uganda sits idle just across the road from the swamp where he and scores of children now work as informal miners. Weeds grow in some classrooms, where window frames have been looted for firewood. Another school nearby is renting out rooms to tenants.

Uganda's schools have been fully or partially shut for more than 77 weeks because of the coronavirus pandemic, the longest disruption anywhere in the world, according to figures from the U.N. cultural agency.

And unlike many parts of the globe, where lessons moved online, most public schools, which serve the vast majority of children in this East African country, were unable to offer virtual schooling.

In the void left, some students got married. Some are dealing with unwanted pregnancies. Others, like 17-year-old Okwako, found jobs.

The pandemic has manufactured "outcasts," a lost generation of learners now "in a battle of how to fit in," said Moses Mangeni, an official with the local government in Busia, where Okwako lives.

Efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 have disrupted the lives of children in every corner of the globe, squeezing their parents, complicating their care, and often removing their safety nets. Perhaps most crucially, it has thrown their schooling into chaos.

The result is the "biggest global education emergency of our time," according to the aid group Save the Children, which last month identified 48 countries, including Uganda, whose school systems are at extreme or high risk of collapse. Most are in sub-Saharan Africa, a region long marked by high dropout rates and a shortage of qualified teachers.

Some other parts of the world that saw protracted closures also struggled to teach students. Mexico, where internet connectivity is low in many places, opted for educational programming via television. Ultimately, the pandemic was devastating for children in Mexico, which saw millions leave school as well as increases in child homicides, teen pregnancies and domestic violence.

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In Iraq, remote learning was similarly "limited and unequal," according to the World Bank.

Some wealthier countries fared better. In Kuwait, because most public schools weren't equipped to go online when the virus first struck, all schooling was suspended for seven months in 2020. But then the oil-rich Gulf Arab sheikhdom poured \$212 million into an e-learning platform, and all schools went online. The rollout is considered a success.

But in Uganda there is no success to speak of.

The country first shut down its schools in March 2020, shortly after the first coronavirus case was confirmed on the African continent. Some classes were reopened to students in February, but a total lockdown was imposed again in June as the country faced its first major surge. It is now the only country in Africa where schools remain closed — though President Yoweri Museveni announced last week that they would reopen in January.

That comes as virus cases have tapered off in recent months, with the country now recording an average of 70 new infections each day and a couple of deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University. So far, Uganda has fully vaccinated about 700,000 of its 44 million people.

First lady Janet Museveni, who is the country's education minister, has rejected criticism that the government isn't doing enough to teach kids. In a speech in October, she asked "why our children cannot be safe at home. What happened to the family?"

The problem, some Ugandans say, is that the government hasn't found a successful way to keep up learning during lockdown. A suggested national program to broadcast lessons via free radio sets didn't materialize, and in rural areas many children don't have learning materials of any kind.

As elsewhere, schools typically also provide a refuge to vulnerable children: They may be fed there or receive their routine childhood vaccinations or have access to other services not easily available at home.

But in Uganda's poorest homes, children are now often left to their own devices, without the private tutoring or Zoom lessons that wealthy families can afford.

In Busia, even before the pandemic, the sight of kids peddling goods in the streets wasn't uncommon. Things have only become worse.

Many children who spoke to The Associated Press expressed hopelessness amid the protracted lockdown.

Okwako, who said he was wearing his school uniform while searching for gold because he had nothing else to put on, sought work out of boredom but regrets that the tiring days leave him little energy to study on his own.

"No time (for) reading books," he said. "If you try to open a book, you just go asleep, and sleep up to tomorrow."

At the informal gold mine, students toil alongside adults, including some of their teachers, under the scorching sun. Witnesses said the risks and frustrations of the precarious work have led to fistfights, and some children have broken limbs while digging.

A typical day can bring in just over \$2, enough for a child to buy a pair of used shoes. Okwako is proud of the two pigs he bought with his earnings. Other children said they use the money help to look after their families, regularly buying salt or soap.

"We come here to make money," said 16-year-old Annet Aita, whose job is to wash the sandy soil in which gold dust is trapped, using highly toxic mercury.

But work also provides a refuge from other dangers that stalk those not in school. Aita said she felt more fortunate than some friends who "got pregnancies at home."

Teacher Francis Adungosi said he now works at the mine "from Monday to Monday" and warned that he will need a "refresher course" before going back to the classroom.

As for his students, "they are traumatized. Remember they are having a lot of challenges. Some of them are pregnant. Some have already got married. Handling those children is going to be so tasking."

That's for those who go back. Many say they won't.

Some of the children now say, "we don't recall what we read, so why should we go back?" said Gilbert Mugalanzi, of the group Somero Uganda, which carried out a survey in November to assess how the pan-

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demic was affecting schoolchildren in parts of Busia.

At Okwako's Mawero Primary School, teacher Emmy Odillo said he expects a small fraction of the 400 students to return next year.

Others have similarly low expectations.

