

Groton Daily Independent

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“Schedule kindness in your day.
Watch how small acts of kindness can
change your mood, bring someone else joy,
and give both of you a positive gift.”

Germany Kent

Wednesday, May 4

Senior Menu: Chicken Tetrizzini, peas, honey fruit salad, vanilla pudding, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancake bites.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, tater tots.

Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Noon: Chamber Meeting at City Hall

5 p.m.: Emmanuel Sarah Circle

6 p.m.: Emmanuel Confirmation

Thursday, May 5 - National Day of Prayer

Senior Menu: Beef tips in gravy over noodles, peas, lettuce salad, fruit, whole wheat bread

School Breakfast: Eggs and sausage.

School Lunch: Taco burgers, spudsters

10 a.m.: Girls Golf at Moccasin Creek CC

2 p.m.: Emmanuel Nigeria Circle

7 p.m.: High School Spring Concert and Awards Night

Friday, May 6

Senior Menu: Bratwurst with bun, mashed potatoes, sauerkraut, green beans, fruit.

School Breakfast: Cinnamon roll bake.

School Lunch: Pizza, green beans.

3 p.m.: Track Meet at Sisseton

6 p.m.: FFA Banquet at GHS Gym.



HELP WANTED!

Groton Store

**Part time cashier & part time deli.
Deli must be 18 years of age or older.
Apply at Ken's in Groton.**

Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

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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Girls sprint medley relay team sprint to first place at Milbank

The Groton Area girls sprint medley relay team took first place at the Milbank Invitational Track Meet held Tuesday.

There were several taking second and they were the boys 3200m relay team, the girls 800m relay team and Aspen Johnson in the long jump and the triple jump. Those that took third place were the boys and girls 400m relay teams, Jackson Cogley in the high jump and the girls 3200m relay team.

Boy's Division

The boys placed seventh in a field of 15 teams with Milbank winning the team title with 176.5 points followed by Warner with 88.5, Webster Area 82.5, Aberdeen Roncalli 69, Clark/Willow Lake 60.5, Hamlin 50, Groton Area 47, Great Plains Lutheran 28, Wheaton/Herman-Norcross 27.5, Florence/Henry 26, Tri-State 22, Sisseton 21.5, Dakota Hills 16.5, Britton-Hecla 13.5, Tiospa Zina 6, Langford Area 6.

100 Meters: 16. Korbin Kucker, 12.16; 25. Christian Ehresmann, 12.74; 31. Jayden Zak, 12.93

200 Meters: 4. Andrew Marzahn, 23.44 SR; 22. Korbin Kucker, 25.28; 27. Jayden Zak, 26.30; 28. Colby Dunker, 26.34

400 Meters: 4. Andrew Marzahn, 53.87

800 Meters: 11. Tristan McGannon, 2:23.09; 17. Braxton Imrie, 2:34.96

110m Hurdles - 39": 7. Caden McInerney, 20.45

300m Hurdles - 36": 11. Colby Dunker, 49.62; 14. Caden McInerney, 50.84

4x100 Relay: 3. Groton Area (Kaden Kurtz, Keegan Tracy, Lane Tietz, Teylor Diegel), 46.9

4x200 Relay: 5. Groton Area (Kaden Kurtz, Keegan Tracy, Andrew Marzahn, Teylor Diegel), 1:35.84

4x400 Relay: 6. Groton Area (Keegan Tracy, Andrew Marzahn, Kaden Kurtz, Teylor Diegel), 3:45.06

4x800 Relay: 2. Groton Area (Cole Simon, Keegan Tracy, Lane Tietz, Jacob Lewandowski), 8:58.02

SMR 200-200-400-800m - [2-2-4-8]: 7. Groton Area (Lane Tietz, Korbin Kucker, Christian Ehresmann, Tristan McGannon), 4:13.45

Shot Put - 12lb: 8. Holden Sippel, 38-11.00; 12. Caleb Hanten, 36-04.50; 15. Kaleb Antonsen, 34-11.50; 38. Christian Ehresmann, 27-05.00

Discus - 1.6kg: 13. Holden Sippel, 96-10; 14. Caleb Hanten, 93-08; 17. Logan Ringgenberg, 86-10

High Jump: 3. Jackson Cogley, 5-05.00

Long Jump: 4. Jacob Zak, 18-08.50; 15. Jackson Cogley, 17-02.50; 29. Tate Larson, 15-00.75

Triple Jump: 10. Jackson Cogley, 35-05.75; 11. Jacob Zak, 35-05.25; 14. Tristan McGannon, 32-09.75

Girl's Division

The girls placed fourth in a field of 14 teams. Milbank won the team title with 161 points followed by Aberdeen Roncalli with 103.5, Great Plains Lutheran with 84, Groton Area 56, Florence/Henry 55, Hamlin 51, Webster Area 46.5, Warner 38, Clark/Willow Lake 36, Britton-Hecla 29, Dakota Hills 29, Wheaton/Herman-Norcross 25, Sisseton 21 and Tri-State 6.

100 Meters: 18. Kayla Lehr, 14.61; 19. Karsyn Jangula, 14.69; 30. Riley Leicht, 15.65

200 Meters: 14. Kayla Lehr, 30.13; 15. Karsyn Jangula, 30.15; 17. Brooklyn Hanson, 30.63; 41. Riley Leicht, 38.69

400 Meters: 10. Kella Tracy, 1:10.07; 12. Brooklyn Hanson, 1:10.42; 23. Sydney Leicht, 1:16.34

4x100 Relay: 3. Groton Area (Jerica Locke, Kennedy Hanson, Aspen Johnson, Laila Roberts), 54.3

4x200 Relay: 2. Groton Area (Jerica Locke, Kella Tracy, Kennedy Hanson, Laila Roberts), 1:54.34

4x400 Relay: 4. Groton Area (Jerica Locke, Kella Tracy, Kennedy Hanson, Laila Roberts), 4:28.1

4x800 Relay: 3. Groton Area (Faith Traphagen, Taryn Traphagen, Emerlee Jones, Rylee Dunker), 10:50.45

SMR 200-200-400-800m - [2-2-4-8]: 1. Groton Area (Laila Roberts, Kella Tracy, Jerica Locke, Faith Traphagen), 4:41.56

Shot Put - 4kg: 8. Maddie Bjerke, 29-05.50; 15. Faith Fliehs, 26-08.00; 24. Emma Kutter, 24-05.50

Discus - 1kg: 13. Maddie Bjerke, 75-03; 25. Faith Fliehs, 64-01; 36. Emma Schinkel, 54-05

High Jump: 5. Anna Fjeldheim, 4-05.00; 22. Emilie Thurston, 3-11.00 SR

Long Jump: 2. Aspen Johnson, 14-08.25; 16. Anna Fjeldheim, 13-04.50; 17. Trista Keith, 13-01.00

Triple Jump: 2. Aspen Johnson, 31-05.25; 13. Emerlee Jones, 28-01.75; 20. Anna Fjeldheim, 26-10.00

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Weber Landscaping Greenhouse

204 N State St., Groton

Opening
for the
season
on Friday,
May 6th!



New products!
New Planters!



We have tons
of hanging
baskets,
vegetables,
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Livingston
garden seeds!!!!

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Look for the green flags! Questions? Call 605-380-6587

THE PANTRY



Opening May 9th at the Groton Community Center

Mondays: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tuesdays: 4 p.m. to 8 p.m

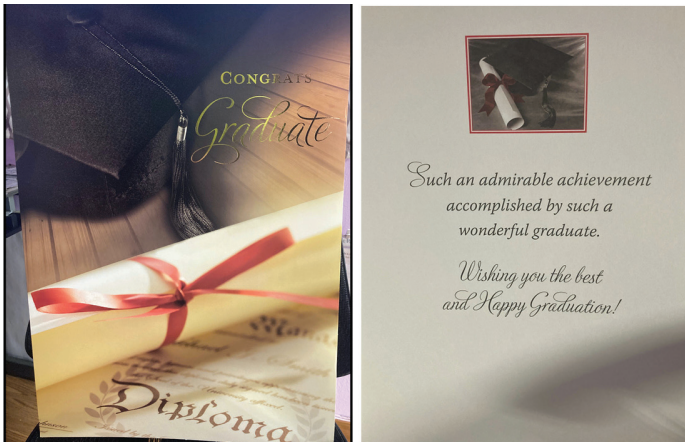
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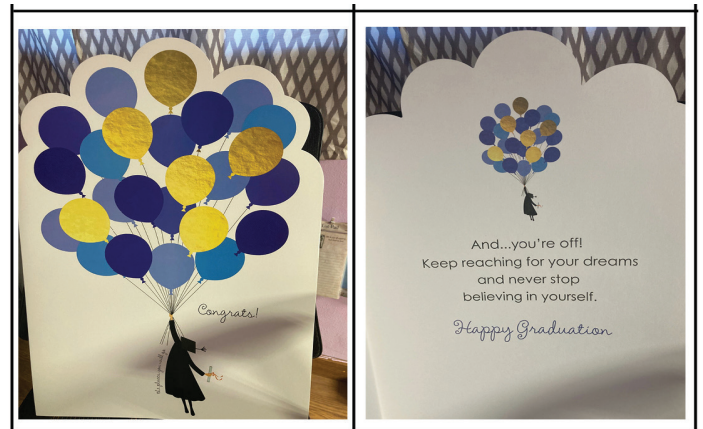
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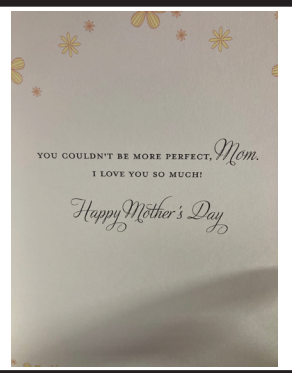
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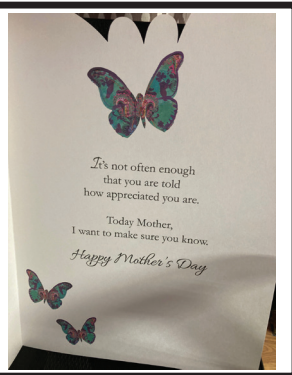
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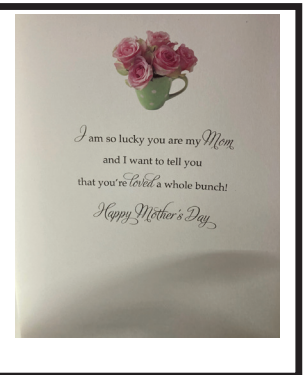
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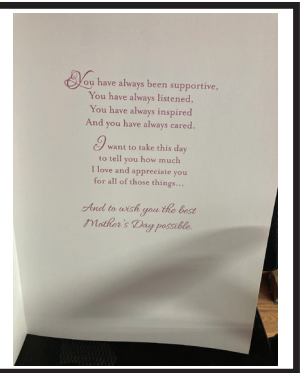
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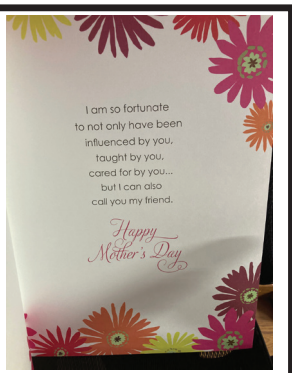
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- NEWS
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Order your Graduation Balloons while we have a good supply!



#1 - \$5



#2 - \$5



#3 - \$6



#4 - \$10 - 45"



#5 - \$5



#6 - \$6



\$3.50 - 9" on a stick



#7 - \$10 - 36"



#8 - \$5



#9 - \$5



#10 - \$5



#11 - \$5



#12 - \$5



#13 - \$8 35"



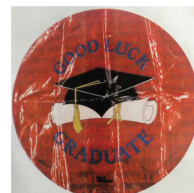
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#18 - \$5



#19 - \$5



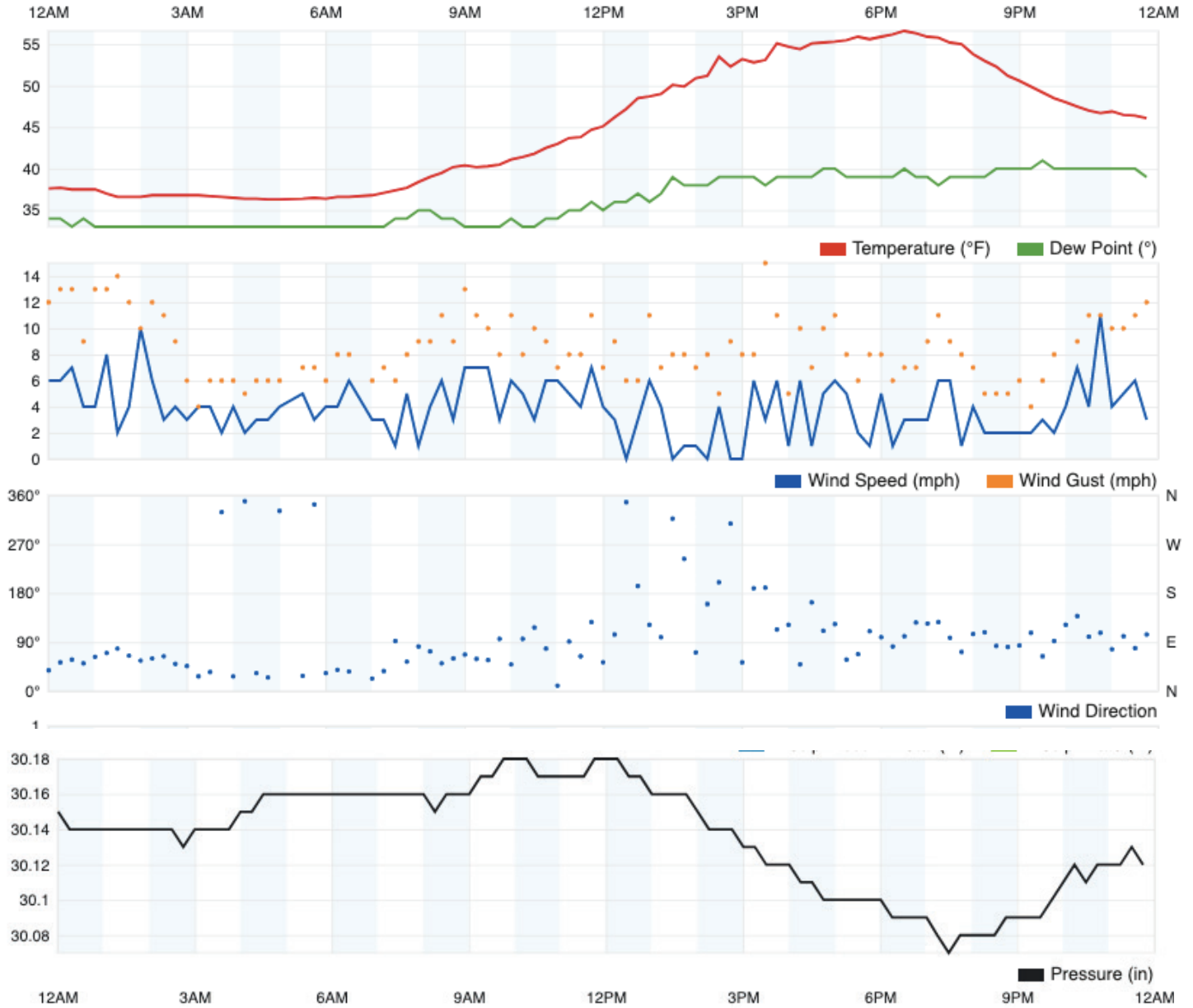
#20 - \$5

We have many other balloons available as well. We now offer locker pickup in the laundromat so you can pick up your order ANY TIME once the order is completed!

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

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Today



Increasing
Clouds

High: 59 °F

Tonight



Decreasing
Clouds

Low: 41 °F

Thursday



Partly Sunny

High: 63 °F

Thursday
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 43 °F

Friday

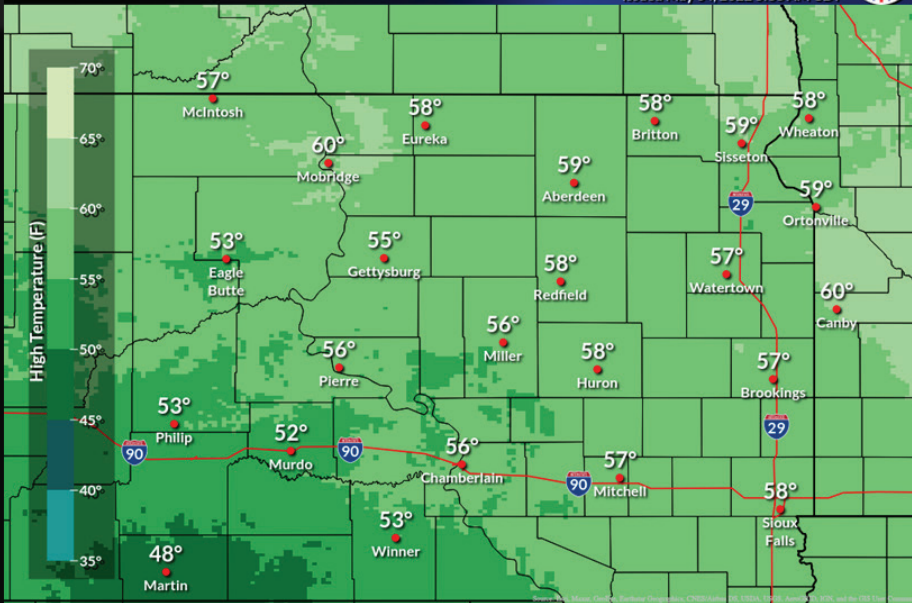


Mostly Sunny

High: 66 °F

Today's High Temperature Forecast

Weather Forecast Office
Aberdeen, SD
Issued May 04, 2022 5:33 AM CDT



NWSAberdeen

www.weather.gov/abr

Today

- Highs in the 50s
- Cloudy
- Chance of light rain over mainly south central South Dakota

Highs in the 50s under a cloudy sky, with a chance of light rain over mainly south central South Dakota.

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Today in Weather History

May 4, 1964: A tornado touched down southwest of Kadoka causing \$25,000 in damage.

1774: Snow was reported in the Williamsburg Gazette to have fallen in Dumfries, Virginia. George Washington's weather diary logged at Mount Vernon that it was a cold day with spits of snow and a hard wind from the northwest. Thomas Jefferson near Charlottesville recorded that the Blue Ridge Mountains was covered with snow. The late snow and frost killed most of the fruit crop in the northern part of the state. It also snowed north across Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.

1812 - A storm produced snow from Philadelphia to Maine. A foot of snow fell near Keene NH, and in Massachusetts, nine inches fell at Waltham, located near Boston. (David Ludlum)

1917 - A late season snowstorm in northwest Texas produced up to eight inches of snow in Potter County and Armstrong County. (David Ludlum)

1922: The first of two tornadoes that formed over Austin, Texas was called the "western cloud." It was more visible, but caused much less damage than the "eastern cloud."

1977 - A tornado 500 yards in width struck Pleasant Hill, MO, severely damaging the high school and grade school. Only minor injuries were reported among the more than 1000 teachers and students due to excellent warnings and prior tornado drills. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the southeastern U.S., with South Carolina hardest hit. Thunderstorm winds toppled trees seventy feet high in Spartanburg County SC, and knocked homes off their foundations near Bishopville SC. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced large hail in North Carolina, but brought welcome rains to much of the rest of the eastern U.S. Residents of New England finally saw sunshine after about a week of clouds and rain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Southern Plains Region and the Lower Mississippi Valley. Thunderstorms spawned fifteen tornadoes, and there were 340 reports of large hail and damaging winds. Hail three inches in diameter, and 9.39 inches of rain, resulted in more than 130 million dollars damage at Monroe LA. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 100 mph at Epps LA and Fort Worth TX. A thunderstorm north of Mineral Wells TX produced high winds which unroofed a nightclub, turning it into a "topless club." (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Lower Ohio Valley to Virginia and the Carolinas. A tornado at Augusta Springs VA killed two people and injured ten others, and another tornado caused 1.7 million dollars damage at Colonial Heights VA. Temperatures soared into the 90s in northern California. The high of 98 degrees in downtown Sacramento was their hottest reading of record for so early in the season. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2003: The week of May 4th through the 10th was one of the busiest weeks for tornadoes in U.S. history. On this date through the 5th, the deadliest outbreak of severe weather since May 1999 produced 84 tornadoes, large hail and damaging winds across eight states. Several thunderstorms became tornadic with a total of five distinct tornado touchdowns in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Two of the tornadoes received a rating of F4, two a rating of F2, and the last was rated an F1. Total damage exceeded 144 million dollars. Several of the tornadoes tracked long distances ranging from 15 to 80 miles. More than 3000 homes and businesses were destroyed. At least 38 people were killed in Kansas, Missouri, and Tennessee.

2007: A devastating EF5 twister demolishes nearly every structure in Greensburg around 9:30 pm (CDT) and kills ten. The mammoth wedge tornado cuts a swath 1.7 miles (2.7 km) wide and 22 miles (35 km) long across the Kansas landscape. It is the worst single tornado to touch down in the US in eight years.

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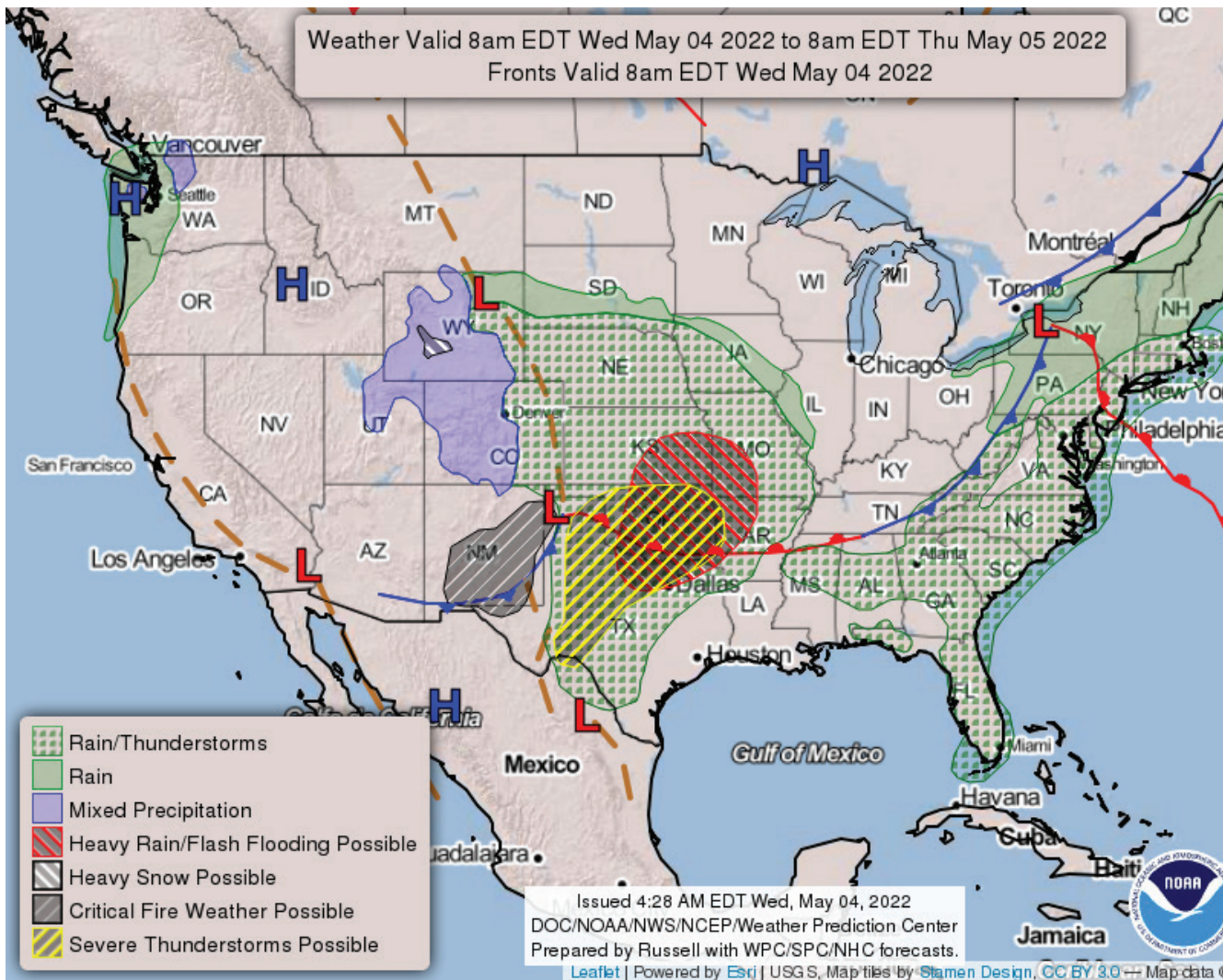
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 57 °F at 6:26 PM
Low Temp: 36 °F at 4:55 AM
Wind: 15 mph at 3:23 PM
Precip: 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 30 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 98 in 1926
Record Low: 20 in 2005
Average High: 66°F
Average Low: 39°F
Average Precip in May.: 0.44
Precip to date in May.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 4.41
Precip Year to Date: 6.50
Sunset Tonight: 8:44:18 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:12:35 AM



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Living And Laughing

"The way things are in this world, I'm certain that your God never laughs," said a skeptic.

"Well, I'm not sure if He laughs or not. But I am sure of one thing: He certainly created me so that I can laugh," said his friend with a smile.

Some people think that tears and trials, grunts and groans are the centerpieces of the Christian life. The real fact is that tears and trials, grunts and groans are more associated with sin than they are with salvation. And, to emphasize that fact, God's Word promises us that one day, "He will wipe away all tears" from the eyes of the believer - not the unsaved.

A physician once said that "he who laughs, lasts." People who laugh live longer than those who don't laugh. Few people realize that their health varies according to the amount of laughter in their lives. Would it not be wonderful if each time we felt discouraged we could go to the pharmacy and find an "over-the-counter" bottle that contained a tablet to make us laugh?

Not only are laughter and health related, but laughter and holiness are related. When the Lord brought His exiles back to Jerusalem, a Psalmist wrote, "Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them.'"

If there are people who have a reason to laugh and sing songs of joy, it is Christians. Our sins are forgiven, and we are released from the fear and penalty of death. We have the promise of an eternal home with the Creator of the universe and His beloved Son, Jesus, who redeemed us. And, we have the power and presence of the Holy Spirit to guide, guard and give us peace that passes all understanding.

What great reasons to laugh and sing songs of joy!

Prayer: It's difficult to understand, Lord, why there are so many days we fail to laugh and rejoice. Bring us all some humor today! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." Psalm 126:2

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2022 Community Events

- 01/30/2022 84th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
01/30/2022 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am – 1pm, Groton Community Center, 109 N 3rd St, Groton,
04/07/2022 Groton CDE
04/09/2022 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
04/09/2022 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
04/23/2022 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/24/2022 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/07/2022 Lions Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
St John's Lutheran Church VBS 9-11am
05/30/2022 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
Transit Fundraiser at the Community Center 4-7pm (Thursday Mid-June)
06/17/2022 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 12pm Start
06/18/2022 Groton Triathlon
Ladies Invitational at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration 10am Start
07/04/2022 Firecracker Couples Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start
(4th of July)
07/10/2022 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar 11am-1pm at the Groton Legion
Baseball Tourney
07/21/2022 Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
How can we... "Love Groton"? United Methodist Church 9:30am
Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20
Golf Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course 11a-1pm
08/05/2022 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
08/12/2022 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
United Methodist Church VBS 5-8pm
Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day 4-5pm GHS Parking Lot
09/10/2022 Lions Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3:30-5pm
09/11/2022 Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 12pm
Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
10/14/2022 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am (2nd Friday in October)
10/01/2022 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/31/2022 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
10/31/2022 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/12/2022 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
11/24/2022 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
12/03/2022 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party at Olive Grove Golf Course
Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm
01/29/2023 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

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- Colored \$42.60/6 months
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paypal.me/paperpaul



News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Tuesday:

Mega Millions

15-19-27-35-57, Mega Ball: 17, Megaplier: 2

(fifteen, nineteen, twenty-seven, thirty-five, fifty-seven; Mega Ball: seventeen; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$57 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$37 million

2nd Medicaid expansion group submits petition for ballot

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A second group attempting to expand Medicaid eligibility in South Dakota submitted petition signatures to the secretary of state Tuesday in a bid to place a proposed law on the November ballot and create a rival to a proposed constitutional amendment.

Dakotans for Health said it had submitted over 23,000 signatures to ask voters to approve a law requiring Medicaid health insurance to be made available to people who live below 133% of the federal poverty level, which is currently about \$18,000 for an individual or \$37,000 for a family of four.

State law requires initiated measures to submit nearly 17,000 signatures from South Dakota registered voters, and the secretary of state's office will take a random sample of the petition signatures to evaluate whether the campaign has collected enough valid signatures.

However, a proposed constitutional amendment to expand Medicaid eligibility has already been certified for the November ballot. It is being pushed by South Dakotans Decide Healthcare, which is backed by of many of the state's largest health care groups.

South Dakotans Decide Healthcare campaign manager Zach Marcus said in a statement that "a constitutional amendment is the best way to ensure that South Dakota voters receive what they vote for."

Dakotans for Health had last year attempted to place a constitutional amendment on the ballot, but failed to get enough valid signatures. The group's co-founder Adam Weiland changed tack Tuesday and argued that voters would be more likely to support an initiated law rather than a constitutional amendment.

"We think it is important for the voters of South Dakota to have another choice to expand Medicaid on the November ballot," he said in a statement.

Minnesota prepares to be abortion destination if Roe falls

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Minnesota could become a destination for abortion services for women from other states if the U.S. Supreme Court throws out the landmark Roe v. Wade decision, and the state's abortion providers said Tuesday that they're preparing for the anticipated surge.

That's because abortion would remain legal, at least for now, under a 1995 Minnesota Supreme Court ruling known as Doe v. Gomez, which effectively established a right to abortion under the state constitution, said Laura Hermer, a professor at the Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

Minnesota has some significant restrictions in place, including a 24-hour waiting period, a requirement that minors notify both parents before they can get an abortion, and a requirement that only doctors can perform abortions. But a lawsuit by abortion rights advocates that's due to go to trial next month seeks to remove those barriers. Hermer said it stands a good chance of success.

Minnesota's abortion providers are concerned about meeting demand from nonresidents. But Sarah Stoesz, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood North Central States, said her organization has been

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"fortifying" its delivery systems, including telemedicine, in preparation.

"It is important to underscore that an abortion ban is not an abortion ban for all people," Stoesz said at a news conference. "It is only an abortion ban for those who lack the means to travel to a state where abortion is safe and accessible. And that is one of the true moral outrages of this situation."

Stoesz's unit of Planned Parenthood also includes the Dakotas, Iowa and Nebraska. Abortion is expected to become illegal immediately in the Dakotas if Roe v. Wade is overturned. Meeting the demand will pose a staffing challenge in the short term in states where it remains legal because so many health care workers have quit due to the pandemic, she said.

Dr. Sarah Traxler, the group's medical director, said demand in Minnesota is expected to rise by up to 25%, depending on exactly what the high court rules and what happens in states such as Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska.

Whole Women's Health of Minnesota recently opened a clinic in Bloomington, near the airport. Around 30% of its patients are already from out of state, some from as far away as Texas, said Sean Mehl, associate director of clinical services.

Democratic Gov. Tim Walz vowed in an email to supporters Tuesday that "no abortion ban will ever become law" as long as he's governor. His major GOP challengers all support a ban.

"Governor Walz has said he's going to veto anything we do. The election this fall is crystal clear. A Republican is going to be pro-life and Walz is not," said Scott Fischbach, executive director of Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life.

Minnesota governors also appoint judges, Fischbach noted. Five of the seven justices on the Minnesota Supreme Court were appointed by Democratic governors.

Abortion also will be important in certain legislative races. Fischbach said there's an anti-abortion majority in the GOP-controlled state Senate but that "it's very tight" in the Democratic-controlled House.

On the House floor Tuesday, two anti-abortion amendments offered during a debate over a health and human services bill very narrowly failed on procedural votes. Too few members were willing to overrule the speaker's decision that the amendments were out of order.

SD pot legalization campaign submits signatures for ballot

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Advocates for legalizing recreational marijuana in South Dakota on Tuesday submitted petition signatures to the secretary of state, saying they were confident they had collected enough to place the initiative on the November ballot.

South Dakotans for Better Marijuana Laws, the organization that launched the campaign, has scrambled in recent days to gather the nearly 17,000 signatures of registered South Dakota voters required to get a proposed law on the ballot. Campaign director, Matt Schweich, said the organization has evaluated the petitions and estimates it has at least 19,250 valid signatures.

"We are confident that we are going to qualify for the ballot," he told the Associated Press, as he made his way to Pierre to submit the signed petitions.

The proposed law would allow people 21 years old and over to use and grow pot for personal use. It would place a 1 ounce (28 gram) limit on the amount that people could use or share.

Secretary of State Steve Barnett will take a random sample of the petition signatures to evaluate whether the campaign collected enough. If the measure is certified, its signature count can still be challenged within 30 days.

Marijuana legalization has spurred political fights among South Dakota's dominant Republican party in recent years and tested faith in a form of direct democracy — the ballot measure. A citizen-proposed constitutional amendment — known as Amendment A — to legalize cannabis passed by 54% in 2020, but Gov. Kristi Noem sponsored a lawsuit to challenge it and the state Supreme Court ruled last year that it violated the state Constitution.

Noem has continually decried recreational pot legalization, but Schweich argued that Noem's actions

have only given the campaign energy.

"I think what happened to Amendment A has angered many voters in this state, even those who are not passionate about cannabis reform," he said.

South Dakota readies for state-lines abortion access fight

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's anti-abortion lawmakers and the state's only abortion provider are poised to turn their fight to accessing abortion over state lines if the U.S. Supreme Court follows through on a draft opinion that overturns the 1973 Roe v. Wade case that legalized abortion nationwide.

A decision to overrule Roe would trigger a 2005 law that outlaws abortions in the state.

That would not be enough for Gov. Kristi Noem. The Republican governor promised on Twitter late Monday that she would call a special legislative session if Roe is overturned. Noem's spokesman Ian Fury declined to discuss her reasoning, saying only that her tweet "speaks for itself."

However, Republican Rep. Jon Hansen suggested a special session could be used to "bolster" the state's trigger law, including helping "make sure pregnant mothers are protected from being pressured or coerced across state lines to have their babies' lives terminated."

Meanwhile, Planned Parenthood North Central States, which operates the state's only clinic that regularly provides abortions, had been preparing for months by planning how to help abortion seekers travel to states where the procedure is legal.

But Sarah Stoesz, president of the organization, worried that a state-by-state approach would disproportionately endanger some women.

"An abortion ban is not an abortion ban for all people. It is only an abortion ban for those who lack the means to travel to a state where abortion is safe and accessible," she said. "And that is one of the true moral outrages of this situation."

EU leader calls for Russian oil ban in new set of sanctions

By LORNE COOK and SAMUEL PETREQUIN Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union's top official on Wednesday called on the 27-nation bloc to ban oil imports from Russia and target the country's biggest bank and major broadcasters in a sixth package of sanctions against Moscow for its war in Ukraine.

European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen, addressing the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, proposed to EU's member nations to phase out imports of crude oil within six months and refined products by the end of the year.

"We will make sure that we phase out Russian oil in an orderly fashion, in a way that allows us and our partners to secure alternative supply routes and minimizes the impact on global markets," von der Leyen said.

The proposals need to be unanimously approved to take effect and are likely to be the subject of fierce debate. Von der Leyen conceded that getting all 27 member countries — some of them landlocked and highly dependent on Russia for energy supplies — to agree on oil sanctions "will not be easy."

The EU gets about 25% of its oil from Russia, most of which goes toward gasoline and diesel for vehicles. Russia supplies about 14% of diesel, S&P Global analysts said, and a cutoff could send already high prices for truck and tractor fuel towering.

If approved, the ban on oil imports will be the second package of EU sanctions targeting Russia's lucrative energy industry over its war in Ukraine that President Vladimir Putin started on Feb. 24. In addition to sanctions on various entities and individuals — including Putin himself and members of his family — the bloc previously approved an embargo on coal imports.

The EU has started discussions on a possible natural gas embargo, but consensus among member countries on targeting the fuel used to generate electricity and heat homes is more difficult to secure. The region gets about 40% of its natural gas from Russia.

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In a sign of the political pressure that von der Leyen has been under to widen EU sanctions on Russia energy, some European Parliament members on Wednesday stepped up calls for the bloc to target imports of natural gas from Russia as well.

"That's great news that we are moving on the oil embargo," Luis Garicano, a Spanish member of the EU assembly, said after von der Leyen's announcement. "But as you know this is far short of what this parliament wants. We actually asked a month ago for a full embargo on gas and oil."

Hungary and Slovakia have already said they wouldn't take part in any oil sanctions, but von der Leyen didn't elaborate on whether they would receive an exemption from the sanctions, although this appears likely.

Von der Leyen also said that the EU should target high-ranking military officers and others "who committed war crimes in Bucha," a suburb of the capital Kyiv. Ukrainian officials have alleged that retreating Russian troops carried out mass killings of civilians in Bucha.

"This sends another important signal to all perpetrators of the Kremlin's war: We know who you are. We will hold you accountable. You're not getting away with this," von der Leyen told the lawmakers.

Von der Leyen said that Putin's intention is "to wipe out Ukraine from the map," but predicted he will fail in his deadly enterprise.

"On the contrary, Ukraine has risen in bravery and in unity," she said. "And it is his own country, Russia, that Putin is sinking."

Banks are also in the EU executive arm's sights, and notably Sberbank. Von der Leyen said the aim is that "we de-SWIFT Sberbank." SWIFT is the major global system for financial transfers.

Von der Leyen said Sberbank holds around 37% of the Russian banking sector.

"And we will also de-SWIFT two other major banks in Russia. By that, we hit banks that are systemically critical to the Russian financial system and Putin's ability to wage destruction," she said.

Von der Leyen added that those alleged to be spreading disinformation about the war in Ukraine would be targeted.

"We are banning three big Russian state-owned broadcasters from our airwaves. They will not be allowed to distribute their content anymore in the EU, in whatever shape or form be it on cable, via satellite, on the internet or via smartphone apps."

She didn't name the broadcasters directly, but branded the television channels "as mouthpieces that amplify Putin's lies and propaganda aggressively. We should not give them a stage anymore to spread these lies."

AP evidence points to 600 dead in Mariupol theater airstrike

By LORI HINNANT, MSTYSLAV CHERNOV and VASILISA STEPANENKO Associated Press

LVIV, Ukraine (AP) — She stood in just her bathrobe in the freezing basement of the Mariupol theater, coated in white plaster dust shaken loose by the explosion. Her husband tugged at her to leave and begged her to cover her eyes.

But she couldn't help it — Oksana Syomina looked. And to this day, she wishes she hadn't. Bodies were strewn everywhere, including those of children. By the main exit, a little girl lay still on the floor.

Syomina had to step on the dead to escape the building that had served as the Ukrainian city's main bomb shelter for more than a week. The wounded screamed, as did those trying to find loved ones. Syomina, her husband and about 30 others ran blindly toward the sea and up the shore for almost five miles (eight kilometers) without stopping, the theater in ruins behind them.

"All the people are still under the rubble, because the rubble is still there — no one dug them up," Syomina said, weeping at the memory. "This is one big mass grave."

Amid all the horrors that have unfolded in the war on Ukraine, the Russian bombing of the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theater in Mariupol on March 16 stands out as the single deadliest known attack against civilians to date. An Associated Press investigation has found evidence that the attack was in fact far deadlier than estimated, killing closer to 600 people inside and outside the building. That's almost

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double the death toll cited so far, and many survivors put the number even higher.

The AP investigation recreated what happened inside the theater on that day from the accounts of 23 survivors, rescuers, and people intimately familiar with its new life as a bomb shelter. The AP also drew on two sets of floor plans of the theater, photos and video taken inside before, during and after that day and feedback from experts who reviewed the methodology.

With communications severed, people coming and going constantly, and memories blurred by trauma, an exact toll is impossible to determine. The government estimated early on that about 300 people died and has since opened a war crimes investigation, according to a document obtained by the AP.

AP journalists arrived at a much higher number through the reconstruction of a 3D model of the building's floorplan reviewed repeatedly by direct witnesses, most from within the theater, who described in detail where people were sheltering.

All the witnesses said at least 100 people were at a field kitchen just outside, and none survived. They also said the rooms and hallways inside the building were packed, with about one person for every 3 square meters of free space.

Many survivors estimated around 1,000 people were inside at the time of the airstrike, but the most anyone saw escape, including rescuers, was around 200. The survivors primarily left through the main exit or one side entrance; the other side and the back were crushed.

The AP investigation also refutes Russian claims that the theater was demolished by Ukrainian forces or served as a Ukrainian military base. None of the witnesses saw Ukrainian soldiers operating inside the building. And not one person doubted that the theater was destroyed in a Russian air attack aimed with precision at a civilian target everyone knew was the city's largest bomb shelter, with children in it.

James Gow, a professor of international security at King's College London, said documenting what happened at the theater is critical to establishing a pattern of crimes against humanity in Ukraine.

"This strong witness testimony will be important in establishing that (Russian illegal) conduct was widespread or systematic," said Gow, who also served as an expert witness at the U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Mariupol has taken on outsized importance as a symbol of the devastation inflicted by Russian forces and of the resistance from Ukraine. The city's fate is now hanging in the balance, and officials say around 20,000 civilians died during the Russian siege. With Mariupol cut off from access, many fear the bombing of the theater presages more war crimes that have yet to be discovered.

The elegant theater had stood in a square in the heart of Mariupol for more than 60 years, a stone building with white pillars, a classical frieze, and a distinctive red roof. It was once called the Russian Dramatic Theater, but local authorities removed the word "Russian" from the name in 2015. Last July, they ordered all performances to be conducted in Ukrainian.

The Russian siege of Mariupol started in the first days of March. The actors, designers and administrators who ran the theater took refuge there a few days later, on March 5. About 60 people spread out in a building with an audience capacity of 600, according to Elena Bila, who was a stage manager there for 19 years.

The city soon ordered the entire building opened as a bomb shelter, given its size, its unusually sturdy walls and its large basement. On the first day, about 600 people showed up, Bila said.

Every day, more and more people came, and they settled in the corridors. A group of 16 men formed a security committee, taking shifts to guard the front doors.

"When people came in, they thought they were safe," Bila said. "In fact, they weren't safe."

About a week before the bombing, the theater's set designer used white paint to inscribe the word "CHILDREN" in Cyrillic letters on the pavement outside, in the hope of staving off an attack from above. The signs, painted in both the front and back entrances, were large enough to be read even from satellites.

On March 9, a Russian airstrike hit a maternity hospital just a few blocks away, and two or three pregnant women moved to the theater for safety, according to two theater employees. The women, along with

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families with small children, were given the most comfortable dressing rooms on the second floor, along a corridor behind the stage. It would turn out to be their doom.