Bosco Masaba, the director of studies at Busia Central Primary School, the private school nearby that has been converted into rentals, said he regularly sees some students in the streets selling tomatoes or eggs. He heard that some girls became domestic workers across the border in Kenya.

"Some, they have lost hope completely," Masaba said.

Christopher Sherman in Mexico City, Zeina Karam in Beirut, and Isabel DeBre in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, contributed to this report.

EXPLAINER: Why voting is a top issue in Tuesday's elections

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and THOMAS PEIPERT Associated Press

After a year of falsehoods surrounding the 2020 presidential election, Republican-led ballot reviews and new voting rules passed by GOP lawmakers, election officials are hoping a smooth election on Tuesday will demonstrate that the system works.

The off-year elections feature local contests for mayor, city council and school board in communities across the country. Voters in some states will be deciding statewide ballot initiatives. And New Jersey and Virginia will elect governors.

"There is an opportunity here to show the world and to show America that democracy is going to keep going, and election officials will keep doing their job despite all the rhetoric," said Jennifer Morrell, a former elections clerk in Utah and Colorado who now advises election offices on security and other issues.

Here's a look at some of the major election and voting issues heading into Tuesday:

HAS ANYTHING CHANGED SINCE 2020?

The pandemic triggered unprecedented challenges for election officials last year. Some states implemented emergency changes to help make mail voting easier for people wary of crowded polling places. Some of these pandemic-related changes have been made permanent, while others have expired.

In Virginia, voters must now remember to add a witness signature to their mail ballots — a requirement that was waived last year. Election officials there say they are seeing some ballots arriving without the witness signature and are reaching out to voters to provide information on how it can be fixed so these ballots will count.

WHAT ABOUT NEW VOTING RESTRICTIONS?

Several states controlled politically by Republicans passed laws this year that tighten voting rules and add new hurdles for mail ballots. Republican lawmakers said the changes were needed to improve security and boost public confidence after the 2020 election. Some of these changes will not take effect until later elections, but new rules are in place in Florida, Georgia and Iowa. In Florida and Georgia, ID requirements have been added for mail voting. In Iowa, voters have fewer days and locations to vote early in person and less time to request and return mail ballots. The state's second largest county reported last week that more than 250 people were denied mail ballots under a new deadline requiring they be requested at least 15 days before an election — instead of the previous 11 days.

WHAT OTHER CHALLENGES ARE FACING VOTERS?

In Louisiana, election officials are still dealing with the destruction of Hurricane Ida, which forced officials to push back the election to Nov. 13. Thousands of voters will be casting ballots at different polling locations. Some voting sites have been set up in tents because there are few buildings in the immediate area that were not damaged from the Aug. 29 storm. Officials are using mail, advertising and signs to notify voters of the polling place changes.

WHAT OTHER CHALLENGES ARE FACING ELECTION OFFICIALS?

Election officials are facing a level of distrust from a segment of the public who believe the 2020 elec-

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tion was stolen from Trump, despite no evidence of widespread fraud. As a result of these false claims, election officials have been targeted with a flood of threats and harassment related to their job. At a U.S. Senate hearing last week, election officials from both parties described receiving death threats and urged Congress to pass legislation boosting protections for election workers.

"I never once thought when I started in elections that I would have to teach de-escalation tactics to our workers, but that's sort of where we are at right now," Natalie Adona, assistant clerk-recorder for California's Nevada County said during a discussion last week hosted by the Bipartisan Policy Center.

WHAT ARE ELECTION OFFICIALS DOING ABOUT MISINFORMATION?

One change election officials have made is boosting their voter education and outreach efforts, to answer questions from skeptics and reassure others that elections remain fair and secure: "Sunlight and transparency are our friends," Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon said. Last week, a group of local election officials in Florida issued a statement warning of the dangers of misinformation and disinformation sowing discord and undermining faith in U.S. elections. The group called on voters to "dedicate themselves to learning about the many safeguards already in place that guarantee the accuracy of Florida's elections."

Some officials are even using the questions from voters as an opportunity to recruit workers. "I say, 'Come on in, come work for us,'" said George Stern, clerk-recorder for Colorado's Jefferson County. "When you actually see the checks in the process, you start to say, 'Oh, OK, that's right, they are verifying the signature on every ballot so someone couldn't mail in 20,000 ballots from a foreign country.'"

IS MAIL VOTING LESS SECURE THAN VOTING IN PERSON?

Numerous safeguards are in place to ensure that people casting mail ballots are who they say they are and only vote once. Voter fraud does happen, but it is exceedingly rare amid the tens of millions of ballots cast in federal elections every two years.

Election officials say the relentless attacks on mail voting and unsubstantiated claims of fraud over the last few years have taken a toll. "It became a bit of a tsunami of disinformation that was really designed to cast doubt on the process," said Amber McReynolds, former Denver elections clerk who now leads the National Vote at Home Institute. "That is a direct attack on our democracy and our voting process, and it certainly makes it difficult for election officials to do their jobs. But more importantly, it deteriorates people's trust in the process."