By March 15, around 1,200 people crammed into the building, sleeping in offices, corridors, balconies, the basement. They lined the curved hallways and the warren of backstage offices and dressing rooms. They sat in the auditorium on once-plush seats whose stuffing was used as kindling for cooking fires.

But they avoided sleeping on the stage, which sat beneath a domed ceiling and felt uncomfortably like the bullseye it turned out to be. Only pets — cats and dogs — were kept there, directly under the dome. The cavernous basement prop room beneath it was empty.

By this time, the city no longer had electricity, food and water. The theater became a place where anyone could get food and water supplied by the Red Cross or news about possible evacuations. A water tank stood out front, and the field kitchen operated to one side.

People also flocked to the theater as the most likely starting point for any evacuations, to get near the front of the line. New arrivals registered at the entrance, where the cloakroom used to be. Just past the registration was what served as a warm welcome: A stand with hot tea.

Among those who showed up in the hope of evacuating on the morning of March 16 were the Kutnyakov family and their neighbors.

Any hesitation they might have had about abandoning their home evaporated when the building next door caught fire.

The six of them ran past a Russian tank, past a hospital already destroyed by shelling, then inadvertently toward another Russian tank, whose turret turned in their direction and opened fire. They hid briefly in the ruins of the children's clinic at the hospital. Then they ran down a side street for the final half-mile (kilometer) to the theater.

"We were immediately offered and poured tea," said Galina Kutnyakova, the 56-year-old matriarch. "You have to imagine, we had hardly eaten or drunk for six days. Everyone was so happy because of the hot tea."

Lunch was at noon, they were told, and in the meantime, they could find space.

The basement was full already. So were the first and second floors. They saw a spot on the third floor, near enormous windows that everyone knew would surely shatter into knives of flying glass if the building was hit.

It was the only place available, so they took it. They swept it up with a broom and laid out the sheets they'd grabbed from home. It was just before 10 a.m.

Maria Kutnyakova, Galina's 30-year-old daughter, walked through the entire building in search of free space, noting the full rooms. She left her mother to handle the registration and went out by herself to find her uncle, who lived nearby. They hadn't seen him in nine days.

That's when she heard warplanes flying in from the sea and heading to the Azovstal steel plant. She walked a little further, and heard a single plane, much closer.

Then came the explosion. As she hugged the edge of the nearest building, she thought to herself, "So it exploded. Let it explode. I've heard a million bombs like that, and the bottom line is it didn't hit me."

But she saw smoke rising from the enormous park with the theater at the center. The theater stood bare, with a huge chunk of its red roof on the ground. The meter (three-foot) thick walls by the field kitchen had disintegrated to dust.

Her mind froze. Her mother and sister were inside.

The airstrike hit around 10 a.m., squarely on the stage and field kitchen.

Maria Radionova had laid out a corner for herself and her two dogs just underneath, in the hall of the drama theater with the chandelier. The roof caved in and the chandelier shattered.

Radionova wasn't there. She had gone to stand on the steps at the entrance to the theater.

She heard the telltale whistle from a plane. A man grabbed her by the neck, pressed her against a wall and covered her. Debris and fragments of bricks flew at them.

The explosion threw another man back and face down onto glass. A wounded woman lay nearby in a

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huge pool of blood.

Radionova went back into the theater and tried to get into the hall. People were running and screaming, and lost children were frantically looking for their mothers. Radionova knew her dogs were dead.

"They were all I had," she said, crying. "This (was) actually my family. ... I cried there for probably two hours."

Victoria Dubovytska, 24, had just folded blankets into a pile in the projection room where she was staying with her 2-year-old daughter, Anastasia, and 6-year-old son, Artem. When the bomb hit, they were thrown against the wall. The blankets tumbled on top of the toddler, shielding her small body from the slabs that fell next.

In the first seconds after the shock, the room was silent. Dubovytska feared her daughter was dead. Then Anastasia's voice joined the other screams: "Mama!"

"I understood she was alive," Dubovytska recalled. "I dragged her out....It was a miracle she survived."

She took her son, her daughter and any documents she could find and ran out of the theater. Half of it had already crumbled.

As people fled the opposite way, Maria Kutnyakova ran into the hall looking for her mother and sister. She went to the third floor, but the windows were shattered and there was no sign of her loved ones or their belongings.

Hoarse shouts for family members filled the air. At first she too shouted "Mom," but she quickly realized that everyone around her was shouting the same word. So she screamed the family name instead.

Someone answered, "Masha Kutnyakova!" With everyone shouting, she couldn't figure out where the voice came from. It sounded like it came from somewhere in the ground, but only the dead lay there. She thought she was going crazy.

She went to the stairs down to the basement and bomb shelter. There, at the bottom, stood her sister, covered in plaster dust, with a cat. She had been on the third floor and fled to the basement for cover.

Their mother wasn't upstairs but on the ground floor, near the medic's office, and escaped out of a side exit. They made their way with a crowd of about 50 people to Mariupol's Philharmonic, a nearby auditorium which was also serving as a shelter. That too came under shelling at sunset.

"I wasn't killed in the theater, but I'm going to die in the philharmonic," Maria Kutnyakova told herself bitterly. "God, this is my cultural program for the day."

The shockwave from the explosion also reverberated outside the theater.

March 16 was Dmitriy Yurin's 31st birthday. He was headed the 100 meters from his home to the theater, as he had done every morning in the past week, for food and water.

Near the entrance to the parking garage, the force of the blast knocked him to the ground. Yurin, a fisherman, picked himself up and ran to help, moving rubble to drag out those who were alive but couldn't walk.

"I looked at my arms, and they were covered in blood up to the elbow," he said. "And I was in a stupor, just shock."

He left for about 20 minutes to collect himself and rub off some of the blood, then returned. Most of the bodies were unreachable deep in the foundations, which were now in flames. Anybody they could reach, rescuers moved to the park.

"Some of them weren't alive, and some of them breathed their last on the street," Yurin remembered, sighing. "We said goodbye to them."

One young woman — maybe 25 years old — stood out in his memory. He stuttered as he recalled her face.

They laid her out on a bare winter flowerbed, still conscious. Two women and a child stood by her, trying to reassure her through their tears.

"We'll live, don't die, everything will be fine," they said. "You'll get help."

But she died in front of him.

Yurin left soon after. He numbly pulled on a neoprene suit he used for fishing on cold winter days and

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wrapped his feet in plastic bags. Then he plunged into the Azov Sea and swam for nearly a kilometer (half-mile) "like a dog" before emerging outside Mariupol. It took days, but he eventually made his way to safety in western Ukraine.

Yulia Marukhnenko also had been renting an apartment near the theater. When she heard the bang, Marukhnenko first looked to the field kitchen, but she knew everybody there was buried. So she rushed to the basements.

Trained in first aid, with a full kit on hand, she was facing problems no first aid could begin to help: limbs attached to no bodies, bodies with no limbs, bones sticking out. Those were the ones who died, either on the spot or in the days afterwards in a city with almost no functioning hospitals. One woman had her leg amputated but died anyway.

Marukhnenko and the two police officers working alongside her said a dozen people were pulled from the rubble, the last one around 4 p.m., six hours after the airstrike. Her name was Nadia.

Still in shock, Nadia said the explosion pulled her young son and husband away, and they died in the basement. The woman cradled a dachshund that belonged to her son, who had named the puppy Gloria. Nadia begged her rescuers to take the dog.

She asked for a cigarette. She said she hadn't smoked for seven months because her son had asked her to quit. But there was no longer anybody to quit for.

Nadia was taken to the hospital, and Marukhnenko doesn't know what happened to her. The dog is with Marukhnenko still.

"If Nadia has survived, tell her that Gloria is fine," Marukhnenko said. "She's eating well, she's all right, and she's with me."

The theater now lies in ruins, with its side and center blackened by fire. Russian forces control the neighborhood around it, and AP video shows heavy equipment swarming the rubble to further dismantle it. But the questions remain: How many bodies are there, and what happened to them?

A police officer who passed the theater a week after the airstrike said the smell of death was overpowering. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he still has relatives in Russia-controlled territory. Video taken by Russian state media shows no bodies inside, contrary to the descriptions of multiple witnesses.

The lack of bodies led the police officer and a Mariupol Red Cross official to speculate that perhaps fewer than 500 people died, but most survivors suggested the bodies were either pulverized into the dust or removed by the Russians. With the site off-limits to investigators and the rubble itself taken away, witness testimony and photos and video of the theater before and after it was bombed will be crucial, said Clint Williamson, who served as U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues from 2006 to 2009.

"Without being able to get to the scene, it is going to be difficult to go much beyond that," he said.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has declared the attack on the Mariupol drama theater an "egregious violation" of international humanitarian law. The organization's mid-April report found that "those who ordered or executed it committed a war crime." It also found no dispute that the destruction of the theater was deliberate.

This finding was echoed by two munitions experts interviewed by the AP, who said the scope of the destruction points to a 500-kilogram bomb from a Russian warplane.

"It's much too much for an artillery shell," said Mark Cancian, an explosives analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a former artillery officer. "The fact that it hit square on would lead me to believe that's what they were aiming at."

Russian troops want to take over Mariupol because of its strategic value as a port and a link between territories in the south and east held by Russia-friendly forces. Moscow has declared victory, but Ukraine refuses to acknowledge defeat.

In the meantime, families are desperate for any news of loved ones. A Telegram channel for Ukraine's missing has more than 19,000 posts, with photos and other details. More than 9,600 refer to Mariupol alone.

The survivors from the theater attack remain haunted by their memories of what the Russians did.

"They came not to capture the city — they came to destroy it," said Maria Kutnyakova, sitting in another

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auditorium in the city of Lviv where artists recently staged a show to honor Mariupol's theater and those killed inside. "They are trying to hide how many people actually died in Mariupol, hide their crimes."

Russia pounds Ukraine, targeting supply of Western arms

By JON GAMBRELL and CARA ANNA Associated Press

LVIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces pounded targets across Ukraine, taking aim at supply lines for foreign weapons in the west and intensifying an offensive in the east, as the European Union moved Wednesday to further punish Moscow for the war with a proposed ban on oil imports.

The Russian military said Wednesday it used sea- and air-launched precision guided missiles to destroy electric power facilities at five railway stations across Ukraine, while artillery and aircraft also struck troop strongholds and fuel and ammunition depots.

The defense minister said a steel mill in Mariupol — the last pocket of Ukrainian resistance in that city — was sealed off, a day after Russian troops began storming it.

Ukrainian authorities, meanwhile, said attacks in the eastern Donbas region left 21 civilians dead.

The flurry of attacks over the past day comes as Russia prepares to celebrate Victory Day on May 9, marking the Soviet Union's defeat over Nazi Germany. This year the world is watching for signs of whether Russian President Vladimir Putin will use the occasion to declare a limited victory — or expand what he calls a "special military operation" to a wider war.

While the Russian attacks were across a wide swath of the country, some were concentrated in and around Lviv, the western city close to the Polish border that been gateway for NATO-supplied weapons.

Explosions were heard late Tuesday in the city, which has seen only sporadic attacks during the war and has become a haven for civilians fleeing the fighting elsewhere. The mayor said the strikes damaged three power substations, knocking out electricity in parts of the city and disrupting the water supply. Two people were wounded.

The strikes on the train stations were meant to disrupt the delivery of Western weapons, Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said, while the minister warned any such deliveries are legitimate targets.

Sergei Shoigu told top military brass Wednesday that the West was "stuffing Ukraine with weapons."

Western weaponry pouring into Ukraine helped to blunt Russia's initial offensive and seems certain to play a central role in the potentially decisive battle for Ukraine's Donbas, where Russian-backed separatists have been battling Ukrainian forces since 2014. Moscow shifted its focus to the industrial region after failing to take Kyiv in the early weeks of the war.

The governor of the eastern Donetsk region, which lies in the Donbas, said Russian attacks left 21 dead on Tuesday, the highest number of known fatalities since April 8, when a missile attack on the railway station in Kramatorsk killed at least 59 people.

Russia has deployed a significant number of troops in the region and appears to be trying to advance in the northern Donbas, as they try to cut Ukrainian forces off, according to an assessment from the British Defense Ministry. However, Moscow's push has been slow as Ukrainian fighters dig in and use long-range weapons to target the Russians.

The U.S. believes Ukrainians in recent days pushed Russian forces about 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of Kharkiv, a northeastern city that lies outside the Donbas but is key to the offensive there.

In another effort to consolidate their control in the east, Russian forces began storming the bombed-out steel mill in Mariupol on Tuesday, the city's last pocket of resistance. The renewed push to take the mill came after scores of civilians were evacuated from the plant's underground tunnels after enduring weeks of shelling.

Shoigu said Wednesday that the fighters at the Azovstal steel mill have been "securely blocked" inside, while Russian forces continue to demand their surrender. The mill's defenders have repeatedly refused to lay down their arms.

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In addition to supplying weapons to Ukraine, Europe and the United States have sought to punish Moscow with sanctions. The EU's top official called on the 27-nation bloc on Wednesday to ban Russian oil imports.

"We will make sure that we phase out Russian oil in an orderly fashion, in a way that allows us and our partners to secure alternative supply routes and minimizes the impact on global markets," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France.

The proposals need to be unanimously approved to take effect and are likely to be the subject of fierce debate. Hungary and Slovakia have already said they won't take part in any oil sanctions, but von der Leyen didn't elaborate on whether they would receive an exemption, which appears likely.

Von der Leyen also proposed that Sberbank, Russia's largest bank, and two other major banks be disconnected from the SWIFT international banking payment system.

Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said authorities on Wednesday plan to continue efforts to evacuate civilians from the city of Mariupol and nearby areas if the security situation allows it.

Thanks to the evacuation effort over the weekend, 101 people — including women, the elderly, and 17 children, the youngest 6 months old — emerged from the bunkers under the Azovstal steelworks to "see the daylight after two months," said Osnat Lubrani, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Ukraine.

One evacuee said she went to sleep at the plant every night afraid she wouldn't wake up.

"You can't imagine how scary it is when you sit in the bomb shelter, in a damp and wet basement, and it is bouncing and shaking," 54-year-old Elina Tsybulchenko said upon arriving in the Ukrainian-controlled city of Zaporizhzhia, about 140 miles (230 kilometers) northwest of Mariupol.

It is unclear how many Ukrainian fighters are still inside, but the Russians put the number at about 2,000 in recent weeks, and 500 were reported to be wounded. A few hundred civilians also remained there, Vereshchuk, the deputy prime minister, said.

In his nightly video address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that by storming the steel mill, Russian forces violated agreements for safe evacuations. He said the prior evacuations are "not a victory yet, but it's already a result. I believe there's still a chance to save other people."

Mariupol — and the plant in particular — has come to symbolize the human misery inflicted by the war. The Russians' two-month siege of the strategic port has trapped civilians with little or no food, water, medicine or heat, as Moscow's forces pounded the city into rubble.

The city's fall would deprive Ukraine of a vital port, allow Russia to establish a land corridor to the Crimean Peninsula, which it seized from Ukraine in 2014, and free up troops for fighting elsewhere in the Donbas.

Also Wednesday, Ukraine's Interior Ministry said a crash in the western Rivne region killed 26 people and injured 12 more. The crash involved a bus, a van and a fuel truck, the report said. The bus was headed to Poland, which has been a key destination for Ukrainian refugees.

With deficit falling, Biden highlights fiscal responsibility

By JOSH BOAK and FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden plans to highlight deficit reduction in remarks Wednesday at the White House, noting that the government will pay down the national debt this quarter for the first time in six years.

Biden will emphasize how strong job gains have increased total incomes and led to additional tax revenues that have improved the government's balance sheet, said a White House official who previewed the speech on condition of anonymity.

Besides the quarterly reduction in the national debt, the Treasury Department estimates that this fiscal year's budget deficit will decline \$1.5 trillion. That decrease marks an improvement from initial forecasts and would likely put the annual deficit below \$1.3 trillion.

The Democratic president has placed renewed emphasis on deficit reduction going into the midterm election, with administration officials saying that the burst of \$1.9 trillion in coronavirus relief approved in 2021 has already paid off in the form of faster growth that now makes it easier to stabilize government finances.

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Deficit reduction also matches a priority of Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, the key Democratic vote in the evenly split Senate who blocked the passage of Biden's domestic and environmental agenda in December. The reduction also occurs amid rising interest rates on U.S. Treasury notes, a consequence of inflation running at a 40-year peak and the Federal Reserve's efforts to reduce price pressures.

It is unclear if greater fiscal responsibility can deliver politically for Biden as Democrats try to defend control of Congress. His two most recent Democratic predecessors, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, also cut budget deficits, only to leave office and see their Republican successors use the savings on tax cuts.

Still, Biden hopes to draw a sharp contrast with former President Donald Trump, whom he beat in 2020. Trump, among a multitude of promises, pledged to lower the national debt yet failed to do so during any financial quarter of his presidency. Biden has repeatedly taken aim at that broken promise.

When unveiling his budget plan in March, Biden said that after his Republican predecessor's "fiscal mismanagement" his administration is "reducing the Trump deficits and returning our fiscal house to order."

One of the challenges for Biden is that voters have largely shrugged off deficit increases and seldom rewarded deficit cuts. Voters might discuss the idea of reducing deficits with pollsters, yet health care, incomes and inflation are often top of mind when casting their ballots.

Norman Ornstein, an emeritus scholar at the conservative American Enterprise Institute, noted that deficits are often "abstract" for voters. The recent low interest rates have also muted any potential economic drags from higher deficits, which have risen following the COVID-19 pandemic and, separately, the 2008 financial crisis, to help the economy recover.

"They're more likely to respond to things that are in their wheelhouse or that they believe will have a more direct effect on their lives," Ornstein said. Deficits are "a step removed for most voters, and we've been through periods where we've had the big deficits and debt and it's not like it devastated directly people's lives."

Beijing closes 10% of subway stations to stem COVID spread

BEIJING (AP) — Beijing on Wednesday closed around 10% of the stations in its vast subway system as an additional measure against the spread of the coronavirus.

The subway authority in a brief message said only that the closure of 40 mostly downtown stations was being taken as part of epidemic control measures. No date for resumption of service was given.

Beijing has been on high alert for the spread of COVID-19, with restaurants and bars limited to takeout only, gyms closed and classes suspended indefinitely. Major tourist sites in the city, including the Forbidden City and the Beijing Zoo, have closed their indoor exhibition halls and are operating at only partial capacity.

A few communities where cases were discovered have been isolated. People residing in "controlled" areas have been told to stay within city limits, including 12 areas deemed high-risk and another 35 considered medium-risk.

City residents are required to undergo three tests throughout the week as authorities seek to detect and isolate cases without imposing the sort of sweeping lockdowns seen in Shanghai and elsewhere. A negative test result obtained within the previous 48 hours is required to gain entry to most public spaces.

Beijing on Wednesday recorded just 51 new cases, five of them asymptomatic.

The subway closings should have relatively little impact on city life, with China observing the Labor Day holiday this week and many commuters in the capital of 21 million already working from home.

In one downtown neighborhood categorized as high-risk on Wednesday, the streets were practically deserted apart from a few delivery drivers on scooters and the occasional pedestrian and car.

All businesses were shut except for supermarkets and fruit and vegetable stores. Outsiders generally stay away from high-risk areas to avoid the possibility of their presence registering on the tracing apps installed on virtually all mobile phones, creating potential problems for future access to public areas.

While taking a lighter touch in Beijing, China has overall stuck to its strict "zero-COVID" approach that restricts travel, tests entire cities and sets up sprawling facilities to try to isolate every infected person. Lockdowns start with buildings and neighborhoods but become citywide if the virus spreads widely.

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That has caused the most disruption in Shanghai, where authorities are slowly easing restrictions that have confined most of the city's 26 million people to their apartments, housing compounds or immediate neighborhoods for close to a month, and in some cases longer.

Shanghai reported another 4,982 cases Wednesday, all but 260 of them asymptomatic, along with an additional 16 deaths. That continues a steady decline in China's largest city, which recorded a daily peak of 27,605 new cases on April 13.

The surprisingly low death toll amid an outbreak of more than 400,000 cases in the city that is home to China's main stock market and biggest port has sparked questions about how such deaths are tallied.

The rigid and widely derided restrictions have led to shortages of food and medical aid along with a wider — though likely temporary — impact on the national economy. Desperate, outraged citizens have confronted authorities at barricades and online, screamed out of their windows and banged pots and pans in a sign of frustration and anger.

Communist authorities who tolerate no dissent have sought to scrub criticism from the internet and blamed the protests, including the banging of cooking implements, on agitation by unidentified "foreign anti-China forces."

As part of reopening, Shanghai this week began requiring health institutions to fully resume services wherever possible.

At downtown Huashan Hospital, patients filled the waiting area with lines forming outside some departments. While patient numbers are down by about two-thirds from before the most recent wave, their conditions tend to be more serious.

Huashan's chief of dermatology, Wu Wenyu, said he was seeing patients who had delayed treatment because of the outbreak, some from cities outside Shanghai.

"For example, a patient suffering from (skin disease) shingles will hurt very much. He or she might have felt very bad at home, but he or she couldn't go to the hospital due to COVID," Wu said. "But now many patients are coming to see the doctor."

Hospital administrators said the hospital was staggering appointments to avoid crowding.

In some residential communities, a single family member was permitted to venture out twice a week to shop, sometimes also picking up items for neighbors.

Ling Jiazhao, manager of a supermarket in the eastern Pudong district, said the store was limiting customers to 50 at a time.