Peipert reported from Golden, Colorado. Associated Press writer Ryan J. Foley in Iowa City, Iowa, and Melinda Deslatte in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, contributed to this report.

At least 3 dead after high rise in Nigeria collapses

By CHINEDU ASADU Associated Press

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — A 21-story apartment building under construction collapsed in an upscale area of Nigeria's largest city, killing at least three people and leaving dozens more missing, officials and witnesses said on Monday.

Lagos Police Commissioner Hakeem Odumosu confirmed the deaths, but added that three survivors had been pulled from the rubble in Ikoyi by Monday evening. Officials arriving at the scene were confronted by crowds of people venting their anger that rescue efforts started several hours after the collapse.

Olayemi Bello told The Associated Press that five of his friends were trapped in the building and he feared the worst.

"When they work finish, they will come outside and they will play with us and talk about the work," he said. "Now, nobody. All of them are dead."

Construction worker Eric Tetteh said that he and his brother had managed to escape. But he estimated that more than 100 people were inside the building at the time it crumbled into a pile of debris.

Workers said the high rise apartment building had been under construction for about two years, and it was not immediately known what had caused the collapse.

However, such incidents are relatively common in Lagos because enforcement of building code regulations

is weak. Other observers blame shoddy work by private developers eager to meet demand for housing in the megacity.

9,000 NYC workers on leave as vaccine mandate takes effect

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and KAREN MATTHEWS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — About 9,000 New York City municipal workers were put on unpaid leave for refusing to comply with a COVID-19 vaccine mandate that took effect Monday and thousands of city firefighters have called out sick in an apparent protest over the requirement, Mayor Bill de Blasio said.

About 9 in 10 city workers covered by the mandate have gotten vaccinated and there have been no disruptions to city services as a result of staffing shortages, de Blasio told reporters at his daily news briefing. New York has more than 300,000 city employees.

Firehouses remained open but 18 of the department's 350 units were out of service and "many units are understaffed," Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro said. Sanitation workers made an extra pickup on Sunday to ensure trash wouldn't pile up, the mayor said.

"I want to thank everyone who got vaccinated," de Blasio said. "Thank you for getting vaccinated. Thank you for doing the right thing. Thank you for moving us forward."

City officials have been battling fierce resistance among a minority of workers in some critical public safety jobs, including police officers and firefighters, as well as a pending legal challenge to the mandate by the city's largest police union.

As of Sunday, 1 in 4 of the city's uniformed firefighters still hadn't gotten a first dose of the vaccine, as required. About 1 in 6 police personnel and 1 in 6 sanitation workers were still unvaccinated.

Police Commissioner Dermot Shea said the vast majority of unvaccinated workers in his department have applied for religious or medical exemptions to the vaccine mandate. So far, just 34 police officers and 40 civilian police employees have been placed on unpaid leave he said.

More than 3,500 city workers were vaccinated over the weekend. That was after a 5 p.m. Friday deadline to collect a \$500 bonus for showing proof they'd gotten a dose of the vaccine but before they were to be put on unpaid leave.

About 12,000 workers have applied for religious or medical exemptions. They can remain on the job while city officials review those applications.

About 2,300 firefighters were out sick, up from what's normally about 1,000 per day, in what Nigro said appeared to be a protest against the vaccine mandate. The fire department's medical office normally sees about 200 people a day, Nigro said. The past week, it has been 700 a day, the majority unvaccinated.

"I've asked them to rethink this, to remember their oath of office," Nigro said. "It's not only affecting the people they serve, it's affecting their brothers and sisters in the department who are forced to fill their spots."

De Blasio said the city is watching to see if the firefighters union is coordinating the sick outs and would take them to court if there's evidence of an illegal strike. He said firefighters who are found to be faking illness are "AWOL effectively" and will face internal department discipline.

"People get really troubled really quick when people don't show up to do their jobs if they're not really sick," de Blasio said. "And we have every reason to believe there's a lot of people out there claiming to be sick, who are not. It's not acceptable."

City officials have said they are prepared for possible staffing shortfalls, calling in vaccinated employees for overtime shifts.

The head of the union that represents New York City firefighters, which has fought the vaccine mandate, warned that public safety could be at risk. The fire department has said it was prepared to take up to 20% of its fire companies out of service and have 20% fewer ambulances on the road.

"We're here today because of a mandate that was put not only on our members, but also all New York City employees, given nine days to make a life-changing decision on their career or whether or not they're going to take a vaccine," Uniformed Firefighters Association President Andrew Ansbro said at an early

morning news conference.

Mayor Bill de Blasio has said the city's highest public safety priority is stopping the spread of COVID-19, which continues to kill a handful of people in the city every day.

Ethiopia's PM defiant as rival Tigray forces make advances

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Ethiopia's prime minister has called on citizens to redouble their efforts to combat the rival Tigray forces who claim to have seized key cities on a major highway leading to the capital, while a new wave of detentions of ethnic Tigrayans has begun.

A move on the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa is a new phase in the war that has killed thousands of people since fighting broke out a year ago between Ethiopian and allied forces and Tigray ones who long dominated the national government before Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office in 2018.

The prime minister's spokeswoman, Billene Seyoum, told The Associated Press on Monday that Abiy "is where he's meant to be, leading the country's front and center."

Abiy said Sunday that federal troops are fighting on four fronts against the Tigray forces and "we should know that our enemy's main strength is our weakness and unpreparedness." Amid calls on social media for attacks against ethnic Tigrayans, he said "we should closely follow those who work for the enemy and live amongst us."

A new roundup of Tigrayans was seen in the capital on Monday. Government spokesman Legesse Tulu said "those who believe the government is now weakening and (Tigray forces are) coming should be careful. Some even went to nightclubs to celebrate. The government is taking actions against those."

The Tigray forces over the weekend claimed to control the key cities of Dessie and Kombolcha, though the federal government disputed it, and Legesse asserted that the Tigray forces killed more than 100 youths in Kombolcha overnight.

The United States has said it is "alarmed" by the reports of Tigray forces taking the cities.

The Tigray forces also told the AP they were poised to physically link up with another armed group, the Oromo Liberation Army, with which it struck an alliance earlier this year.

The fighting could reach the Oromo region that neighbors Addis Ababa. Ethnic Oromo once hailed Abiy as the country's first Oromo prime minister, but discontent has since emerged with the jailing of outspoken Oromo leaders.

A top general with the Tigray forces, Tsadkan Gebretensae, told Tigray TV over the weekend they were ruling out talks with the federal government.

The Tigray forces say they are pressuring Ethiopia's government to lift a months-long blockade on their region of around 6 million people, with basic services cut off and humanitarian food and medical aid denied. The humanitarian crisis has spread as the fighters have moved into the neighboring Amhara and Afar regions after retaking much of their region in June.

In Addis Ababa, there was low-level concern. "It is unthinkable that they will come to Addis. It will never happen," said resident Hamelmal Alemu, who believed the Tigray forces would be defeated before then.

"Even if they come here, they won't kill all the people, because otherwise they won't have anyone to govern," said another resident, Desta Tadesse.

A third resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity out of concern about retaliation, worried that state media were not fully reporting events. He said he was Amhara and he believed that if the Tigray forces come, they will kill him.

The government of Amhara on Sunday ordered government institutions to stop regular activities and join the war effort.

Fed to start reining in economic aid as inflation risk rises

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

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WASHINGTON (AP) — With inflation at its highest point in three decades, the Federal Reserve is set this week to begin winding down the extraordinary stimulus it has given the economy since the pandemic recession struck early last year, a process that could prove to be a risky balancing act.

Chair Jerome Powell has signaled that the Fed will announce after its policy meeting Wednesday that it will start paring its \$120 billion in monthly bond purchases as soon as this month. Those purchases are intended to keep long-term loan rates low to encourage borrowing and spending.

Once the Fed has ended its bond purchases by mid-2022, it will then turn to a more difficult decision: When to raise its benchmark short-term rate from zero, where it's been since COVID-19 hammered the economy in March 2020. Raising that rate, which affects many consumer and business loans, would be intended to make sure inflation doesn't get out of control. But it would carry the risk of discouraging spending and undercutting the job market and the economy before they've regained full health.

"We don't have a roadmap for what we're going through," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at Grant Thornton. Powell has to "walk a tightrope" by supporting the recovery while not "turning a deaf ear to inflation."

Against that uncertain backdrop, President Joe Biden has yet to announce whether he will re-nominate Powell for another four-year term as Fed chair. Powell's current term expires in early February, but previous presidents have usually announced such decisions in the late summer or early fall.

Biden is expected to offer Powell a second term despite complaints from progressive groups that the chairman has heightened risks to the financial system by loosening bank regulations and isn't sufficiently committed to taking account of the economic threats from climate change in the Fed's oversight of financial firms. Powell is admired on Wall Street and in most economic circles and has drawn praise for steering the economy through the recession, in part through an array of emergency Fed lending programs.

The Fed's likely decision this week to taper its bond purchases comes as high inflation is bedeviling the U.S. economy for much longer than Powell and many other officials initially expected. Healthy spending demand from consumers has run up against clogged ports, shut-down factories and labor shortages that have forced up prices for autos, furniture, food, building materials, and household products.

On Friday, the government said prices surged 4.4% in September from a year earlier — the fastest 12-month increase since 1991. There was, however, one sign that inflation might be ebbing: Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, prices ticked up just 0.2% from August to September. That was down a tenth from the previous month's increase and far below the 0.6% jump in May.