"I'm hoping it won't cause congestion. Each community has two to four hours to go out for shopping, so most members will complete that within one hour," Ling said.

AP Methodology: Calculating Mariupol theater airstrike dead

By LORI HINNANT Associated Press

Close to 600 people died in the Russian airstrike on the Mariupol drama theater on March 16, evidence from an Associated Press investigation suggests. That's around twice the city government's estimate of 300 in the deadliest single known attack against civilians in the Ukraine war.

AP journalists drew on accounts of 23 survivors, rescuers and people intimately familiar with the shelter operating at the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theater, as well as two sets of floor plans of the theater, photos and video taken inside before, during and after that day and feedback from experts. The AP used the information to create a 3D model of the theater.

Witnesses and survivors walked the journalists through the building virtually on the floor plan, pointing out where people were sheltering room by room and how densely crowded each space was.

Sixteen direct witnesses, most of them inside the theater, said the building was packed, with about one person for every 3 square meters (yards) of free space in the rooms and hallways. All said that upwards of 100 people were at the field kitchen outside the building, and that everyone there died.

Most said around 1,000 people were in the theater at the time. The outliers included one witness who believed there were just a few hundred people, and one who estimated around 1,300 people were inside.

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No one, including rescuers, saw more than 200 people escape alive, and most saw far fewer. Those numbers are in line with survivor estimates of 130 from Mariupol city officials and 150 from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Survivors escaped from the main exit or a side entrance because other areas of the building were crushed.

After constructing the 3D model, the AP went back to witnesses to check and adjust. Two war crimes experts reviewed AP's methodology of matching floor plans against witness descriptions, and concluded that it was as sound and definitive as possible in the absence of access to the site.

Two survivors estimated that around 300 had died, as authorities initially estimated, and the lack of bodies led a police officer and a Mariupol Red Cross official to speculate that the toll was fewer than 500. But most witnesses claimed closer to 600 died, in line with the AP analysis of density, and suggested that the bodies were either pulverized into the dust or removed by the Russians. The AP also talked with two munitions experts.

With communications severed, people coming and going constantly, and memories blurred by trauma, an exact death toll is impossible to determine.

North Korea fires ballistic missile amid rising animosities

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, KIM TONG-HYUNG and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea launched a ballistic missile toward its eastern waters on Wednesday, South Korean and Japanese officials said, days after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to speed up the development of his nuclear weapons "at the fastest possible pace" and threatened to use them against rivals.

The launch, the North's 14th round of weapons firing this year, also came six days before a new conservative South Korean president takes office for a single five-year term.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that the missile was fired from the North's capital region and flew to the waters off its eastern coast. It called North Korea's repeated ballistic missile launches "a grave threat" that would undermine international peace and security and a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions banning any ballistic launch by the North.

The statement said that Won In-Choul, the South Korean JCS chief, held a video conference about the launch with Gen. Paul LaCamera, an American general who heads the South Korea-U.S. combined forces command in Seoul, and they agreed to maintain a solid joint defense posture.

Japan also detected the North Korean launch and quickly condemned it.

"North Korea's series of actions that threatens the peace, safety and stability of the international community are impermissible," Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told reporters during his visit to Rome.

Kishida said he'll discuss the launch when he meets Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi later Wednesday. "Naturally, we will exchange views on the regional situation in the Indo-Pacific and East Asia, and I will thoroughly explain the reality of the region including the North Korean missile launch today, to gain understanding about the pressing situation in the East Asia," he said.

Japanese Vice Defense Minister Makoto Oniki said that the missile was believed to have landed in waters outside of the Japanese Exclusive Economic Zone. There has been no report of damage or injury reported from vessels and aircraft in the area.

It wasn't immediately known what missile North Korea launched. South Korea's military said the missile flew about 470 kilometers (290 miles) at the apogee of 780 kilometers (485 miles), while Oniki of Japan said it traveled about 500 kilometers (310 miles) at the maximum altitude of 800 kilometers (500 miles).

Observers say North Korea's unusually fast pace in weapons testing this year underscores its dual goal of advancing its missile programs and applying pressure on Washington over a deepening freeze in nuclear negotiations. They say Kim eventually aims to use his expanded arsenal to win an international recognition of North Korea as a nuclear state that he believes would help force the United States to relax international economic sanctions on the North.

One of the North Korean missiles tested recently was an intercontinental ballistic missile potentially ca-

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pable of reaching the entirety of the American homeland. That missile's launch broke Kim's self-imposed 2018 moratorium on big weapons tests.

There are signs that the North is also preparing for a nuclear test at its remote northeastern testing facility. If made, the nuclear bomb test explosion by North Korea would be the seventh of its kind and the first since 2017.

Last week, Kim Jong Un showcased his most powerful nuclear-capable missiles targeting both the United States and its allies during a massive military parade in capital, Pyongyang. During a speech at the parade, Kim said he would develop his arsenal at the "fastest possible pace" and warned that the North would preemptively use its nuclear weapons if its national interests are threatened.

North Korea has previously unleashed harsh rhetoric threatening to attack its rivals with its nuclear weapons. But the fact that Kim made the threat himself and in a detailed manner have caused security jitters among some South Koreans. Taken together with North Korea's recent tests of short-range nuclear-capable missiles, some experts speculate North Korea's possibly escalatory nuclear doctrine would allow it to launch preemptive nuclear strikes on South Korea in some cases.

Wednesday's launch came before the May 10 inauguration of South Korean President-elect Yoon Suk Yeol, who has vowed to boost Seoul's missile capability and solidify its military alliance with Washington to better cope with increasing North Korean nuclear threats.

North Korea has a history of raising animosities with weapons tests when Seoul and Washington inaugurate new governments in an apparent bid to boost its leverage in future negotiations.

Yoon's power transition office called the latest North Korean launch "a grave provocation" and urged Pyongyang to stop acts that raise tensions and threaten international peace. It said in a statement that the Yoon government will strongly respond to North Korean provocations in close cooperation with the international community.

Some experts say the Biden administration's passive handling of North Korea as it focuses on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and an intensifying rivalry with China is allowing more room for the North to expand its military capabilities.

The Biden administration's actions on North Korea have so far been limited to largely symbolic sanctions and offers of open-ended talks. North Korea has rejected the administration's offer for talks, saying it must first abandon its "hostile policy," in an apparent reference to U.S.-led international sanctions and U.S.-South Korean joint military exercises.

Mari Yamaguchi reported from Tokyo.

Pope's Ukraine diplomacy a political and spiritual tightrope

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — His appeals for an Orthodox Easter truce in Ukraine went unheeded. His planned meeting with the head of the Russian Orthodox Church was canceled. A proposed visit to Moscow? Nyet. Even his attempt to showcase Russian-Ukrainian friendship fell flat.

Pope Francis hasn't made much of a diplomatic mark in Russia's war in Ukraine, seemingly unable to capitalize on his moral authority, soft power or direct line to Moscow to nudge an end to the bloodshed or at least a cease-fire.

Rather, Francis has found himself in the unusual position of having to explain his refusal to call out Russia or President Vladimir Putin by name — popes don't do that, he said — and to defend his "very good" relations with the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, who has justified the war on spiritual grounds.

While the long list of dead ends would indicate a certain ineffectiveness, it is par for the course for the Vatican's unique brand of diplomacy that straddles geopolitical realities with spiritual priorities, even when they conflict.

And in the case of Ukraine, they have: Francis has sought to be a pastor to his local flock in Ukraine, incessantly calling for peace, sending cardinals in with humanitarian aid and even reportedly proposing

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that a Vatican-flagged ship evacuate civilians from the besieged port of Mariupol.

But he has also kept alive the Holy See's longer-term policy goal of healing relations with the Russian Orthodox Church, which split from Rome along with the rest of Orthodoxy over 1,000 years ago. Up until recently, Francis held out hope that he would secure a second meeting with Russian Patriarch Kirill, even while Moscow bombed Ukrainian civilians.

Francis recently revealed that their planned June meeting in Jerusalem had been called off, because Vatican diplomats thought it would send a "confusing" message. But he also told an Italian newspaper Tuesday that he had offered to go to Moscow to meet with Putin, and wondered aloud if NATO's eastward expansion hadn't provoked the war.

To his critics, Francis' continued outreach to Moscow even amid reported atrocities harks back to the perceived silence of Pope Pius XII, criticized by some Jewish groups for failing to speak out sufficiently against the Holocaust. The Vatican insists Pius' quiet diplomacy helped save lives.

"Francis is doing what he can, with the right priorities, to stop the war, stop people from suffering," said Anne Leahy, who was Canada's ambassador to the Holy See from 2008-12 and ambassador to Russia in the late 1990s.

"But he's keeping channels of communication open in every way he can. Even if it doesn't work, I think the idea is to keep trying," she said.

Leahy noted that a pope must have as a top priority this Gospel-mandated objective to unify Christians, and that relations with the Orthodox therefore must remain at the forefront.

"Diplomacy is at the service of the church's mission, and not the other way around," she said in a telephone interview.

At times, Francis' words and gestures seem contradictory: One day he sits down for a videoconference with Kirill that is prominently featured on the website of the Russian Orthodox Church with a statement saying both sides had expressed hope for a "just peace." Three weeks later, he kisses a battered Ukrainian flag brought to him from Bucha, where Ukrainian civilians were found shot to death with their hands bound.

The Vatican has a long tradition of this dual-faceted diplomacy. During the Cold War, the policy of "Ostpolitik" meant that the Vatican kept up channels of communication with the same Communist governments that were persecuting the faithful on the ground, often to the dismay of the local church.

Francis' decision to continue with the "classic Vatican diplomacy of Ostpolitik, of dialoguing with the enemy and not closing the door, is debatable," said the Rev. Stefano Caprio, professor of church history at the Pontifical Oriental Institute.

"Those who are upset that the pope isn't defending them more are right, but those from the diplomatic side who say 'We can't throw away these relations' are also right. They are obviously in contradiction," he said.

"But since we're not talking about an argument of faith — we aren't talking about the persons of the Holy Trinity — you can have opinions that differ from the pope," he added.

In some ways, Francis' role on the sidelines of the Ukraine conflict can be traced to his position when Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and the Holy See appeared at least publicly neutral, despite appeals from Ukrainian Greek Catholics, who are a minority in the majority Orthodox country, for Francis to strongly condemn Moscow.

Instead, Francis described the ensuing conflict as the fruit of "fratricidal violence," as if both sides were equally to blame and that the conflict was an internal Ukrainian matter.

"My experience in 2014 is that the existence of the (Ukrainian) Greek Catholics was seemingly an embarrassment and a frustration with the Holy Father and the Holy See," said John McCarthy, who was Australia's ambassador to the Vatican at the time. "Their priority was the relationship with the Russian Orthodox" and securing a meeting with Kirill.

Francis eventually obtained that long-sought meeting, embracing Kirill in a VIP room of the Havana, Cuba, airport on Feb. 12, 2016, in the first meeting between a pope with the Russian patriarch since the 1054 Schism.

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The two men signed a joint statement that was hailed by the Holy See at the time as a breakthrough in ecumenical relations. But it enraged Ukraine's Greek Catholics because, among other things, it referred to them as an "ecclesial community" as if they were a separate church not in communion with Rome, and didn't mention Russia's role in the separatist conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Fast forward to 2022, and Francis again upset the local Ukrainian church: The Vatican had proposed that a Ukrainian and Russian woman carry the cross together during the Vatican's torchlit Good Friday procession at the Colosseum. The gesture, which preceded Francis' unheeded Easter appeal for a truce, was an attempt to show the possibility of future Russian-Ukrainian reconciliation.

But the Ukrainian ambassador objected, and the head of Ukraine's Greek Orthodox faithful, Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, decried the proposal as "inopportune and ambiguous," since it didn't take into consideration the fact that Russia had invaded Ukraine.

In the end, the Vatican compromised: The women carried the cross but instead of reading aloud a meditation that had called for reconciliation, stood together in silent prayer.

Leahy, the former Canadian ambassador, said the outcome was a classic example of papal pastoral care bridging Vatican diplomacy: Francis listened to Shevchuk's complaint and modified the ritual, while keeping his broader agenda of dialogue with Russia alive.

Recalling the word "pontiff" derives from the Italian word for "bridge," she said: "It's the job of a diplomat, and certainly of a supreme pontiff who has the word 'bridge' written in his name, to keep the channels open."

The Rev. Roberto Regoli, a professor of church history and an expert in papal diplomacy at the Pontifical Gregorian University, said those diplomatic channels with the Orthodox are important now, but also in the future when eventually Ukraine will have to be rebuilt.

"The reconstruction of a country ... requires the involvement of all forces, even religious ones," he said. "So keeping these channels open is useful for the present but even more for the future, because it will take decades to rebuild."

Election 2022: JD Vance wins Ohio's GOP Senate primary

By JILL COLVIN and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — "Hillbilly Elegy" author JD Vance won Ohio's contentious and hyper-competitive GOP Senate primary on Tuesday, buoyed by Donald Trump's endorsement in a race that was an early test of the former president's hold on his party as the midterm season kicks into high gear.

A onetime staunch critic of Trump whose 2016 memoir about his Appalachian childhood lifted him to fame, Vance spent much of the campaign behind in the polls. But a late-stage endorsement from Trump pushed him to frontrunner status and the two men downplayed Vance's past scathing criticism of the former president, with Vance saying he was wrong.

In accepting the GOP nomination, Vance struck a unifying tone, complimenting his rivals — including silencing boos for his most bitter opponent, former state Treasurer Josh Mandel — and pledging to appeal to the state's many moderates headed into November after an exceptionally bitter campaign that, at one point, saw two candidates nearly come to blows on a debate stage.

"Now this campaign, I really think, was a referendum on what kind of a Republican Party we want, and what kind of a country we want," Vance told the crowd.

He now faces Democrat Tim Ryan in the general election race to fill the seat being vacated by retiring Republican Sen. Rob Portman. The 10-term Democratic congressman, who easily won his three-way primary Tuesday night, will likely have an uphill climb in a state Trump won twice by an 8-point margin. In a potential warning sign for Ryan, roughly twice as many Republicans participated in the primary than Democrats.

Meanwhile, Ohio's Republican Gov. Mike DeWine secured his party's nomination for a second term and will take on Democrat Nan Whaley.

In neighboring Indiana, incumbent Republicans in the state House fended off primary challengers who

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wanted to push the Legislature further to the right. Among the roughly two dozen so-called liberty candidates in Republican legislative races, one defeated a 10-term incumbent in northern Indiana, while a leader of the movement lost his primary race.

Tuesday's contests ushered in a more competitive phase of the midterm primary season, with closely watched races in Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Georgia scheduled for later this month. The election will culminate in November, when control of Congress, governor's mansions and key elections offices are at stake.

The campaign is intensifying at a volatile moment in the nation's politics. On the eve of this week's primaries, a draft U.S. Supreme Court opinion was leaked that suggests the court could overturn the 1973 landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion nationwide. While the Democrats decried the draft, they suddenly have a clear, unifying message they hope will offset an otherwise difficult political climate dominated by economic woes that include high inflation and gas prices.

Trump, meanwhile, is using the primaries to build his reputation as a GOP kingmaker as he mulls another presidential run a year after leaving office under the cloud of two impeachments and the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol insurrection. A Trump spokesperson Tuesday took credit for the outcome in the Ohio Senate contest, saying the former president's endorsement "propelled (Vance) into a commanding first place finish."

While Vance is the GOP primary's undisputed winner, driving up support in Ohio's rural regions, there was notable support for Mandel and state Sen. Matt Dolan, the only major candidate who did not aggressively court Trump. His traction suggests there remains appetite in the party for non-Trump alternatives, especially in a state with a long history of electing moderates, including DeWine, Portman and former Ohio governor-turned-Trump critic John Kasich.

Dolan notched strong performances in Ohio's metropolitan communities, particularly around Cleveland and Columbus. Mandel, meanwhile, also found some rural support.

At the Strongsville library in suburban Cleveland, Joanne Mondak, 71, said she voted for Dolan because the rest of the candidates are "nutcakes" who are "too much Trump."

Ohio, once a bellwether state, is now decidedly Republican, posing a challenge for Ryan, who has distanced himself from the progressive wing of his party during the race. Campaigning in sweatshirts and baseball caps, he has fashioned himself as a blue-collar crusader fighting for working families.

During his acceptance speech, Ryan grew emotional as he spoke about the community his steelworker grandfather was able to build while holding a well-paying union job.

"I am absolutely in my bones certain that we can do this if we come together, and it's not about finding our differences. It's not about hate," he said.

Buoyed by historical trends and Democratic President Joe Biden's deep unpopularity, Republicans are optimistic about retaking the House and Senate come November. A new president's party almost always loses in seats in subsequent midterm elections and Republicans hope soaring inflation, high energy prices and lingering frustrations over the country's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic will further boost their prospects.

Democrats, meanwhile, are banking the GOP — with Trump's help — will elect candidates so extreme they prove unelectable come November. Vance, in particular, has drawn fire for dismissing Russia's invasion of Ukraine as none of the United States' business and accusing Biden of trying to intentionally kill Trump voters by allowing illegal drugs to cross the southern border.

"By all rights, history tells us that the Democrats are going to lose control of the House," said Dale Butland, a Democratic strategist in Ohio. "By all rights, we should lose control of the Senate, too. However, the only thing that could save us is if the Republicans nominate a bunch of far-right crazies that are unacceptable in a general election."

While DeWine is widely known in Ohio after a 40-year political career, he faced fierce backlash from conservatives over the COVID-19 shutdowns and mandates he imposed during the early months of the pandemic.

DeWine's three opponents — former U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci, former state Rep. Ron Hood and farmer Joe Blystone — all tapped into that anger, but appear to have split the far-right vote. Still, DeWine didn't take

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any chances and poured millions into advertising during the race's final weeks.

On the Democratic side, Whaley became the first woman in state history to receive a major party's backing. She defeated former Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley in a race that drew relatively little attention as much of the state focused on the contentious Senate Republican primary and the ongoing redistricting legal battle. Whaley had the support of the state's top Democrat, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, a popular household name, while Cranley had the backing of feminist icon Gloria Steinem.

The two candidates saw eye-to-eye on most major issues — guns, abortion rights, social justice — but Whaley had repeatedly pointed out that Cranley only recently said he was pro-choice.

Trump-backed Secretary of State Frank LaRose also won his party's nomination for another term.

In the House, Republican Max Miller, a former Trump campaign and White House aide, won the GOP nomination in the sprawling new 7th District in northeast Ohio, despite allegations from his ex-girlfriend, former White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham, that he grew violent with her as their relationship deteriorated. He has denied the charges.

Miller was initially recruited to challenge Republican Rep. Anthony Gonzalez, one of the 10 House Republicans who voted in favor of Trump's impeachment. But Gonzalez chose to retire instead.

Fiji says US can seize Russian superyacht but not right away

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — A judge in Fiji has ruled that U.S. authorities can seize a Russian-owned superyacht — but has put a hold on his order until at least Friday while defense lawyers mount a challenge.

The yacht Amadea — worth \$325 million — had earlier been stopped from leaving the South Pacific nation because of its links to Russia. That order will stand for now, preventing U.S. authorities from taking the yacht to Hawaii or elsewhere.

A question remains over which of two Russian oligarchs really owns the Amadea, with only one of them facing sanctions. There are also questions about how far U.S. jurisdiction extends into Fiji.

Suva High Court Justice Deepthi Amaratunga on Tuesday granted an order allowing the U.S. to seize the superyacht after the U.S. had earlier filed a warrant. But the judge has also allowed for a pause while defense lawyers put together their challenge.

The judge's next decision in the case will come on Friday, when he will decide whether to continue to put a hold on the yacht's seizure pending a formal appeal by the defense.

The U.S. Justice Department in March announced the creation of a team of federal agents and prosecutors to pursue wealthy Russians or those aiding Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The team, called Task Force KleptoCapture, was set up to seize assets belonging to oligarchs with the aim of pressuring Russia to end the war.

The U.S. claims the real owner of the superyacht Amadea is Suleiman Kerimov. The economist and former Russian politician was sanctioned by the U.S. in 2018 for alleged money laundering and has faced further sanctions from Canada, Europe, Britain and other nations after Russia invaded Ukraine.

Kerimov made a fortune investing in Russian gold producer Polyus, with Forbes magazine putting his net worth at \$14.5 billion.

But defense lawyers claim the real owner is Eduard Khudainatov, the former chairman and chief executive of Rosneft, the state-controlled Russian oil and gas company. Khudainatov currently does not appear to face any sanctions, unlike many oligarchs and people with close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin who have been sanctioned since the war began.

As with many superyachts, determining the real ownership of the Amadea is difficult due to the shadowy trail of trusts and shell companies. On paper, the superyacht is registered in the Cayman Islands and owned by Millemarin Investments Ltd., also based in the Cayman Islands.

Defense lawyers have claimed in court that Millemarin Investments Ltd. is the legal owner of the vessel and that the company is linked to the real, or beneficial, owner, Khudainatov. But U.S. authorities have

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claimed that behind all the various fronts, the real owner is Kerimov.

On April 19, after the yacht had sailed into Fiji from Mexico, the High Court in Suva ordered that the Amadea not leave Fiji until the merits of the U.S. warrant to seize the vessel were determined. Perhaps reflecting the question over ownership, the court later ordered Fijian prosecutors to amend an original summons, which named just Kerimov, to also include Millemarin Investments Ltd. as a second respondent to the case.

For now, the yacht continues to sit in a Fijian harbor with its crew of about 25 rotating on and off the vessel, while a police officer remains on board to ensure it stays put.