Still, wages and salaries soared in the July-September period by the most in at least 20 years, according to a separate report Friday. That suggests that workers are increasingly able to compel higher pay from businesses that are desperate to fill a near-record number of open jobs. Large pay increases can drive up inflation if companies raise prices to cover their higher costs.

While inflation is running hot, the job market isn't back to full strength. The unemployment rate was 4.8% in September, above its pre-pandemic level of 3.5%. And roughly 5 million fewer people have jobs now than did before the pandemic. Many Americans have yet to come off the sidelines to look for work, some of them because they still fear the virus or can't find or afford child care, others because they have decided to retire early.

Powell has said that he would like the job market to show further improvement before the Fed begins to raise its key short-term rate. Economists expect him to use the news conference that follows the Fed meeting Wednesday to stress, as he has before, that the start of tapering of the Fed's bond purchases doesn't mean a rate hike is near.

"I do think it's time to taper, and I don't think it's time to raise rates," he said about a week ago.

Minutes from the Fed's last meeting indicate that the central bank will likely reduce its monthly purchases of Treasury and mortgage bonds by \$15 billion a month. By tapering the bond purchases that quickly, the Fed would have the flexibility to raise rates by the second half of 2022.

That doesn't mean it will. At its last meeting, about half the Fed's policymakers forecast that the first rate hike would be in late 2022, with the other half projecting 2023 or later. The timing of any rate hike

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will depend, though, on whether inflation is still high, and whether the Fed thinks the job market is back at full health.

Earlier in the pandemic, Powell had spoken optimistically about helping restore the unemployment rate get to its pre-COVID level, when it reached a 50-year low of 3.5%. More recently, though, he and other officials have expressed doubts about whether the job market can recover that fully.

It's far from clear whether or when the several million Americans who have left the labor force will return. Among the newly jobless are those who live or work in places, such as the downtowns of major urban centers, where jobs may never fully return. If many people have indeed dropped out of the job market for good, the Fed might decide it can raise rates sooner than it otherwise would.

"They have to be thinking now that the labor force has changed in a structural way," said Steve Friedman, an economist at asset manager Mackay Shields and a former senior staffer at the New York Fed.

Yet the risk is that the Fed might end up raising rates too soon. Supply bottlenecks may loosen in the coming months. If the Fed were to raise rates at the same time, it could depress spending and weaken the economy just as its supply problems are healing.

"We could easily find that demand is damping just as supply is increasing," Randal Quarles, a member of the Fed's Board of Governors, said in a recent speech. "In the worst case, we could depress the incentives for supply to return, leading to an extended period of sluggish activity."

Women of color growing force as mom influencers

By ASTRID GALVAN Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Kisha Gulley was once kicked out of a Facebook group for mothers with autistic children after a contentious debate she felt was racial. Over and over, she clashed with the white-dominated groups she'd sought out for support as a new mom.

So Gulley, who is Afro Latina, started her own parenting blog and social media accounts. It's now a source of income for her.

The multibillion-dollar world of sleep training guides, toddler activity ideas, breastfeeding tips and all things parenting has traditionally been overwhelmingly white. Parenting book jackets feature mostly white faces. The so-called mom influencers that brands choose to advertise their products have, until recently, also been mostly white.

This has left a hole for women of color — especially new moms — who struggle to find culturally relevant parenting advice and products.

Increasingly, they're taking matters into their own hands.

"If I can't find it, that's when we have to start creating that for ourselves. I knew I couldn't be the only person that had these questions," said Gulley, who lives in Phoenix.

When she learned her firstborn son was autistic, Gulley dove deeply into research, digging for any resources that might help her family. And even though there was a lot of information out there, there were small but significant questions that many experts couldn't answer.

How, for example, could she comb through her son's thickly-textured hair without triggering his sensory issues? What's a good sunscreen to use on dark skin that doesn't leave white residue?

It was a frustrating time for her that climaxed in the Facebook group when she felt that several white women were dismissive and rude to a Black mom who had sought advice about how to talk to her family about her child's autism diagnosis. The women didn't grasp that in some communities of color, older generations can be apprehensive about autism and tend to think issues come down to behavior and discipline. Gulley defended the mom, and was kicked out of the group.

She grew her own social media presence soon after, and now makes a living from it, earning more now than she did in her 15 years as a flight attendant, she said.

For Stacey Ferguson, the need for diverse parenting voices has been top of mind for many years. She struggled to find online forums and communities that resonated with her experiences as a Black mother.

Ferguson, a lawyer by training who is now a business owner, founded Blogalicious, an organization and

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annual conference that helped women of color monetize and grow their blogs, 12 years ago.

The first Blogalicious conference drew 177 people; by the time Ferguson decided to shut them down in 2017, 500 people attended each year.

"There really was like this feeling of magic in the room. And what we were really surprised about was that a lot of brands were really interested to come and meet our community," Ferguson said.

Over the years, mommy bloggers have evolved into Instagram influencers. Carefully curated images accompany posts with tips on how to get a baby to sleep or teach them to feed themselves. Often, influencers advertise products they say moms might find helpful.

The trend was started mostly by white women and the brands that sought them out. Ferguson says the landscape is much more diverse now, and brands are more intentional about reaching a diverse range of parents.

But a problem persists. Marketing budgets are much more limited for multicultural targets than for general advertising, Ferguson said. Traditionally, white women have been paid to market to general audiences. That means a white mom could earn much more money marketing to an audience of all ethnicities and races than a woman who markets specifically to, say, Latina moms.

"It's still that archaic way of looking at marketing," Ferguson said. "The brands and the agencies that understand (the need to diversify) are making progress. The issue is that there's still so many that are behind."

There's no consensus on just how much brands and companies spend on advertising or sponsoring through mom influencers, but several marketing experts said it's in the billions each year.

Brands are just now catching up to the Latino and Black American markets, said Larry Chiagouris, a professor of marketing at Lubin School of Business at Pace University.

Chiagouris said the parenting influencer world has been dominated by white women because they've been the majority in the past, but that he's increasingly seeing Latinas, Black and Asian American women joining the sphere.

"It's like a chicken and an egg situation. Marketers want to spend money on Latino influencers, but you have to find them. There's not as many as you might think," Chiagouris said.

Jacqueline Hernandez Lewis of Long Island, New York, began blogging nine years ago as a law student and military wife seeking a community.

After she became a mom, Hernandez Lewis, 33, wanted to find a space where Latinas and other moms of color felt empowered. When she went back to work after her first child, she struggled to adapt and wanted to find a way to spend more time at home while still earning income. She now has three little ones.

Hernandez Lewis earned \$25 from her first sponsored post. Now, she earns anywhere between \$700 to \$3,000 per post, while also working full time.

Her recent Instagram posts feature ads for a line of Spanish-language books being republished by Disney Books; for a popular brand of baby wipes; and for Poise, which makes pads that postpartum women can use.

For Hernandez Lewis, it's important that women of color have an online community and are represented, but it's just as crucial that they reap the rewards of their buying power.

"We deserve to be represented on the business side. There's brands that haven't been as inclusive as I'd hoped, but a lot of brands are shifting and becoming more inclusive," Hernandez Lewis said.

Galván covers issues impacting Latinos in the U.S. for the AP's Race and Ethnicity team. Follow her on Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/astridgalvan>

Barclays CEO steps down over Epstein report by UK regulators

LONDON (AP) — The chief executive of British bank Barclays stepped down Monday following a report by United Kingdom regulators into his past links with the late financier and sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Jes Staley has previously said he "deeply regrets" his relationship with Epstein, who killed himself at a

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federal jail in New York in August 2019 while awaiting a sex trafficking trial. There is no suggestion that the 64-year-old Staley knew anything about Epstein's alleged crimes.

Staley said he will contest regulators' preliminary conclusions, which were shared with him and the bank Friday. The report by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority examined the way Staley characterized his relationship with Epstein to Barclays when he was Epstein's private banker in his previous job at U.S. investment bank J.P. Morgan.

Details of the report have not been released, and both regulators have refused to comment.

Barclays said in a statement Monday that the bank and Staley agreed he would resign in light of regulators' preliminary findings and Staley's decision to fight them.

The bank noted that the investigation "makes no findings" that Staley saw or knew about any of Epstein's alleged crimes, which it said was "the central question" behind its decision to back its chief executive after Epstein was arrested in 2019. It wouldn't comment further.

Staley said his last contact with Epstein was in fall 2015, when he and his wife sailed to Epstein's private island for lunch. That trip occurred shortly before he joined Barclays. He said he had no contact with Epstein once he joined the bank in December 2015.

C.S. Venkatakrishnan, head of global markets for the bank, will take over as chief executive. Barclays said succession planning has been in place for some time, and he had been identified as the preferred candidate more than a year ago.

Shares in Barclays fell 2% following the announcement, as Staley had been widely credited with doing a good job at the bank.

Barclays credited him for running the company with "commitment and skill," helping transform operations and improve its results. It added that the regulatory process still has to run its course and that "it is not appropriate" for the bank to comment further on the preliminary conclusions.

Analysts said that Barclays had to act because of the potential damage to its reputation.

"Barclays is right to pull the plug now," said Neil Wilson, chief market analyst at Markets.com. "It probably could have done it earlier."

The bank said Staley will get a 2.5 million pound (\$3.5 million) payout and receive other benefits for a year. He also may be eligible to receive repatriation costs to the U.S. and could receive more cash.

COVID-19's global death toll tops 5 million in under 2 years

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

The global death toll from COVID-19 topped 5 million on Monday, less than two years into a crisis that has not only devastated poor countries but also humbled wealthy ones with first-rate health care systems.

Together, the United States, the European Union, Britain and Brazil — all upper-middle- or high-income countries — account for one-eighth of the world's population but nearly half of all reported deaths. The U.S. alone has recorded over 745,000 lives lost, more than any other nation.