According to Boat International, the Amadea is 106 meters long and was built in 2017. It features a stainless steel albatross that extends off the bow and weighs more than 5 tons, a live lobster tank in the galley, a 10-meter (33-foot) pool, a hand-painted Pleyel piano and a large helipad.

The U.S. Embassy in Suva earlier said in a statement that the U.S. was acting with allies and partners around the world to impose costs on Russia because of its "war of choice."

"We continue to ratchet up the pressure on Putin's oligarchs and we are working with allies and partners to go after corrupt gains from some of the individuals closest to Putin, no matter where they are held around the world," the embassy said.

Residents wary as fire burns near northeast New Mexico town

By CEDAR ATTANASIO and SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

LAS VEGAS, N.M. (AP) — Martina Gonzales and her grandson watched from their front yard as aircraft disappeared into a giant plume of smoke to fight a growing wildfire that has burned hundreds of square miles, destroyed about 170 homes and threatens more destruction if weekend winds whip, as predicted, through the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

"My grandson has actually, um, been a little bit scared, nervous," Gonzales said Tuesday — the day New Mexico's governor asked President Joe Biden to declare a disaster so federal aid can come for the largest blaze burning in the U.S.

"The smoke was really bad yesterday," Gonzales said as 4-year-old Lukas, despite his fear, yelled "airplane" every time one flew to the fight to save Las Vegas, their small farm and ranch community in northeastern New Mexico.

Gonzales' car is packed with valuables in case an evacuation order comes. But she said that if the entire regional hub of about 13,000 people has to flee, she's not sure where they'll go. The residential care home where she works as a pharmacist started moving elderly clients out on Monday.

Nearly 200 patients at the state psychiatric hospital in Las Vegas also evacuated Monday.

"We've been seeing a lot of fire trucks go up the street," Gonzales said. "And actually, the fire looks like it's right over this little mountain."

During a briefing on the wind-whipped fire burning through dry landscape, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed her request for a presidential disaster declaration and said she hoped it would bring financial help for recovery efforts. She called it important to seek the declaration now, rather than waiting until the fire is out.

Lujan Grisham, a first-term Democrat who is running for reelection, said Tuesday night that the number of homes under mandatory evacuation had jumped from 6,000 to about 15,500. The governor said the number of homes destroyed would likely go much higher.

"I have families who don't know what the next day looks like," she said. "I have families who are trying to navigate their children and health care resources, figure out their livelihoods and they're in every single little community and it must feel to them like they are out there on their own."

Fire managers offered assurances, explanations and warnings at an evening briefing at the local community college. They put the amount of newly charred land up slightly on Tuesday, to about 231 square miles (598 square kilometers), but said containment remained at just 20%.

Dan Pearson, a U.S. Forest Service fire behavior analyst, called the day "a brief reprieve from the extreme

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conditions we have been experiencing," but warned that dry winds are expected to increase and shift on Wednesday, pushing fire and smoke toward Las Vegas.

"Tomorrow, we're back to red-flag criteria," Pearson said, adding that forecasts called for better firefighting conditions Thursday and Friday before winds increase and gusts whip to 50 mph (80 kph) or more during the weekend.

"So, if I have one message out there: Please be super careful this weekend, more than you already are," he said.

San Miguel County Sheriff Chris Lopez said he has fielded calls from people worried about safety if the fire crests a ridge just west of Las Vegas. Schools in the community canceled classes at least through Wednesday.

"I can tell you, from my training and experience, town is very defendable," Lopez said. "As you go further into town, it becomes a lot more defensible. And you know, we're doing everything we can to prepare for that."

Fire engines and crews worked Tuesday on the edge of town, and bulldozers cleared more fire lines on the outskirts. Air tanker and helicopter pilots took advantage of a break in the thick smoke and falling ash to drop fire retardant and water.

Authorities said flames remain a couple of miles from Las Vegas, which is also home to the United World College and New Mexico Highlands University.

New Mexico has been swept by waves of hot, dry and windy weather across the Southwest. Forecasters have also issued warnings for parts of Arizona and Colorado, and authorities in Texas urged people there to be careful after several fires started on Monday.

Wildfires have become a year-round threat in the drought-stricken West — moving faster and burning hotter than ever due to climate change, scientists and fire experts say. Fire officials also point to overgrown and unhealthy forested areas where built-up vegetation can worsen wildfire conditions.

Nationally, the National Interagency Fire Center reported Tuesday that a dozen uncontained large fires have burned about 400 square miles (1,000 square kilometers) in five states, including New Mexico. Nearly 3,500 wildland firefighters and support personnel are assigned to fires burning across the country.

On the northern flank of the big New Mexico fire, crews were trying to keep the flames from reaching the towns of Cleveland and Mora as winds shifted, said Todd Abel, a fire operations section chief. Fire lines were holding, but state officials urged residents who have refused to leave evacuation areas to reconsider, calling conditions dangerous.

The fire merged last week with another blaze sparked in early April when a prescribed fire set by land managers escaped containment. The cause of the other fire remains under investigation.

Lujan Grisham said Tuesday that the federal government bears some responsibility.

Another New Mexico wildfire burning through forested areas to the northeast had forced the evacuations of about 800 homes while charring 92 square miles (238 square kilometers).

A separate fire burning in the mountains near Los Alamos National Laboratory prompted the evacuation of about 200 homes. It has charred more than 39 square miles (101 square kilometers) and destroyed at least three homes.

With abortion in jeopardy, minority women have most to lose

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS and LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — If you are Black or Hispanic in a conservative state that already limits access to abortions, you are far more likely than a white woman to have one.

And if the U.S. Supreme court allows states to further restrict or even ban abortions, minority women will bear the brunt of it, according to statistics analyzed by The Associated Press.

The potential impact on minority women became all the more clear on Monday with the leak of a draft Supreme Court opinion suggesting the court's conservative majority is poised to overturn the landmark 1973 decision legalizing abortion. The draft decision is not yet final but it sent shockwaves through the

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country. Overturning the Roe v. Wade decision would give states authority to decide abortion's legality. Roughly half, largely in the South and Midwest, are likely to quickly ban abortion.

When it comes to the effect on minority women, the numbers are unambiguous. In Mississippi, people of color comprise 44% of the population but 81% of women receiving abortions, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, which tracks health statistics.

In Texas, they're 59% of the population and 74% of those receiving abortions. The numbers in Alabama are 35% and 69%. In Louisiana, minorities represent 42% of the population, according to the state Health Department, and about 72% of those receiving abortions.

"Abortion restrictions are racist," said Cathy Torres, an organizing manager with Frontera Fund, a Texas organization that helps women pay for abortions. "They directly impact people of color, Black, brown, Indigenous people ... people who are trying to make ends meet."

Why the great disparities? Laurie Bertram Roberts, executive director of the Alabama-based Yellowhammer Fund, which provides financial support for women seeking abortion, said women of color in states with restrictive abortion laws often have limited access to health care and a lack of choices for effective birth control. Schools often have ineffective or inadequate sex education.

If abortions are outlawed, those same women — often poor — will likely have the hardest time traveling to distant parts of the country to terminate pregnancies or raising children they might struggle to afford, said Roberts, who is Black and once volunteered at Mississippi's only abortion clinic.

"We're talking about folks who are already marginalized," Roberts said.

Amanda Furdge, who is Black, was one of those women. She was a single, unemployed college student already raising one baby in 2014 when she found out she was pregnant with another. She said she didn't know how she could afford another child.

She'd had two abortions in Chicago. Getting access to an abortion provider there was no problem, Furdge said. But now she was in Mississippi, having moved home to escape an abusive relationship. Misled by advertising, she first went to a crisis pregnancy center that tried to talk her out of an abortion. By the time she found the abortion clinic, she was too far along to have the procedure.

She's not surprised by the latest news on the Supreme Court's likely decision. Most people who aren't affected don't consider the stakes.

"People are going to have to vote," said Furdge, 34, who is happily raising her now 7-year-old son but continues to advocate for women having the right to choose. "People are going to have to put the people in place to make the decisions that align with their values. When they don't, things like this happen."

Torres said historically, anti-abortion laws have been crafted in ways that hurt low-income women. She pointed to the Hyde Amendment, a 1980 law that prevents the use of federal funds to pay for abortions except in rare cases.

She also cited the 2021 Texas law that bans abortion after around six weeks of pregnancy. Where she lives, near the U.S.-Mexico border in the Rio Grande Valley, women are forced to travel to obtain abortions and must pass in-state border patrol checkpoints where they have to disclose their citizenship status, she said.

Regardless of what legislators say, Torres insisted, the intent is to target women of color, to control their bodies: "They know who these restrictions are going to affect. They know that, but they don't care."

But Andy Gipson, a former member of the Mississippi Legislature who is now the state's agriculture and commerce commissioner, said race had nothing to do with passage of Mississippi's law against abortion after the 15th week. That law is the one now before the Supreme Court in a direct challenge to Roe v. Wade.

Gipson, a Baptist minister who is white, said he believes all people are created in the image of God and have an "innate value" that starts at conception. Mississippi legislators were trying to protect women and babies by putting limits on abortion, he said.

"I absolutely disagree with the concept that it's racist or about anything other than saving babies' lives," said Gipson, a Republican. "It's about saving lives of the unborn and the lives and health of the mother, regardless of what color they are."

To those who say that forcing women to have babies will subject them to hardships, Mississippi Attorney

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General Lynn Fitch, a white Republican, said it is “easier for working mothers to balance professional success and family life” than it was 49 years ago when Roe was decided.

Fitch, who is divorced, often points to her own experience of working outside the home while raising three children. But Fitch grew up in an affluent family and has worked in the legal profession — both factors that can give working women the means and the flexibility to get help raising children.

That’s not the case for many minority women in Mississippi or elsewhere. Advocates say in many places where abortion services are being curtailed, there’s little support for women who carry a baby to term.

Mississippi is one of the poorest states, and people in low-wage jobs often don’t receive health insurance. Women can enroll in Medicaid during pregnancy, but that coverage disappears soon after they give birth.

Mississippi has the highest infant mortality rate in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Black infants were about twice as likely as white infants to die during the first year of life in Mississippi, according to the March of Dimes.

Across the country, U.S. Census Bureau information analyzed by The Associated Press shows fewer Black and Hispanic women have health insurance, especially in states with tight abortion restrictions. For example, in Texas, Mississippi and Georgia, at least 16% of Black women and 36% of Latinas were uninsured in 2019, some of the highest such rates in the country.

Problems are compounded in states without effective education programs about reproduction. Mississippi law says sex education in public schools must emphasize abstinence to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Discussion of abortion is forbidden, and instructors may not demonstrate how to use condoms or other contraception.

The Mississippi director for Planned Parenthood Southeast, Tyler Harden, is a 26-year-old Black woman who had an abortion about five years ago, an experience that drove her to a career supporting pregnant women and preserving abortion rights.

She said when she was attending public school in rural Mississippi, she didn’t learn about birth control. Instead, a teacher stuck clear tape on students’ arms. The girls were told to put it on another classmate’s arm, and another, and watch how it lost the ability to form a bond.

“They’d tell you, ‘If you have sex, this is who you are now: You’re just like this piece of tape — all used up and washed up and nobody would want it,’” Harden said.

When she became pregnant at 21, she knew she wanted an abortion. Her mother was battling cancer and Harden was in her last semester of college without a job or a place to live after graduation.

She said she was made to feel fear and shame, just as she had during sex ed classes. When she went to the clinic, she said protesters told her she was “killing the most precious gift” from God and that she was “killing a Black baby, playing into what white supremacists want.”

Harden’s experience is not uncommon. The anti-abortion movement has often portrayed the abortion fight in racial terms.

Outside the only abortion clinic operating in Mississippi, protesters hand out brochures that refer to abortion as Black “genocide” and say the late Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood and a proponent of eugenics, “desired to eradicate minorities.” The brochures compare Sanger to Adolf Hitler and proclaim: “Black lives did not matter to Margaret Sanger!”

The Mississippi clinic is not affiliated with Planned Parenthood, and Planned Parenthood itself denounces Sanger’s belief in eugenics.

White people are not alone in making this argument. Alveda King, an evangelist who is a niece of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., is among the Black opponents of abortion who, for years, have been portraying abortion as a way to wipe out people of their race.

Tanya Britton, a former president of Pro-Life Mississippi, often drives three hours from her home in the northern part of the state to pray outside the abortion clinic in Jackson. Britton is Black, and she said it’s a tragedy that the number of Black babies aborted since Roe would equal the population of several large cities. She also said people are too casual about terminating pregnancies.

“You just can’t take the life of someone because this is not convenient — ‘I want to finish my education,’” Britton said. “You wouldn’t kill your 2-year-old because you were in graduate school.”

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But state Rep. Zakiya Summers of Jackson, who is Black and a mother, suggested there's nothing casual about what poor women are doing. Receiving little support in Mississippi — for example, the Legislature killed a proposal to expand postpartum Medicaid coverage in 2021 -- they are sometimes forced to make hard decisions.

"Women are just out here trying to survive, you know?" she said. "And Mississippi doesn't make it any easier."

Primary takeaways: Trump passes test as kingmaker in Ohio

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

The primary elections in Ohio and Indiana on Tuesday stood as the first real test of former President Donald Trump's status as the Republican Party kingmaker — and he passed.

Takeaways from the races:

TRUMP'S CLOUT

Trump's chosen candidate, "Hillbilly Elegy" author and one-time investment banker JD Vance, won the crowded Republican primary for U.S. Senate in Ohio, giving Trump a strong beginning to primary season.

Vance, former State Treasurer Josh Mandel, businessman Mike Gibbons and former state GOP chair Jane Timken all vied for Trump's endorsement, increasingly adopting language that mirrored the former president's bombastic, populist style. In the end, Trump went with Vance, who in 2016 said the celebrity businessman could become "America's Hitler" but has since become an avid supporter.

Vance wooed the former president by echoing his bashing of immigrants, skepticism about U.S. military involvement overseas — even in support of Ukraine — and lies about Trump's defeat in the 2020 election. Lagging in the polls when he received Trump's endorsement three weeks ago, Vance made it a centerpiece of his closing pitch and vaulted ahead of his rivals.

Vance will face Democratic U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan in November's general election as they compete for the seat held by retiring GOP Sen. Rob Portman. Trump won Ohio by 8 percentage points in 2020, and the state has swung to the right under his influence. Replacing Portman, a traditional Republican and no fan of Trump's, with Vance would move the Senate further in the former president's direction.

POWER OF ELECTION DENIAL

Ohio's Republican secretary of state, Frank LaRose, easily survived a primary challenge from John Adams, who denies that President Joe Biden won the 2020 election and ran as a full-throated skeptic of modern voting systems.

But Ohio's Republican primary still shows the power that Trump's election lies have on his party's base. An AP-NORC poll last year found two-thirds of Republicans believe Biden was not legitimately elected, even though the contest was free of any significant voter fraud and repeated investigations, audits and court cases have disproved Trump's claims.

LaRose initially said the 2020 election was secure and accurate, but as the primary neared, he began to echo some of Trump's talking points. He claimed there were problems in other states and touted his office's work to combat voter fraud.

Trump endorsed LaRose, a longtime supporter. Since Ohio wasn't a battleground and Trump won the state easily, the incumbent secretary of state never got on his bad side in the days after he 2020 loss.

In contrast, in swing state Michigan — one of the states Trump claimed to win in 2020, even though he actually lost it — Trump endorsed an election conspiracy theorist, Kristina Karamo. She won the GOP nomination for secretary of state last month. Plenty of other Trump-backed election deniers are competing in upcoming Republican primaries.

RESILIENT GOVERNORS

Trump and his populist supporters have shaken up their party and pushed its incumbents in Trump's direction in many places, but one weak point so far are governor's mansions.

Ohio was the clearest example of that. Trump castigated Republican Gov. Mike DeWine for his strict coronavirus policies in 2020, but DeWine cruised to victory in the primary. He will face Democrat Nan

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Whaley in the general election. Whaley, the former mayor of Dayton, is the first woman nominated by a major party for Ohio governor.

Ohio is not the only place where a GOP governor is well positioned against a primary challenger. Idaho's Brad Little has a strong fundraising advantage against his conservative opponent, Lt. Gov. Janice McGeachin. In Georgia, Gov. Brian Kemp is a strong favorite against former Sen. David Perdue, whom Trump recruited to punish Kemp for not supporting his election lies and for certifying Biden's victory in the state.

Governors are helped by their incumbency, the wide range of popular conservative policies they can announce and federal coronavirus relief that has taken the pressure off state budgets. DeWine, for example, outraised his foes by millions of dollars and was able to benefit from, for example, the chip firm Intel's announcement it will invest \$20 million in the state.

DeWine got another boost because his opposition was split between former U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci and farmer Joe Blystone. Trump didn't make an endorsement in the race.

DEMOCRATS SPURN THE LEFT, AGAIN

In the Cleveland area, Democratic Rep. Shontel Brown trounced former state Sen. Nina Turner in yet another battle between the party's establishment and progressive wings.

Turner co-chaired Sen. Bernie Sanders' presidential primary campaign and lost to Brown in last year's special election for the seat after its previous occupant, Marcia Fudge, became Biden's secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Turner ran again, hoping that the district might be more amenable to her approach after it was redrawn to include more Democratic areas.

No such luck. Brown's easy victory is a reminder that the left has a very uneven track record in Democratic primaries, notching a few high-profile wins like that of U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in New York City, but mostly a long string of losses. Trump may have changed Republican primaries, but Democratic ones still tilt toward the same establishment that has run the party for decades.

IN INDIANA, INCUMBENCY BEATS 'LIBERTY'

Legislative races in Indiana showed the power of incumbency, even amid rising conservative anger.

Activists infuriated by the state's coronavirus restrictions organized roughly two dozen so-called liberty candidates to take on lawmakers in the GOP primary whom they saw as too supportive of Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb's public health measures. The picture was mixed on Tuesday night, with several of those races uncalled.

But the challengers were repeatedly coming up short taking on incumbent legislators. One incumbent targeted as too close to the party establishment lost his primary, but so did an incumbent who encouraged the liberty candidates. And in at least 10 other races, the liberty candidates fell short.

It's a reminder that, even in Trump's GOP, conservative insurgents don't always have an easy path against incumbents.

Early transgender identity tends to endure, study suggests

By LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer

Children who begin identifying as transgender at a young age tend to retain that identity at least for several years, a study published Wednesday suggests.

The research involved 317 youngsters who were 3 to 12 years old when they were recruited to the study. Five years later, at the study's end, 94% were living as transgender and almost two-thirds were using either puberty-blocking medication or sex hormones to medically transition.

Most children in the study were from white, high-income families who supported their transitions. On average, the kids began identifying as transgender at around age 6.

It's unknown whether similar results would be found among youngsters from less advantaged backgrounds or those who begin identifying as transgender as teenagers. The study was published online in *Pediatrics*.

Politicians seeking to outlaw or criminalize medical treatment for transgender youth have cited evidence suggesting many change children their minds or "retransition."

Some doctors say that's why transgender medication or surgery shouldn't be offered until affected kids reach adulthood, but rigorous research on the numbers is lacking. The *Pediatrics* study is one of the larg-

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est to look at the issue, although not all kids had started treatment and none had transgender surgery.

The study is "incredibly timely ... and sorely needed," said Coleen Williams, a psychologist who works with Boston Children's Hospital's Gender Multispecialty Service, a clinic that treats transgender kids.

"If you're in the trenches doing this work day-in and day-out with trans kiddos and their families, this is what we see," said Williams, who was not involved in the study. "A majority of transgender youth and kids who make a social transition remain living in their affirmed gender."

Families were recruited to participate in the study from social media groups for trans kids, camps, conferences and word of mouth in about 40 states.

Kristina Olson, a Princeton University psychologist who led the study, said a few of the children transitioned back briefly during the study but by the end, most had returned to a transgender identity.

"It suggests that our model of thinking about people as they're either X or Y, they're either cisgender or transgender ... is kind of an antiquated way of thinking about gender," Olson said.

She noted that when the study began, in 2013, "nonbinary" wasn't a common term and the children studied used male or female pronouns. That may change as the researchers follow them through their teen years. The youngsters were around age 12 on average when the study ended.

The Society for Evidence-Based Gender Medicine, a nonprofit group of health professionals who are concerned about medical transition risks for minors, said other evidence shows high numbers of kids outgrow transgender identities by puberty or adulthood. Some researchers point to flaws in that data.

Dr. William Malone, an advisor to the group, said the new study appears to reinforce concerns "that early social gender transition may cement a young person's transgender identity, and lead minors on the path to eventual medicalization, with all its inherent risks and uncertainties."

Justices' views on abortion in their own words and votes

By MARK SHERMAN and JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When the Supreme Court heard arguments in a major abortion case from Mississippi in December, it was clear to observers that there was substantial support among the court's conservative majority for overruling two landmark decisions that established and reaffirmed a woman's right to an abortion.

So when a draft of the opinion in the case written by Justice Samuel Alito was leaked late Monday the potential outcome — the overruling of *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* — was not the surprise. It was that the draft was leaked at all.

Even before arguments in the current case, however, the justices themselves have had a lot to say about abortion over the years — in opinions, votes, Senate confirmation testimony and elsewhere. One justice, Clarence Thomas, has openly called for overruling *Roe* and *Casey*.

A sampling of their comments:

CHIEF JUSTICE JOHN ROBERTS

Roberts voted to uphold restrictions in two major abortion cases, in the majority in 2007 to uphold a ban on a method of abortion opponents call "partial-birth abortion" and in dissent in 2016 when the court struck down Texas restrictions on abortion clinics in a case called *Whole Woman's Health*. But when a virtually identical law from Louisiana came before the court in 2020, Roberts voted against it and wrote the opinion controlling the outcome of the case and striking down the Louisiana law. The chief justice said he continues to believe that the 2016 case "was wrongly decided" but that the question was "whether to adhere to it in deciding the present case."