"This is a defining moment in our lifetime," said Dr. Albert Ko, an infectious disease specialist at the Yale School of Public Health. "What do we have to do to protect ourselves so we don't get to another 5 million?"

The death toll, as tallied by Johns Hopkins University, is about equal to the populations of Los Angeles and San Francisco combined. It rivals the number of people killed in battles among nations since 1950, according to estimates from the Peace Research Institute Oslo. Globally, COVID-19 is now the third leading cause of death, after heart disease and stroke.

The staggering figure is almost certainly an undercount because of limited testing and people dying at home without medical attention, especially in poor parts of the world, such as India.

Hot spots have shifted over the 22 months since the outbreak began, turning different places on the world map red. Now, the virus is pummeling Russia, Ukraine and other parts of Eastern Europe, especially where rumors, misinformation and distrust in government have hobbled vaccination efforts. In Ukraine, only 17% of the adult population is fully vaccinated; in Armenia, only 7%.

"What's uniquely different about this pandemic is it hit hardest the high-resource countries," said Dr. Wa-

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faa El-Sadr, director of ICAP, a global health center at Columbia University. "That's the irony of COVID-19."

Wealthier nations with longer life expectancies have larger proportions of older people, cancer survivors and nursing home residents, all of whom are especially vulnerable to COVID-19, El-Sadr noted. Poorer countries tend to have larger shares of children, teens and young adults, who are less likely to fall seriously ill from the coronavirus.

India, despite its terrifying delta surge that peaked in early May, now has a much lower reported daily death rate than wealthier Russia, the U.S. or Britain, though there is uncertainty around its figures.

The seeming disconnect between wealth and health is a paradox that disease experts will be pondering for years. But the pattern that is seen on the grand scale, when nations are compared, is different when examined at closer range. Within each wealthy country, when deaths and infections are mapped, poorer neighborhoods are hit hardest.

In the U.S., for example, COVID-19 has taken an outsize toll on Black and Hispanic people, who are more likely than white people to live in poverty and have less access to health care.

"When we get out our microscopes, we see that within countries, the most vulnerable have suffered most," Ko said.

Wealth has also played a role in the global vaccination drive, with rich countries accused of locking up supplies. The U.S. and others are already dispensing booster shots at a time when millions across Africa haven't received a single dose, though the rich countries are also shipping hundreds of millions of shots to the rest of the world.

Africa remains the world's least vaccinated region, with just 5% of the population of 1.3 billion people fully covered.

"This devastating milestone reminds us that we are failing much of the world," U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said in a written statement. "This is a global shame."

In Kampala, Uganda, Cissy Kagaba lost her 62-year-old mother on Christmas Day and her 76-year-old father days later.

"Christmas will never be the same for me," said Kagaba, an anti-corruption activist in the East African country that has been through multiple lockdowns against the virus and where a curfew remains in place.

The pandemic has united the globe in grief and pushed survivors to the breaking point.

"Who else is there now? The responsibility is on me. COVID has changed my life," said 32-year-old Reena Kesarwani, a mother of two boys, who was left to manage her late husband's modest hardware store in a village in India.

Her husband, Anand Babu Kesarwani, died at 38 during India's crushing coronavirus surge earlier this year. It overwhelmed one of the most chronically underfunded public health systems in the world and killed tens of thousands as hospitals ran out of oxygen and medicine.

In Bergamo, Italy, once the site of the West's first deadly wave, 51-year-old Fabrizio Fianza was deprived of a final farewell as his 86-year-old father lay dying in the hospital. He is still trying to come to terms with the loss more than a year later.

"For the last month, I never saw him," Fianza said during a visit to his father's grave. "It was the worst moment. But coming here every week, helps me."

Today, 92% of Bergamo's eligible population have had at least one shot, the highest vaccination rate in Italy. The chief of medicine at Pope John XXIII Hospital, Dr. Stefano Faggioli, said he believes that's a clear result of the city's collective trauma, when the wail of ambulances was constant.

In Lake City, Florida, LaTasha Graham, 38, still gets mail almost daily for her 17-year-old daughter, Jo'Keria, who died of COVID-19 in August, days before starting her senior year of high school. The teen, who was buried in her cap and gown, wanted to be a trauma surgeon.

"I know that she would have made it. I know that she would have been where she wanted to go," her mother said.

In Rio de Janeiro, Erika Machado scanned the list of names engraved on a long, undulating sculpture of oxidized steel that stands in Penitencia cemetery as an homage to some of Brazil's COVID-19 victims. Then she found him: Wagner Machado, her father.

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"My dad was the love of my life, my best friend," said Machado, 40, a saleswoman who traveled from Sao Paulo to see her father's name. "He was everything to me."