Roberts' views on when to break with court precedent could determine how far he is willing to go in the Mississippi case. At his 2005 confirmation hearing, he said overturning precedent "is a jolt to the legal system," which depends in part on stability and evenhandedness. Thinking that an earlier case was wrongly decided is not enough, he said. Overturning a case requires looking "at these other factors, like settled expectations, like the legitimacy of the Court, like whether a particular precedent is workable or not, whether a precedent has been eroded by subsequent developments," Roberts said then.

In the same hearing, Roberts was asked to explain his presence on a legal brief filed by the George H.W.

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Bush administration that said Roe's conclusion that there is a right to abortion has "no support in the text, structure, or history of the Constitution." Roberts responded that the brief reflected the administration's views.

JUSTICE CLARENCE THOMAS

Thomas voted to overturn Roe in 1992, in his first term on the court, when he was a dissenter in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. He has repeatedly called for Roe and Casey to be overturned since.

In 2000, he wrote in dissent when the court struck down Nebraska's ban on "partial-birth abortion." Recounting the court's decision in Roe, he wrote, "In 1973, this Court struck down an Act of the Texas Legislature that had been in effect since 1857, thereby rendering unconstitutional abortion statutes in dozens of States. As some of my colleagues on the Court, past and present, ably demonstrated, that decision was grievously wrong. Abortion is a unique act, in which a woman's exercise of control over her own body ends, depending on one's view, human life or potential human life. Nothing in our Federal Constitution deprives the people of this country of the right to determine whether the consequences of abortion to the fetus and to society outweigh the burden of an unwanted pregnancy on the mother. Although a State may permit abortion, nothing in the Constitution dictates that a State must do so."

JUSTICE STEPHEN BREYER

Breyer has been the lead author of two court majorities in defense of abortion rights, in 2000 and 2016. He has never voted to sustain an abortion restriction, but he has acknowledged the controversy over abortion.

Millions of Americans believe "that an abortion is akin to causing the death of an innocent child," while millions of others "fear that a law that forbids abortion would condemn many American women to lives that lack dignity," he wrote in the Nebraska case 21 years ago, calling those views "virtually irreconcilable." Still, Breyer wrote, because the Constitution guarantees "fundamental individual liberty" and has to govern even when there are strong divisions in the country, "this Court, in the course of a generation, has determined and then redetermined that the Constitution offers basic protection to the woman's right to choose."

JUSTICE SAMUEL ALITO

Alito has a long track record of votes and writings opposing abortion rights, as a jurist and, earlier, a government lawyer.

Alito has voted to uphold every abortion law the court has considered since his 2006 confirmation, joining a majority to uphold the federal "partial-birth" abortion law and dissenting in the 2016 and 2020 cases.

As a federal appeals court judge, he voted to uphold a series of Pennsylvania abortion restrictions, including requiring a woman to notify her spouse before obtaining an abortion. The Supreme Court ultimately struck down the notification rule in *Casey* and reaffirmed the abortion right in 1992 by a 5-4 vote.

Working for the Reagan administration in 1985, Alito wrote in a memo that the government should say publicly in a pending abortion case "that we disagree with *Roe v. Wade*." Around the same time, applying for a promotion, Alito noted he was "particularly proud" of his work arguing "that the Constitution does not protect a right to an abortion."

JUSTICE SONIA SOTOMAYOR

Sotomayor joined the court in 2009 with virtually no record on abortion issues, but has voted repeatedly in favor of abortion rights since then. Recently, when the court allowed Texas' restrictive abortion law to take effect, Sotomayor accused her colleagues of burying "their heads in the sand." She was in the majority in the Texas and Louisiana abortion clinic cases.

Sotomayor's displeasure with the court's recent Texas ruling was evident at a virtual appearance she made. "I can't change Texas' law, but you can," she said.

JUSTICE ELENA KAGAN

Kagan also has repeatedly voted in favor of abortion rights in more than 11 years as a justice. She is also arguably the most consistent voice on the court arguing for the importance of adhering to precedents and can be expected to try to persuade her colleagues not to jettison constitutional protections for abortion.

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Kagan was in the majority when the court struck down the Texas and Louisiana restrictions on abortion clinics. More recently, Kagan called Texas' new abortion law "patently unconstitutional" and a "clear, and indeed undisputed, conflict with Roe and Casey."

Kagan had already grappled with the issue of abortion before becoming a justice. While working in the Clinton White House she was the co-author of a memo that urged the president for political reasons to support a late-term abortion ban proposed by Republicans in Congress, so long as it contained an exception for the health of the woman. Ultimately, President George W. Bush signed a similar late-term abortion ban without a health exception. The Supreme Court upheld it.

JUSTICE NEIL GORSUCH

Gorsuch has perhaps the shortest record on abortion among the nine justices. He was in the majority allowing Texas' restrictive abortion law to take effect. In dissent in 2020, he would have upheld Louisiana's abortion clinic restrictions. As an appeals court judge before joining the Supreme Court in 2017, Gorsuch dissented when his colleagues declined to reconsider a ruling that blocked then-Utah Gov. Gary Herbert from cutting off funding for the state branch of Planned Parenthood. But Gorsuch insisted at his Senate confirmation hearing that he was concerned about procedural issues, not the subject matter. "I do not care if the case is about abortion or widgets or anything else," he said.

JUSTICE BRETT KAVANAUGH

Kavanaugh's name was added to President Donald Trump's shortlist of Supreme Court candidates shortly after he sided with the administration in a 2017 case involving abortion. Trump chose him for the court the following year. As a justice, Kavanaugh dissented from the Louisiana decision and voted to allow the new Texas law to take effect, though he has taken a less absolutist stance than some of his conservative colleagues. In the Louisiana case, for example, Kavanaugh wrote that more information was needed about how the state's restrictions on clinics would affect doctors who provide abortions and seemed to suggest his vote could change knowing that information.

Kavanaugh's most extensive writing on abortion came while he was a judge on the federal appeals court in Washington. The Trump administration had appealed a lower court ruling ordering it to allow a pregnant 17-year-old immigrant in its custody to get an abortion. The administration's policy was to decline to help those minors get abortions while in custody.

Kavanaugh was on a three-judge panel that postponed the abortion, arguing that officials should be given a limited window to transfer the minor out of government custody to the care of a sponsor. She could then obtain an abortion without the government's assistance. The full appeals court later reversed the decision and the teenager obtained an abortion. Kavanaugh called that decision out-of-step with the "many majority opinions of the Supreme Court that have repeatedly upheld reasonable regulations that do not impose an undue burden on the abortion right recognized by the Supreme Court in Roe v. Wade."

Kavanaugh was criticized by some conservatives for not going as far as a colleague, Judge Karen Henderson, who stated unambiguously that an immigrant in the U.S. illegally has no right to an abortion. At his appeals court confirmation hearing, Kavanaugh dodged questions on his own personal beliefs on Roe v. Wade.

Kavanaugh voted to allow the Texas law to go into effect in September, but during oral arguments earlier this month he appeared to have doubts about its novel structure and whether it would lead to a spate of copycat laws on abortion and other rights protected by the Constitution.

JUSTICE AMY CONEY BARRETT

Barrett's one public vote on the Supreme Court concerning abortion was to allow the Texas "fetal heart-beat" law to take effect. She also cast two votes as an appeals court judge to reconsider rulings that blocked Indiana abortion restrictions.

In 2016, shortly before the election that would put Trump in office, she commented about how she thought abortion law might change if Trump had the chance to appoint justices. "I ... don't think the core case — Roe's core holding that, you know, women have a right to an abortion — I don't think that would change," said Barrett, then a Notre Dame law professor. She said limits on what she called "very late-term

abortions" and restrictions on abortion clinics would be more likely to be upheld.

Barrett also has a long record of personal opposition to abortion rights, co-authoring a 1998 law review article that said abortion is "always immoral." At her 2017 hearing to be an appeals court judge, Barrett said in written testimony, "If I am confirmed, my views on this or any other question will have no bearing on the discharge of my duties as a judge."

Although Barrett allowed the Texas law to take effect, she joined Kavanaugh during oral arguments in raising skeptical questions about its structure, asking 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."

New Mexico governor seeking US disaster status for wildfire

By CEDAR ATTANASIO and SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

LAS VEGAS, N.M. (AP) — New Mexico's governor on Tuesday asked President Joe Biden to declare a disaster as firefighters scrambled to clear brush, build fire lines and spray water to keep the largest blaze burning in the U.S. from destroying more homes in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

During a briefing on the fire burning across the state's northeast, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed a request for a presidential disaster declaration that will be sent to the White House in hopes of freeing up financial assistance for recovery efforts. She said it was important that the declaration be made on the front end rather than waiting until the fire is out.

"I'm unwilling to wait," said Lujan Grisham, a first-term Democrat who is running for reelection. "I have families who don't know what the next day looks like, I have families who are trying to navigate their children and health care resources, figure out their livelihoods and they're in every single little community and it must feel to them like they are out there on their own."

In the small northeastern New Mexico city of Las Vegas, residents were already voicing concerns about grocery stores being closed as some people chose to leave ahead of the flames even though evacuations had not been ordered.

Fire managers told an evening briefing at the local community college that the spread slowed a bit on Tuesday, and put the amount of newly charred land up slightly, to about 231 square miles (598 square kilometers) of mountainsides, towering ponderosa pines and meadows.

Officials have reported about 170 homes destroyed, about 15,500 homes under mandatory evacuation and said the state's psychiatric hospital in Las Vegas remained evacuated. Schools in the community canceled classes at least through Wednesday.

Dan Pearson, a U.S. Forest Service fire behavior analyst, called Tuesday "a brief reprieve from the extreme conditions we have been experiencing," but warned that winds are expected to increase and shift on Wednesday, pushing fire and smoke toward Las Vegas.

"Tomorrow, we're back to red-flag criteria," Pearson said, adding that forecasts called for better firefighting conditions on Thursday and Friday before winds increase and gusts whip to 50 mph (80 kph) or more during the weekend.

A battery of fire engines and their crews were busy Tuesday working to protect homes and other structures on the edge of Las Vegas while bulldozers cleared more fire lines on the outskirts. Air tanker and helicopter pilots took advantage of a break in the thick smoke and falling ash to drop fire retardant and water.

New Mexico was in the bull's eye for the nation's latest wave of hot, dry and windy weather. Forecasters also issued warnings for parts of Arizona and Colorado, and authorities in Texas urged people there to be careful after crews in that state had to respond to several new fires Monday.

Authorities in northeastern New Mexico said the flames were a couple of miles from Las Vegas, which serves as an economic hub for most of northeastern New Mexico and the ranching and farming families who have called the rural region home for generations. It's home to the United World College and New Mexico Highlands University.

The governor said during her briefing that the number of homes destroyed would likely go much higher

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given the ground that the fire has covered and the villages that it moved through over the past week.

San Miguel County officials said Tuesday they have been unable to get back into burned areas to continue assessments since conditions were too dangerous.

Wildfires have become a year-round threat in the drought-stricken West and they are moving faster and burning hotter than ever due to climate change, scientists and fire experts say. Fire officials also have said that many forested areas have become overgrown and unhealthy and that the buildup of vegetation can worsen wildfire conditions.

Nationally, the National Interagency Fire Center reported Tuesday that a dozen uncontained large fires have burned about 400 square miles (1,000 square kilometers) in five states, including New Mexico. Nearly 3,500 wildland firefighters and support personnel are assigned to fires burning across the country.

On the northern flank of the big New Mexico fire, crews were trying to keep the flames from reaching the town of Mora as the winds shifted. Bulldozed fire lines were holding, but state officials urged those residents who have refused to leave the area to reconsider, saying it's a dangerous situation.

Northeast of Las Vegas, on the other side of an interstate, is the Zamora Ranch. Owner Kenny Zamora has opened up his corrals and stables for livestock refugees, including 160 cattle, 50 horses, 70 sheep, 10 goats and a couple of pigs.

José Griego and wife Casey Taylor brought 10 horses and a small donkey to the ranch. Each has its own story: One was a wedding gift to the couple. Another is Griego's go-to horse for rounding up cattle.

"Everything that's breathing is out, and that's what matters," said Taylor, who teaches science in a nearby community.

State livestock inspectors said green flags are flying at the entrances of ranches where livestock are left behind during evacuations so that responders know later.

The fire merged last week with another blaze that was sparked in early April when a prescribed fire set by land managers escaped containment. The cause of the other fire remains under investigation.

Lujan Grisham said Tuesday that the federal government bears some responsibility.

Another New Mexico wildfire burning through forested areas to the northeast has forced the evacuations of about 800 homes while charring 92 square miles (238 square kilometers).

A separate fire burning in the mountains near Los Alamos National Laboratory prompted the evacuation of about 200 homes. It has charred more than 39 square miles (101 square kilometers) and destroyed at least three homes.

As US poised to restrict abortion, other nations ease access

By ASTRID SUÁREZ and CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — As women in the United States find themselves on the verge of possibly losing the constitutional right to abortion, courts in many other parts of the world have been moving in the opposite direction.

That includes in a number of traditionally conservative societies — such as recently in Colombia, where the Constitutional Court in February legalized the procedure until the 24th week of pregnancy, part of a broader trend seen in parts of heavily Catholic Latin America.

It's not yet clear what impact there will be outside the United States from the leaked draft opinion suggesting the U.S. Supreme Court could overturn the landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision.

But for women's activists who for years have led grinding campaigns demanding open access to abortion, often looking to the United States as a model, it's a discouraging sign and a reminder that hard-won gains can be impermanent.

"It is an awful precedent for the coming years for the region and the world," said Colombian Catalina Martínez Coral, Latin America and Caribbean director for the New York-based Center for Reproductive Rights, which was among the groups that litigated the abortion case in Colombia's high court.

The February ruling there established a broad right for women to have abortions within the 24-week period, whereas previously they could do so only in specific cases such as if a fetus presented malforma-

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tions or a pregnancy resulted from rape. Abortion is still allowed after that period under those special circumstances.

The decision fell short of advocates' hopes for a complete decriminalization, but Martínez Coral said it still left Colombia with the "most progressive legal framework in Latin America."

Similarly, Mexico's Supreme Court held last year that it was unconstitutional to punish abortion. As the country's highest court, its ruling bars all jurisdictions from charging a woman with a crime for terminating a pregnancy.

Statutes outlawing abortion are still on the books in most of Mexico's 32 states, however, and nongovernmental organizations that have long pushed for decriminalization are pressing state legislatures to reform them. Abortion was already readily available in Mexico City and some states.

To the south in Argentina, lawmakers in late 2020 passed a bill legalizing abortion until the 14th week and after that for circumstances similar to those described in the Colombia ruling.

It's also widely available in Cuba and Uruguay.

But expansion of abortion access has not extended to all of Latin America, with many countries restricting it to certain circumstances — such as Brazil, the region's most populous nation, where it's permissible only in cases of rape, risk to the woman's life and certified cases of the birth defect anencephaly. Former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who is seeking a new term in October, recently said he sees legalizing abortion as a public health issue, eliciting criticism in a country where few approve of the procedure.

Other places have total bans with no exceptions, such as Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Courts in the latter have given women long prison sentences for aggravated homicide even in cases where prosecutors suspect a miscarriage was actually an abortion.

Many African nations also maintain complete bans, but in October 2021, Benin legalized abortion in most circumstances up to 12 weeks. Previously it was permitted in cases of rape or incest; risk to the woman's life; or severe fetal malformation.

Most European countries have legalized abortion, including predominantly Catholic ones. Ireland did so in 2018, followed by tiny San Marino in a voter referendum last fall. It remains illegal in Andorra, Malta and Vatican City, while Poland last year tightened its abortion laws.

It's also been widely available in Israel since 1978 and relatively uncontroversial, allowed by law before the 24th week with the approval of hospital "termination committees" that consist of medical professionals including at least one woman.

Laws and interpretations vary across the Muslim world.

Abortion has been legal up to 12 weeks in Tunisia for decades, but in Iran it's been forbidden since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Last year the leader of Cairo's top institution of Islamic clerics, Al-Azhar, said abortion is not the solution even in cases where a child is likely to be seriously ill or disabled.

When the U.S. Supreme Court's final decision is handed down, expected in late June or early July, the world will be watching.

"While moves to decriminalize and legalize abortion in places like Argentina, Ireland, Mexico and Colombia in the last few years have been a huge win for the global community," Agnes Callamard, secretary-general of the human rights group Amnesty International, said in a statement, "there are grim signs that the United States is out of step with the progress that the rest of the world is making in protecting sexual and reproductive rights."

Live updates | Midterm results show strong Trump influence

By The Associated Press undefined

The midterm election season began in earnest Tuesday with primaries in Indiana and Ohio. Ohio's hotly contested Republican Senate race tested the enduring power of former President Donald Trump's influence, as his endorsed candidate, JD Vance, defeated six others for the GOP nomination for the seat held by retiring Republican Sen. Rob Portman.

Trump-endorsed Republicans Madison Gesiotto Gilbert and Max Miller won U.S. House primaries in north-

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east Ohio. Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose, also endorsed by Trump, won the state's Republican primary over a conservative challenger who questioned the legitimacy of the 2020 presidential election results.

HERE'S WHAT HAPPENED:

Election 2022: JD Vance wins Ohio's GOP Senate primary
Ohio Republican Gov. DeWine will face Nan Whaley this fall
Indiana GOP lawmakers hold off many hard-right challengers
Brown wins Ohio rematch with progressive activist Turner
Primary takeaways: Trump passes test as kingmaker in Ohio

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS:

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Donald Trump-endorsed Republican Madison Gesiotto Gilbert has won a crowded primary for an open U.S. House seat in northeast Ohio.

Gilbert, a North Canton columnist and conservative commentator who worked on Trump's 2020 campaign, bested six other Republicans on Tuesday to secure the GOP nomination for the Akron-area 13th Congressional District.

Gilbert will face Democratic state Rep. Emilia Sykes, who was unopposed in the primary, this November. Their contest will be one of the year's most competitive, with the newly drawn district viewed as a toss-up slightly favoring Democrats.

Among rivals defeated by Gilbert were anti-abortion activist Janet Folger Porter; lawyer and entrepreneur Greg Wheeler; and Shay Hawkins, an attorney and trade association president.

INDIANAPOLIS — Jennifer-Ruth Green has won the Republican nomination in a northwestern Indiana congressional district that the GOP is looking to capture after several decades as a Democratic stronghold.

Green, a Black U.S. Air Force veteran, won Tuesday's primary in the 1st Congressional District to challenge Democratic Rep. Frank Mrvan, who won his first term in 2020 following the retirement of 18-term Democratic Rep. Pete Visclosky.

The 1st District hugs Indiana's Lake Michigan shoreline near Chicago. Democrats have typically won there by large margins, but former President Donald Trump closed the gap by appealing to working-class voters in a district with some of the country's largest steel mills.

Green emerged from a seven-candidate Republican field that included former LaPorte Mayor Blair Milo, who was well connected with Indiana's Republican hierarchy after spending four years as a member of GOP Gov. Eric Holcomb's Cabinet leading state job-training programs.

Green had a combat deployment to Iraq and is now a lieutenant colonel in the Indiana Air National Guard. She had criticized Milo as not supportive enough of Trump, citing Milo's decision to step down as a delegate to the 2016 Republican convention rather than vote for Trump as the nominee.

COLUMBUS, Ohio — U.S. Senate candidate JD Vance struck a unifying tone as he accepted the Republican Party's nomination Tuesday.

He complimented his GOP opponents — including silencing boos for his most bitter rival, former Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel -- and pledged to appeal to the state's many moderates heading into November.

He said Democratic nominee Tim Ryan, a 10-term congressman, is "the very worst of modern American politics" for saying he stands for one thing and voting for another. He called Ryan "a guy who has spent 20 years failing the people of Youngstown and now wants the people of Ohio to give him a promotion."

Vance made it a point to reach out to Mandel's supporters.

"Some of the best people in the state of Ohio voted for Josh Mandel tonight. I hope to earn your support," he said.

But Vance called the conservative Club for Growth, which endorsed Mandel early and spent millions in negative attack ads against Vance, "one of the grossest organizations in professional establishment

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Washington.”

COLUMBUS, Ohio — U.S. Rep. Shontel Brown has won her Democratic primary in Cleveland, holding off a second challenge from progressive firebrand Nina Turner.

Brown’s victory in Ohio’s 11th Congressional District on Tuesday followed Turner’s loss of some key support she had from the party’s left flank during the pair’s first faceoff last August.

Turner, a former state senator, was endorsed by Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, whose 2020 presidential campaign she co-chaired. On the eve of Tuesday’s primary, she was also endorsed by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. But other members of “the squad” laid low this time, and the Congressional Progressive Caucus wound up endorsing Brown.

With her win, Brown is expected to hold on to the seat in November in the heavily Democratic district. She is a former member of the Cuyahoga County Council and chair of the county Democratic Party.

INDIANAPOLIS — Former state Sen. Erin Houchin has won the crowded Republican primary for an open congressional seat from a solidly GOP district in southern Indiana.

Houchin emerged Tuesday from a nine-candidate Republican field for the 9th Congressional District seat that opened up when current GOP Rep. Trey Hollingsworth unexpectedly announced in January he wouldn’t seek reelection after three terms.

The 45-year-old Houchin finished second to Hollingsworth in the 2016 GOP primary race. This time, she was able to overcome a self-funded campaign by wealthy trucking company owner Mike Sodrel, who attempted a political comeback for the seat he held for a single term after a 2004 election win.

Houchin resigned her state Senate seat in February after seven years to focus on the congressional race. Houchin was the only woman among the Republican candidates, and she also drew on her ties to GOP activists from her previous stints as former U.S. Sen. Dan Coats’ southeastern Indiana director and the 9th District’s Republican chair.

COLUMBUS, Ohio — JD Vance has won the Republican primary for Ohio’s open Senate seat, notching a major victory for former President Donald Trump, who had endorsed him.

The “Hillbilly Elegy” author defeated six other candidates Tuesday to claim the Republican nomination for the seat being vacated by retiring Republican Rob Portman.

Trump endorsed Vance less than three weeks before the primary at a time when state treasurer Josh Mandel and investment banker Mike Gibbons were leading in the polls.

The former president has staked his status as a GOP kingmaker on his ability to mobilize his supporters as he eyes another White House run in 2024.

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Republican Max Miller has won a U.S. House primary in northeast Ohio, in an early midterm victory for Donald Trump, who had endorsed him.

Miller, a former campaign and White House aide to the former president, prevailed in a four-way GOP primary Tuesday in Ohio’s newly drawn 7th Congressional District.

His path to the nomination eased when incumbent Rep. Bob Gibbs dropped out of contention in April, citing the chaos created by Ohio’s unresolved redistricting fight.

Miller will be favored this fall in the Republican-leaning district, which sprawls west and south of Cleveland. He faces Democrat Matthew Diemer, a Bay Village media entrepreneur and first-time candidate who was unopposed after two challengers left the race.

Miller was initially recruited to challenge U.S. Rep. Anthony Gonzalez, one of 10 House Republicans who voted to impeach Trump, but Gonzalez retired.

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Nan Whaley has won the Democratic nomination for Ohio governor, becoming the first woman in the state’s history to receive a major party’s backing for the office.

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Ohio has never elected a female governor, and the former Dayton mayor figures to be an underdog against incumbent Republican Gov. Mike DeWine, who sewed up his party's nomination despite angering conservatives with his aggressive pandemic mandates in a state that has swung to the right in recent years.

Whaley defeated former Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley on Tuesday in a race that drew little attention as much of the state focused on the contentious Senate Republican primary and ongoing redistricting legal battle.

She promised during the campaign to protect abortion rights and wants the state to add a \$15 minimum wage, universal preschool and better access to child care.

Ohio hasn't elected a Democrat to be governor since 2006. Despite being a presidential bellwether state for over a half century until 2020, Ohio has become more Republican under the influence of former President Donald Trump.

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio Republican Gov. Mike DeWine won his party's nomination for a second term in office despite angering many conservatives early in the pandemic with aggressive stay-at-home mandates and business shutdowns.

DeWine on Tuesday topped three far-right opponents, including former U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci, who painted the governor as a moderate not aligned with former President Donald Trump.

Despite some notable splits with Trump, DeWine managed to win a shot at a second term by relying on a huge fundraising advantage and a network of supporters built from a political career spanning more than 40 years.

DeWine will be a favorite again in November against the winner of the Democratic primary between Nan Whaley and John Cranley, two former Ohio mayors who have far less name recognition in a state that hasn't elected a Democrat governor since 2006.

DeWine touted his longtime record of opposing abortion, calling himself "the most pro-life governor in Ohio history."

In his first term, DeWine signed a bill banning abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected — at the time one of the most stringent restrictions in the nation. In the past year, he signed a "Stand Your Ground" law and scored a major win when Intel announced it was investing \$20 billion in two semiconductor factories near Columbus.

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose has won the state's Republican primary over a conservative challenger who questioned the legitimacy of the 2020 presidential election results.

LaRose defeated former state lawmaker John Adams in Tuesday's primary election. He will face Democrat Chelsea Clark, a suburban Cincinnati City Council member and businesswoman, in November. Clark was unopposed in Tuesday's primary.

LaRose was elected Ohio secretary of state in 2018 and presided over the state's 2020 election. LaRose defended the integrity of the vote count in the weeks after the 2020 election, saying, "Elections are run better and more honestly than really I think they ever have been." This year, however, while trying to win Donald Trump's endorsement, he changed his tune, saying he agreed with the former president that "voter fraud is a serious problem."

LaRose had Trump's endorsement in the race. He had backed Trump's first run for office in 2016 and was part of a team that handled logistics for Trump's 2017 inauguration.

Adams is an Army and Navy veteran and former state lawmaker who had criticized LaRose for his role in postponing the March 2020 primary during the coronavirus pandemic.

COLUMBUS, Ohio — U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan has won the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate in Ohio.

The 10-term congressman from Ohio's blue-collar Mahoning Valley defeated progressive Morgan Harper, a former consumer protection attorney, and one other rival to claim the Democratic nomination for the seat being vacated by retiring Republican Rob Portman.

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Ryan's victory was widely expected, given his long history in office and his backing by U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, the state's highest-ranking Democrat. Democrats see the November election as one of its best chances nationally to flip a seat.

Ryan will face the winner of the crowded Republican primary in the November general election. "Hillbilly Elegy" author JD Vance, former state treasurer Josh Mandel and investment banker Mike Gibbons are among the candidates competing for the GOP nomination. Vance was endorsed by former President Donald Trump.

Ryan directed his campaign message at working class Ohio residents, promising to increase jobs and boost wages.

Ohio Republican Gov. DeWine will face Nan Whaley this fall

By JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP) — Republican Gov. Mike DeWine on Tuesday won his party's nomination for a second term in office and will face Democrat Nan Whaley this fall after he overcame conservative anger of his strict pandemic policies and notable rifts with former President Donald Trump.

Whaley, a former Dayton mayor, became the first woman in state history to receive a major party's backing for the governor's office by defeating ex-Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley in a primary race that drew little attention.

DeWine fought off three far-right challengers in the GOP primary and will be a favorite again in November against Whaley, who has far less name recognition in a state that hasn't elected a Democratic governor since 2006.

Whaley thinks having a woman at the top of the ticket will be an advantage for Democrats this time, pointing out that the party has fared better with female voters in states that have nominated women for leadership roles.

She promised during the campaign to protect abortion rights, promote social justice and fight political corruption. She also wants the state to add a \$15 minimum wage, universal preschool and better access to child care.

Ohio has elected just one Democrat to be governor in the past three decades. Since then, the state has shifted to the right, especially in recent years under Trump's hold.

The former president did not choose sides in the Republican contest for governor. Former U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci, who had hoped to win his endorsement, painted DeWine as a moderate who's out of step with Trump and governed "like a blue-state liberal."

DeWine, who easily won the state's top office four years ago, was careful to say he's still a supporter of Trump's but without fully embracing him. He also dismissed Trump's false claims of a stolen 2020 election.

The governor faced a revolt in some corners of Ohio after enraging the GOP faithful with aggressive stay-at-home mandates, business shutdowns and curfews during the pandemic.

But the four-way Republican primary played to DeWine's advantage as voters upset with the governor split their support between Renacci and Joe Blystone, a farmer who jumped in the race early and built a following in rural Ohio, where he fared well in his first bid for office.

Many conservatives complained that DeWine's policies and actions during the pandemic ran counter to what they were hearing from Trump and GOP governors such as Florida's Ron DeSantis and South Dakota's Kristi Noem.

DeWine also lost the backing of some anti-abortion and conservative groups during the primary despite his longtime record of opposing abortion and calling himself "the most pro-life governor in Ohio history."

In his first term, DeWine signed a bill banning abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected — at the time one of the most stringent restrictions in the nation. In the past year, he signed a stand your ground law and scored a major win when Intel announced it was investing \$20 billion in two semiconductor factories near Columbus.

Russia storms Mariupol plant as some evacuees reach safety

By CARA ANNA and YESICA FISCH Associated Press

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces Tuesday began storming the steel mill containing the last pocket of resistance in Mariupol, Ukrainian defenders said, just as scores of civilians evacuated from the bombed-out plant reached relative safety and told of days and nights filled with dread and despair from constant shelling.

Osnat Lubrani, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Ukraine, said that thanks to the evacuation effort over the weekend, 101 people — including women, the elderly, and 17 children, the youngest 6 months old — were able to emerge from the bunkers under the Azovstal steelworks and “see the daylight after two months.”

One evacuee said she went to sleep at the plant every night afraid she wouldn’t wake up.

“You can’t imagine how scary it is when you sit in the bomb shelter, in a damp and wet basement, and it is bouncing and shaking,” 54-year-old Elina Tsybulchenko said upon arriving in the Ukrainian-controlled city of Zaporizhzhia, about 140 miles (230 kilometers) northwest of Mariupol, in a convoy of buses and ambulances.

She said if the shelter were hit by a bomb like the ones that left the huge craters she saw on the two occasions she ventured outside, “all of us would be done.”

Evacuees, a few of whom were in tears, made their way from the buses into a tent offering some of the comforts long denied them during their weeks underground, including hot food, diapers and connections to the outside world. Mothers fed small children. Some of the evacuees browsed racks of donated clothing, including new underwear.

The news for those left behind was more grim. Ukrainian commanders said Russian forces backed by tanks began storming the sprawling plant, which includes a maze of tunnels and bunkers spread out over 11 square kilometers (4 square miles).

How many Ukrainian fighters were holed up inside was unclear, but the Russians put the number at about 2,000 in recent weeks, and 500 were reported to be wounded. A few hundred civilians also remained there, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said.

“We’ll do everything that’s possible to repel the assault, but we’re calling for urgent measures to evacuate the civilians that remain inside the plant and to bring them out safely,” Sviatoslav Palamar, deputy commander of Ukraine’s Azov Regiment, said on the messaging app Telegram.

He added that throughout the night, the plant was hit with naval artillery fire and airstrikes. Two civilian women were killed and 10 civilians wounded, he said.

The U.N.’s Lubrani expressed hope for further evacuations but said none had been worked out.

In his nightly video address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that by storming the steel mill, Russian forces violated agreements for safe evacuations. He said the prior evacuations are “not a victory yet, but it’s already a result. I believe there’s still a chance to save other people.”

In other battlefield developments, Russian troops shelled a chemical plant in the eastern city of Avdiivka, killing at least 10 people, Donetsk regional governor Pavlo Kyrylenko said.

“The Russians knew exactly where to aim — the workers just finished their shift and were waiting for a bus at a bus stop to take them home,” Kyrylenko wrote in a Telegram post. “Another cynical crime by Russians on our land.”

Explosions were also heard in Lviv, in western Ukraine, near the Polish border. The strikes damaged three power substations, knocking out electricity in parts of the city and disrupting the water supply, and wounded two people, the mayor said. Lviv has been a gateway for NATO-supplied weapons and a haven for those fleeing the fighting in the east.

A rocket also struck an infrastructure facility in a mountainous area in Transcarpathia, a region in far western Ukraine that borders Poland, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, authorities said. There was no immediate word of any casualties.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said Russian aircraft and artillery hit

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hundreds of targets in the past day, including troop strongholds, command posts, artillery positions, fuel and ammunition depots and radar equipment.

Ukrainian authorities said the Russians also attacked at least a half-dozen railroad stations around the country.

The assault on the Azovstal steelworks began almost two weeks after Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his military not to storm the plant to finish off the defenders but to seal it off. The first — and so far only — civilians to be evacuated from the shattered plant got out during a brief cease-fire in an operation overseen by the U.N. and the Red Cross.

At a reception center in Zaporizhzhia, stretchers and wheelchairs were lined up, and children's shoes and toys awaited the convoy. Medical and psychological teams were on standby.

Some of the elderly evacuees appeared exhausted as they arrived. Some of the younger people, especially mothers comforting babies and other young children, appeared relieved.

"I'm very glad to be on Ukrainian soil," said a woman who gave only her first name, Anna, and arrived with two children, ages 1 and 9. "We thought we wouldn't get out of there, frankly speaking."

A small group of women held up signs in English asking that fighters also be evacuated from the steel plant.

The arrival of the evacuees was a rare piece of good news in the nearly 10-week conflict that has killed thousands, forced millions to flee the country, laid waste to towns and cities, and shifted the post-Cold War balance of power in Eastern Europe.

"Over the past days, traveling with the evacuees, I have heard mothers, children and frail grandparents speak about the trauma of living day after day under unrelenting heavy shelling and the fear of death, and with extreme lack of water, food and sanitation," Lubrani said. "They spoke of the hell they have experienced."

In addition to the 101 people evacuated from the steelworks, 58 joined the convoy in a town on the outskirts of Mariupol, Lubrani said. About 30 people who left the plant decided to stay behind in Mariupol to try to find out whether their loved ones were alive, Lubrani said. A total of 127 evacuees arrived in Zaporizhzhia, she said.

The Russian military said earlier that some of the evacuees chose to stay in areas held by pro-Moscow separatists.

Tsybulchenko rejected Russian allegations that the Ukrainian fighters wouldn't allow civilians to leave the plant. She said the Ukrainian military told civilians that they were free to go but would be risking their lives if they did so.

"We understood clearly that under these murder weapons, we wouldn't survive, we wouldn't manage to go anywhere," she said.

Mariupol has come to symbolize the human misery inflicted by the war. The Russians' two-month siege of the strategic southern port has trapped civilians with little or no food, water, medicine or heat, as Moscow's forces pounded the city into rubble. The plant in particular has transfixed the outside world.

After failing to take Kyiv in the early weeks of the war, Russia withdrew from around the capital and announced that its chief objective was the capture of Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, known as the Donbas.

Mariupol lies in the region, and its fall would deprive Ukraine of a vital port, allow Russia to establish a land corridor to the Crimean Peninsula, which it seized from Ukraine in 2014, and free up troops for fighting elsewhere in the Donbas.

But so far, Russia's troops and their allied separatist forces appear to have made only minor gains in the eastern offensive.

Ukraine's resistance has been significantly bolstered by Western arms, and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced 300 million pounds (\$375 million) in new military aid, including radar, drones and armored vehicles.

In a speech delivered remotely to Ukraine's parliament, he pronounced the battle Ukraine's "finest hour," echoing the words of Winston Churchill during World War II.

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"Your children and grandchildren will say that Ukrainians taught the world that the brute force of an aggressor counts for nothing against the moral force of a people determined to be free," Johnson said.

Norman Mineta, transportation secretary in 9/11 era, dies

By BRIAN WITTE and TERENCE CHEA Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — Norman Mineta, who broke racial barriers for Asian Americans serving in high-profile government posts and ordered commercial flights grounded after the 9/11 terror attacks as the nation's federal transportation secretary, died Tuesday. He was 90.

John Flaherty, Mineta's former chief of staff, said Mineta died peacefully at his home surrounded by family in Edgewater, Maryland, east of the nation's capital.

"His cause of death was a heart ailment," Flaherty added. "He was an extraordinary public servant and a very dear friend."

Mineta broke racial barriers for Asian Americans in becoming mayor of San Jose, California early in his political career. He later became the first Asian American to become a federal Cabinet secretary, serving under both Democratic President Bill Clinton and Republican George W. Bush.

Bush went on to award Mineta the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In a statement, the former president said Mineta was "a wonderful American story about someone who overcame hardship and prejudice to serve in the United States Army, Congress, and the Cabinet of two Presidents."

"As my Secretary of Transportation, he showed great leadership in helping prevent further attacks on and after 9/11. As I said when presenting him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Norm has given his country a lifetime of service, and he's given his fellow citizens an example of leadership, devotion to duty, and personal character," the former president said.

The son of Japanese immigrants who spent two years of his childhood at a World War II internment camp, Mineta began his political career leading his hometown of San Jose before joining the Clinton administration as commerce secretary and then crossing party lines to serve in Bush's Cabinet.

As Bush's transportation secretary, Mineta led the department during the crisis of Sept. 11, 2001, as hijacked commercial airliners barreled toward U.S. landmarks. After a second plane crashed into the World Trade Center, Mineta ordered the Federal Aviation Administration to ground all civilian aircraft — more than 4,500 in flight at the time. It was the first such order given in U.S. aviation history.

Mineta was subsequently tasked with restoring confidence in air travel in the aftermath of the terror attacks. He oversaw the hasty creation of the Transportation Security Administration, which took over responsibility for aviation security from the airlines.

Within a year, the TSA had hired tens of thousands of airport screeners, put air marshals on commercial flights and installed high-tech equipment to screen air travelers and their luggage for bombs.

The effort was derided at the time for wasteful spending and causing long lines at airports. But Mineta, widely liked and respected in Washington for his deep knowledge of transportation issues, managed to escape the brunt of that criticism.

In 2006, he resigned at age 74 after 5 and 1/2 years in his post, making him the longest-serving transportation secretary since the agency was created in 1967.

Born on Nov. 12, 1931, Norman Yoshio Mineta was 10 and wearing his Cub Scouts uniform when he and his parents were transported to be incarcerated in Wyoming after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.

He went on to graduate from the University of California, Berkeley, with a bachelor's degree in business administration and served as an Army intelligence officer in Korea and Japan. After three years with the military, he returned to San Jose to run his father's Mineta Insurance Agency.

Mineta's foray into politics came in 1967, when San Jose's mayor tapped him to fill a vacant seat on the city council. He won re-election and served four more years on the council before winning the city's top seat in 1971, making him the first Asian-American mayor of a major city. It now has an airport that bears his name.

Mineta was elected to Congress in 1974 and served 10 terms representing Silicon Valley. During his

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tenure, he pushed for more funding for the FAA and co-authored a landmark law that gave state and local governments control over highway and mass transit decisions.

The co-founder of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus also scored a personal victory when he helped win passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which required the U.S. government to apologize to the 120,000 Japanese Americans forced to live in wartime internment camps. Former internees also received reparations of \$20,000 each.

In 1993, Mineta became chairman of the House Public Works and Transportation Committee — another first — but he quickly lost that job after Republicans won control of the House in 1994.

Mineta resigned from Congress in 1995 to join Lockheed Martin Corp. as senior vice president of its transportation division, which built and operated electronic toll collection systems.

But Washington came calling again five years later when Clinton, in the final months of his presidency, appointed him to replace William Daley as commerce secretary.

Mineta then became the first cabinet secretary to make the switch directly from a Democratic to Republican administration. He was the only Democrat in Bush's cabinet.

As transportation secretary, Mineta successfully promoted private investment in roads and bridges such as the Chicago Skyway and Indiana Toll Road and helped secure passage of a \$286 billion highway spending plan after almost two years of wrangling with Congress.

After overseeing the rapid launch of the TSA, Mineta had his department downsized by almost two-thirds when the TSA and Coast Guard were moved to the Department of Homeland Security in 2003 in the biggest government reorganization in nearly six decades.

After retiring from public service, he joined the public relations firm Hill & Knowlton as vice chairman and settled with his wife, Danealia, in Maryland near the Chesapeake Bay.

'Still in shock.' Abortion defenders, foes stunned by leak

By REBECCA SANTANA, EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS and CLAIRE GALOFARO Associated Press

The phones inside an Alabama abortion clinic were ringing off the hook: the callers wanted to know if abortion remains legal. And, if so, for how long?

A leaked Supreme Court draft opinion was ricocheting around the world.

As Dalton Johnson, the clinic's owner, read it Monday night, he was struck by the bluntness of the language that would end the constitutional right to an abortion, closing clinics in about half of American states, including his.

"I'm still in shock," Johnson said Tuesday as he scrambled to reassure his staff and patients they would continue providing abortions as long as they're allowed in Alabama.

People on both sides of the abortion divide have been expecting the Supreme Court this summer to reverse the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade case that legalized abortion nationwide. But many said the draft opinion was nevertheless stunning, forcing them to reckon with the reality the nation is likely to enter soon.

"I can't stop crying," said an elated Mississippi state Rep. Becky Currie, who sponsored the 2018 law that is the basis for the Supreme Court case. "I am not quite sure I have the words to express how I feel right now, but God has had his hands on that bill since the beginning."

The leaked draft, published late Monday by Politico, is a 98-page opinion in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, which challenged the constitutionality of the Mississippi bill that banned abortion after 15 weeks. If the decision stands as written, it would also overturn Planned Parenthood v. Casey, a 1992 decision that protected abortion services even though it allowed states to add some limitations.

"Roe was egregiously wrong from the start," the draft opinion states. It was signed by Justice Samuel Alito, a member of the court's 6-3 conservative majority. According to Politico, four other justices — Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett — have agreed with the opinion.

The draft opinion was written in February, and the language could change before the court issues its final ruling. As written, it would give states the power to decide the legality of abortion. Roughly half, largely in the South and Midwest, are likely to quickly ban abortion.

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Abortion clinics in those states opened Tuesday morning, still seeing patients but uncertain about the future.

The daily rituals unfolded as they always do: some protesters screamed at people walking inside while other abortion opponents prayed, clinic escorts tried to shield patients and hustle them in the doors.

"Please overturn Roe v. Wade," said Barbara Beavers, who stood outside the clinic in Jackson, Mississippi, on Tuesday, gently trying to persuade people against going inside. "Have mercy on our unborn children. We're destroying our future, killing our babies."

Inside clinics, the news prompted frantic phone calls, and abortion providers across America rushed to tell their patients that the clinics remained open.

"I immediately felt sick to my stomach," said Tammi Kromenaker, who owns a clinic in Fargo, North Dakota. "And 20 million thoughts started going through my head about what can we do? What does my staff need to hear? What do our patients need to hear?"

She posted a notice on their website: "If you have an appointment at Red River Women's Clinic, your appointment is safe."