AP journalists Rajesh Kumar Singh in Chhitpalgarh, India; Cara Anna in Nairobi, Kenya; Rodney Muhumuza in Kampala, Uganda; Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Colleen Barry in Bergamo, Italy; and Diane Jeantet in Rio de Janeiro contributed.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 2, the 306th day of 2021. There are 59 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 2, 2000, American astronaut Bill Shepherd and two Russian cosmonauts, Yuri Gidzenko (gihd-ZEENG'-koh) and Sergei Krikalev (SUR'-gay KREE'-kuh-lev), became the first residents of the international space station.

On this date:

In 1783, General George Washington issued his Farewell Address to the Army near Princeton, New Jersey.

In 1889, North Dakota and South Dakota became the 39th and 40th states with the signing of proclamations by President Benjamin Harrison.

In 1917, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issued a declaration expressing support for a "national home" for the Jews in Palestine.

In 1920, white mobs rampaged through the Florida citrus town of Ocoee, setting fire to Black-owned homes and businesses, after a Black man, Mose Norman, showed up at the polls to vote on Election Day; some historians estimate as many as 60 people were killed.

In 1947, Howard Hughes piloted his huge wooden flying boat, the Hughes H-4 Hercules (derisively dubbed the "Spruce Goose" by detractors), on its only flight, which lasted about a minute over Long Beach Harbor in California.

In 1963, South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem (noh ding ZEE'-em) was assassinated in a military coup.

In 1976, former Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter became the first candidate from the Deep South since the Civil War to be elected president as he defeated incumbent Gerald R. Ford.

In 1994, a jury in Pensacola, Florida, convicted Paul Hill of murder for the shotgun slayings of an abortion provider and his escort; Hill was executed in September 2003.

In 2003, in Iraq, insurgents shot down a Chinook helicopter carrying dozens of U.S. soldiers, killing 16. In Durham, New Hampshire, V. Gene Robinson was consecrated as the first openly gay bishop in the Episcopal Church.

In 2004, President George W. Bush was elected to a second term as Republicans strengthened their grip on Congress. Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh was slain in Amsterdam after receiving death threats over his movie "Submission," which criticized the treatment of women under Islam.

In 2007, British college student Meredith Kercher, 21, was found slain in her bedroom in Perugia, Italy; her roommate, American Amanda Knox and Knox's Italian boyfriend, Raffaele Sollecito (rah-fy-EHL'-ay soh-LEH'-chee-toh), were convicted of killing Kercher, but both were later exonerated. (Rudy Guede (GAY'-day), a petty criminal who was convicted separately in the case, is serving a 16-year sentence.)

In 2010, Republicans won control of the House of Representatives, picking up 63 seats in midterm elections, while Democrats retained a majority in the Senate; Republican governors outnumbered Democrats after gaining six states. Californians rejected a ballot measure that would have made their state the first to legalize marijuana for recreational use.

Ten years ago: The Congressional Gold Medal was awarded to some 19,000 Japanese-Americans who'd served in the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence

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Five years ago: Ending a championship drought that had lasted since 1908, the Chicago Cubs won the World Series, defeating the Cleveland Indians 8-7 in extra innings. In Iowa, Des Moines Police Sgt. Anthony Bemino and Urbandale Officer Justin Martin were shot and killed while sitting in their patrol cars in separate attacks about 2 miles apart; suspect Scott Michael Greene later pleaded guilty to two counts of first-degree murder and was sentenced to consecutive life prison terms. Garth Brooks was named entertainer of the year at the Country Music Association Awards.

One year ago: In the closing hours of the presidential campaign, President Donald Trump charged across the nation delivering an incendiary but false allegation that the election was rigged, while Democrat Joe Biden pushed to claim states that were once seen as safely Republican. Even as Trump insisted that the nation was "rounding the turn" on the coronavirus, Dr. Deborah Birx, the coordinator of the White House coronavirus task force, broke with the president and joined a chorus of Trump administration scientists sounding alarm about a spike in infections.

Today's Birthdays: Political commentator Patrick Buchanan is 83. Actor Stefanie Powers is 79. Country-rock singer-songwriter J.D. Souther is 76. Actor Kate Linder is 74. Rock musician Carter Beauford (The Dave Matthews Band) is 63. Actor Peter Mullan is 62. Singer-songwriter k.d. lang is 60. Rock musician Bobby Dall (Poison) is 58. Actor Jenny Robertson ("Bull Durham") is 58. Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage is 57. Actor Lauren Velez is 57. Actor Sean Kanan is 55. Actor David Schwimmer is 55. Christian/jazz singer Alvin Chea (Take 6) is 54. Jazz singer Kurt Elling is 54. Former Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker is 54. Rock musician Fieldy is 52. Actor Meta Golding is 50. Rock singer-musician John Hampson (Nine Days) is 50. Actor Marisol Nichols is 50. Rapper Nelly is 47. Actor Danny Cooksey is 46. Rock musician Chris Walla is 46. Actor Reshma Shetty is 44. TV personality Karamo Brown ("Queer Eye," "Dancing With the Stars") is 41. Country singer Erika Jo is 35. Actor-singer Kendall Schmidt is 31.