In Charleston, West Virginia, Katie Quinonez had barely slept the night before; she was having nightmares about the Supreme Court. She rushed into the clinic Tuesday morning, terrified that her patients would misunderstand the news and think that abortion was immediately outlawed. They posted on social media that abortion remains legal and the clinic is open, but they don't know for how much longer.

She had been bracing for this news.

"But there was still this visceral reaction, this very devastating feeling," Quinonez said. "This is a red alert moment. This is beyond a red alert moment. The building is on fire."

At Johnson's clinic in Huntsville, women called to ask whether they can still get an abortion. Johnson said his first call of the morning was from a woman who had an abortion scheduled for Friday and wanted to come in Tuesday instead.

The staff held a meeting, and Johnson says he asked them to focus on those still coming for abortions who need their help. The opinion was just a draft, he told them, and cautioned that it wasn't the final decision.

Dr. Cheryl Hamlin, an OB-GYN from Boston, travels South about once a month to do abortions at Mississippi's only abortion clinic. She said a lot of her patients won't be able to afford the costs of going out of state to have an abortion, including paying for hotels and taking time off work.

Meanwhile, states that continue to allow abortions "are going to be overflowing with patients," she said.

Some anti-abortion activists were skeptical that the draft would become reality, fixating instead on the fact that it was leaked the press and whether that implied political posturing.

"I'm hopeful," said Dennis Westover, a 72-year-old retired electrical engineer, a regular protester outside the clinic in Charleston, West Virginia. But he was suspicious that someone leaked it as ammunition in the country's intractable culture wars.

"When our Supreme Court stuff starts to be leaked, it's egregious," he said. "One side or the other did it for a political motive to stir up some kind of stink."

In Louisville, Kentucky, protester Angela Minter said she prayed the draft opinion will be the final one.

"I'm excited today," Minter said. "I believe it's an indication of what's to come."

Minter thinks that's God answering her prayers: She's been coming to the clinic most mornings since 2004. Patients tried to dodge her and the other protesters screaming outside. "Don't murder your baby," one man shouted at a young woman. Clinic escorts in orange vests helped her into the building.

The Louisville clinic was closed for a week last month after the legislature banned abortion, until a court intervened. But if Roe falls, it will likely be shuttered again.

"I do anticipate a day with no abortion clinics in Kentucky," said Meg Stern, who runs the Kentucky Health Justice Network and escorts at the clinic. Abortion access will now be an issue of privilege: People with the means to travel will be able to end their pregnancies.

"It's the family that only has one vehicle and is already struggling to make ends meet. Maybe they're

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in the city, maybe they're in the rural parts of the state. But if they don't have access to travel, lodging, gas money, food money, babysitters while they're gone, time off work," she said. "Do you have the car that will make it?"

For months now, the nation has had a glimpse of what that looks like. Texas banned abortion after six weeks in September. Planned Parenthood clinics in the surrounding states saw a 2,500% increase in patients, said Dr. Iman Alsaden, medical director for Planned Parenthood Great Plains.

Some Texans have arrived in Jackson, Mississippi, where Derenda Hancock volunteers as an escort.

"It's only the people who can afford to get here that we're seeing. It makes you think about all the people left behind at home that can't afford to get here, that can't make the trip. How are they faring?" she wondered. "They're going to be forced to be mothers."

Some groups are working to try to circumvent the law the best they can: mobile abortion units, fundraising for travel assistance, mail-order medications. One online women's health provider reported a significant spike in requests for emergency contraception Tuesday. Democrat-leaning states like New York, California and Illinois are rushing to pass laws to protect abortion access, both for their residents and people coming from out of state.

If abortion is outlawed in North Dakota, Kromenaker is planning to open a clinic just across the river in Minnesota. She hopes the leaked draft shakes people enough to take action, right away.

She texted her husband Tuesday: "We've got to move forward very quickly now," she wrote. "The urgency is there."

EXPLAINER: What's the latest in Russia's dance with default?

By The Associated Press undefined

Russia appeared to dodge default on its foreign debt by dipping into its scarce dollar reserves. But Moscow's debt drama is far from over.

Russia's finance ministry abandoned its proposal to use rubles instead of dollars to make overdue payments on two government bonds, saying Friday that it had transferred the money to an account at Citigroup: \$564.4 million for a bond due in 2022, and \$84.4 million for another due in 2042. A 30-day grace period on making the overdue payments was to expire Wednesday.

The government had claimed that U.S. sanctions freezing its massive currency reserves held abroad meant it couldn't pay and that Russia wasn't to blame for any default, the first on foreign debt since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

Even if Russia is found to have made the most recent payments, others are coming due. Plus, U.S. permission for American bondholders to accept payment on Russian bonds is set to expire May 25, so even if Russia tries to pay, investors would not legally be able to take the money.

Here are some of the issues surrounding Russian debt:

WHY ARE PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT A POSSIBLE RUSSIAN DEFAULT?

Ratings agencies have said that if bonds specify payment in dollars, then paying in rubles amounts to a failure to pay as promised. One reason Russia would want to pay in rubles instead of its reserves of foreign currency is that a large part of them have been frozen abroad. It made Friday's payment by dipping into scarce internal reserves that sanctions could not touch.

Russia has not definitively avoided default unless the money made its way from Citigroup through the banking system to bondholders ahead of Wednesday's deadline.

"Bondholders don't get paid until Citigroup processes the payments" and pass them on to clearinghouses that distribute payment to bondholders, said Jay S. Auslander, a top sovereign debt lawyer at the firm of Wilk Auslander in New York.

Banks are being extremely cautious about any transactions with Russia and may want to check with U.S. and UK authorities first. But "I think it's likely is that the funds will make it to the bondholders, in which case, they will not be in default this time," Auslander said.

HOW MUCH DOES RUSSIA OWE?

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About \$40 billion in foreign bonds, about half of that to foreigners. Before the start of the war, Russia had around \$640 billion in foreign currency and gold reserves, much of which was held overseas and is now frozen.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF A COUNTRY IS IN DEFAULT?

Ratings agencies can lower the rating to default or a court can decide the issue. Bondholders who have credit default swaps — contracts that act like insurance policies against default — can ask a committee of financial firm representatives to decide whether a failure to pay debt should trigger a payout, which still isn't a formal declaration of default.

The Credit Default Determination Committee — an industry group of 14 banks and investors that determines whether or not to pay on these swaps — said Friday that they "continue to monitor the situation" after Russia's payment. After another meeting Tuesday, the committee said it would continue to monitor the situation and "defer publication of an Initial List of Deliverable Obligations."

WHAT CAN INVESTORS DO?

The formal way to declare default is if 25% or more of bondholders say they didn't get their money. Once that happens, provisions say all Russia's other foreign bonds are also in default, and bondholders could then seek a court judgment to enforce payment.

In normal circumstances, investors and the defaulting government typically negotiate a settlement in which bondholders are given new bonds that are worth less but that at least give them some partial compensation.

But sanctions bar dealings with Russia's finance ministry. And no one knows when the war will end or how much defaulted bonds could wind up being worth.

In this case, declaring default and suing "might not be the wisest choice," Auslander said. "You can't negotiate with Russia right now. You're wading into a world where sanctions are constantly changing, where there are a lot of unknowns. So you may see creditors decide at this point to keep their intentions close to their vest and hang tight for now."

Popular sentiment is a consideration for investors, especially any who may have bought bonds at knocked-down prices in hopes of profiting from a settlement.

"Right now is maybe not a good time to rush in and show that you were profiting off distressed debt in Russian bonds," Auslander said. "Will that time come in the future? I suspect it will."

Once a country defaults, it can be cut off from bond-market borrowing until the default is sorted out and investors regain confidence in the government's ability and willingness to pay. But Russia has already been cut off from Western capital markets, so any return to borrowing is a long way off anyway.

The Kremlin can still borrow rubles at home, where it mostly relies on Russian banks to buy its bonds.

WHAT IMPACT COULD A RUSSIAN DEFAULT HAVE?

The country is already suffering substantial economic impact from Western sanctions, which have sent foreign companies fleeing and disrupted trade and financial ties with the rest of the world. Default would be one more symptom of that isolation and disruption.

Investment analysts are cautiously reckoning that a Russia default would not have the kind of impact on global financial markets and institutions that came from an earlier default in 1998. Back then, Russia's default on domestic ruble bonds led the U.S. government to step in and get banks to bail out Long-Term Capital Management, a large U.S. hedge fund whose collapse, it was feared, could have shaken the wider financial and banking system.

Holders of the bonds — for instance, funds that invest in emerging market bonds — could take serious losses. Russia, however, played only a small role in emerging market bond indexes, limiting the losses to fund investors.

While the war itself is having devastating consequences in terms of human suffering and higher food and energy prices worldwide, default on government bonds would be "definitely not systemically relevant," Kristalina Georgieva, head of the International Monetary Fund, has said.

Biden blasts 'radical' Roe draft, warns other rights at risk

By ZEKE MILLER and JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Tuesday blasted a "radical" Supreme Court draft opinion that would throw out the landmark Roe v. Wade abortion rights ruling that has stood for a half century. The court cautioned no final decision had been made, but Biden warned that other privacy rights including same-sex marriage and birth control are at risk if the justices follow through.

Chief Justice John Roberts said he had ordered an investigation into what he called the "egregious breach of trust" in leaking the draft document, which was dated to February. Opinions often change in ways big and small in the drafting process, and a final ruling has not been expected until the end of the court's term in late June or early July.

Across the nation, Americans grappled with what might come next. The Democratic-controlled Congress and White House both vowed to try to blunt the impact of such a ruling, but their prospects looked dim.

A decision to overrule Roe would have sweeping ramifications, leading to abortion bans in roughly half the states, sparking new efforts in Democratic-leaning states to protect access to abortion, and potentially reshaping the contours of this year's hotly contested midterm elections.

The draft was published by the news outlet Politico late Monday.

Speaking to reporters before boarding Air Force One, Biden said he hoped the draft wouldn't be finalized by justices, contending it reflects a "fundamental shift in American jurisprudence" that threatens "other basic rights" like access to birth control and marriage.

"If this decision holds, it's really quite a radical decision," he added.

"If the court does overturn Roe, it will fall on our nation's elected officials at all levels of government to protect a woman's right to choose," Biden said. "And it will fall on voters to elect pro-choice officials this November. At the federal level, we will need more pro-choice Senators and a pro-choice majority in the House to adopt legislation that codifies Roe, which I will work to pass and sign into law."

Though past efforts have failed, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said he intended to hold a vote.

"This is as urgent and real as it gets," Schumer said on the Senate floor Tuesday. "Every American is going to see on which side every senator stands."

Speaking at the EMILY's List political action committee conference Tuesday, Vice President Kamala Harris said the draft opinion showed "women's rights in America are under attack."

"Women's issues are America's issues and democracies cannot be strong if the rights of women are under attack," she added. "Let us fight with everything we've got."

Leaders in New York and California rolled out the welcome mat to their states for women seeking abortions, and other Democratic states moved to protect access to abortion in their laws.

The court's ruling would be most acutely felt by women who don't have the means or ability to travel from states that have or stand poised to pass stiff abortion restrictions or outright bans

Whatever the outcome, the Politico report late Monday represented an extremely rare breach of the court's secretive deliberation process, and on a case of surpassing importance.

"Roe was egregiously wrong from the start," the draft opinion states. It was signed by Justice Samuel Alito, a member of the court's 6-3 conservative majority who was appointed by former President George W. Bush.

The document was labeled a "1st Draft" of the "Opinion of the Court" in a case challenging Mississippi's ban on abortion after 15 weeks. The draft opinion in effect states there is no constitutional right to abortion services. It would allow individual states to more heavily regulate or outright ban the procedure.

"We hold that Roe and Casey must be overruled," it states, referencing the 1992 case Planned Parenthood v. Casey that affirmed Roe's finding of a constitutional right to abortion services but allowed states to place some constraints on the practice. "It is time to heed the Constitution and return the issue of abortion to the people's elected representatives."

The draft opinion strongly suggests that when the justices met in private shortly after arguments in the case on Dec. 1, at least five — all the conservatives except perhaps Chief Justice Roberts — voted to

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overrule Roe and Casey, and Alito was assigned the task of writing the court's majority opinion.

Votes and opinions in a case aren't final until a decision is announced or, in a change wrought by the coronavirus pandemic, posted on the court's website.

Politico said only that it received "a copy of the draft opinion from a person familiar with the court's proceedings in the Mississippi case along with other details supporting the authenticity of the document."

The report comes amid a legislative push to restrict abortion in several Republican-led states — Oklahoma being the most recent — even before the court issues its decision. Critics of those measures have said low-income and minority women will disproportionately bear the burden of the new restrictions.

The leak jumpstarted the intense political reverberations that the high court's ultimate decision was expected to have in the midterm election year. Already, politicians on both sides of the aisle were seizing on the report to fundraise and energize their supporters on both sides of the issue.

Democrats contended that several conservative justices misled senators about their feelings.

And Maine Republican Susan Collins, who supports abortion rights but was a pivotal GOP vote for the confirmations of Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, said if the draft reflects the final opinion of the court, "it would be completely inconsistent with what Justice Gorsuch and Justice Kavanaugh said in their hearings and in our meetings in my office."

Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, told reporters on Capitol Hill that "my confidence in the court has been rocked," and said her proposal with Collins to legislate abortion rights should be reinvigorated.

Polling shows relatively few Americans want to see Roe overturned. In general, AP-NORC polling finds a majority of the public favors abortion being legal in most or all cases. Few say abortion should be illegal in all cases.

Still, Americans have nuanced attitudes on the issue. In an AP-NORC poll conducted last June, 61% said abortion should be legal in most or all circumstances in the first trimester of a pregnancy. However, 65% said abortion should usually be illegal in the second trimester, and 80% said that about the third trimester, though many Americans believe that the procedure should be allowable under at least some circumstances even during the second or third trimesters.

Alito, in the draft, said the court can't predict how the public might react and shouldn't try. "We cannot allow our decisions to be affected by any extraneous influences such as concern about the public's reaction to our work," Alito wrote in the draft opinion, according to Politico.

Outside, the Supreme Court building, anti-abortion rights protesters carried signs that said "Ignore Roe" and "In God We Trust" while their pro-abortion-rights counterparts held placards declaring "Bans off our Bodies" and "Impeach Kavanaugh." Crowds built as the day wore on.

Jessica Fendryk, 39, who drove an hour from Bel Air, Maryland, spoke of generations of demonstrators. "I can't believe how many women I have met that did this in their lifetime already. And so I feel like I owe it to them to be here because they already did this," she said. "And now we have to be fighting for them all over again."

Outside Washington, the reaction among conservatives was muted, ranging from cautious celebration over the anticipated ruling to sharp criticism of the source of the leaked draft.

"We will let the Supreme Court speak for itself and wait for the court's official opinion," Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch said in a statement.

At Supreme Court arguments in December, all six conservative justices signaled that they would uphold the Mississippi law, and five asked questions that suggested that overruling Roe and Casey was a possibility.

Only Roberts seemed prepared to take the smaller step of upholding the 15-week ban, though that, too, would be a significant weakening of abortion rights.

Until now, the court has allowed states to regulate but not ban abortion before the point of viability, around 24 weeks.

Twenty-six states are certain or likely to ban abortion if Roe v. Wade is overturned, according to the pro-abortion rights think tank the Guttmacher Institute. Of those, 22 states already have total or near-total bans on the books that are currently blocked by Roe, aside from Texas. The Texas law banning it after six weeks has been allowed to go into effect by the Supreme Court due to its unusual civil enforcement

structure. Four more states are considered likely to quickly pass bans if Roe is overturned. Sixteen states and the District of Columbia have protected access to abortion in state law.

Oklahoma governor signs Texas-style ban on most abortions

By SEAN MURPHY Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Oklahoma's Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt signed a Texas-style abortion ban on Tuesday that prohibits abortions after about six weeks of pregnancy, part of a nationwide push in GOP-led states hopeful that the conservative U.S. Supreme Court will uphold new restrictions.

"I want Oklahoma to be the most pro-life state in the country," Stitt tweeted after signing the bill.

Stitt's signing of the bill comes on the heels of a leaked draft opinion from the nation's high court that it is considering weakening or overturning the landmark Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion nearly 50 years ago.

The bill Stitt signed takes effect immediately with his signature, and the Oklahoma Supreme Court on Tuesday denied an emergency request to temporarily halt the bill. Abortion providers say now that the new law is in effect, they will immediately stop providing services for women after six weeks of pregnancy.

"While the law is in effect, which it now is because the governor signed it, abortion services after six weeks will be largely unavailable," said Rabia Muqaddam, a staff attorney for the New York-based Center for Reproductive Rights, which is representing Oklahoma abortion providers in the case. "It's a short-term loss, but we're hopeful that the Oklahoma Supreme Court will still grant us relief."

The new law prohibits abortions once cardiac activity can be detected in an embryo, which experts say is roughly six weeks into a pregnancy, before many women know they are pregnant. A similar bill approved in Texas last year led to a dramatic reduction in the number of abortions performed in that state, with many women going to Oklahoma and other surrounding states for the procedure.

Dr. Iman Alsaden, the medical director of Planned Parenthood Great Plains, said Texas' law that took effect in September has given their employees an idea of what a post-Roe country might look like.

"Since that day, my colleagues and I have regularly treated patients who are fleeing their communities to seek care," Alsaden said. "They're taking time off of work, taking time out of school and taking time away from their family responsibilities to get the care that until September 2021 they were able to get safely and readily in their communities."

The bill authorizes abortions if performed as the result of a medical emergency, but there are no exceptions if the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest.

Like the Texas law, the Oklahoma bill would allow private citizens to sue abortion providers or anyone who helps a woman obtain an abortion for up to \$10,000. After the U.S. Supreme Court allowed that mechanism to remain in place, other Republican-led states sought to copy Texas' ban. Idaho's governor signed the first copycat measure in March, although it has been temporarily blocked by the state's Supreme Court.

Stitt earlier this year signed a bill to make performing an abortion a felony crime in Oklahoma, but that measure is not set to take effect until this summer, and legal experts say it's likely to be blocked because the Roe v. Wade decision still remains the law of the land.

The number of abortions performed each year in Oklahoma, which has four abortion clinics, has declined steadily over the last two decades, from more than 6,200 in 2002 to 3,737 in 2020, the fewest in more than 20 years, according to data from the Oklahoma State Department of Health. In 2020, before the Texas law was passed, about 9% of the abortions performed in Oklahoma were women from Texas.

Before the Texas ban took effect on Sept. 1, about 40 women from Texas had abortions performed in Oklahoma each month, the data shows. That number jumped to 222 Texas women in September and 243 in October.

Politico's Supreme Court scoop boosts security concerns

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — In breaking news of a Supreme Court draft opinion that would strike down 50 years

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of abortion policy, Politico's most impactful moment also put the news organization squarely in the middle of one of society's most contentious issues.

Politico sent a memo to staff members on Tuesday saying it had restricted access to its offices and told security to be "extra vigilant" about visitors. The company also urged employees to consider removing their Politico affiliation on social media accounts.

The company has not reported any specific threats.

But the story on the court's apparent readiness to overrule the 1973 Roe v. Wade case that legalized abortion nationwide led to wide speculation online about Politico's sources, some of it specific and malevolent.

The Federalist, a conservative website, headlined a story: "The SCOTUS Abortion Decision Leak is what Actual Treasonous Insurrection Looks Like." The site said it believed the news was leaked to bully justices into changing their votes.

Politico's story struck like a thunderclap when posted at 8:32 p.m. Eastern Monday. It's very rare for internal Supreme Court discussions to be made public, and unprecedented for a full draft decision to see the light of day — much less for one of the most closely watched cases to come before justices in years.

Demonstrators quickly appeared outside of the court, and cable news networks rearranged schedules to cover the news.

"I gasped and reflexively put my hand over my mouth," journalist Emily Kaplan wrote on Twitter. "Haven't done that since Election Night 2016."

The story, written by Josh Gerstein and Alexander Ward, said the court had already voted to eliminate Roe as a precedent. It linked to a copy of the draft decision which, according to a stamp on it, was written by Justice Samuel Alito and circulated within the court on Feb. 10, 2022.

Politico emphasized it was a draft decision that could change. In the article, Politico said it had received a copy of the draft opinion "from a person familiar with the court's proceedings" in the case that was argued Dec. 1, along with "other details supporting the authenticity of the document."

That would seem to limit the potential sources: Each one of the court's nine justices has four clerks and there is an unknown number of support staff. It was not clear whether Politico had an electronic or hard copy of the decision.

The story was a closely held secret even within Politico, with few people knowing that it was coming. At the time it was posted, Politico's top news executives, Editor-in-Chief Matt Kaminski and Executive Editor Dafna Linzer, sent a memo to the full staff about it.

"After an extensive review process, we are confident of the authenticity of the draft," the executives wrote. "This unprecedented view into the justice's deliberations is plainly news of great public interest."

Politico gave no details about how it concluded the document was real and not a fake, or how long it had been in possession of the draft. The company said that "our journalism speaks for itself."

The draft's authenticity was ultimately confirmed Tuesday by Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, who announced an investigation into who leaked the document.

It's understandable that Politico is going to great lengths to protect the identity of its source, said Kelly McBride, expert on journalism ethics for the Poynter Institute think tank.

Yet while fellow journalists understand why it's a huge story and why Politico published it, that might not be clear to a general public unfamiliar with how journalism works and often suspicious of motives, she said. Politico should have considered communicating some of that with readers.

"It's going to have such massive consequences that I don't think that it's hard to explain why you did it," she said.

Politico doesn't have the footprint of The New York Times, the Washington Post or The Associated Press — all of whom were chasing its story — but it is a well-known brand name for those who follow Washington closely. Launched in 2007 by former Washington Post reporters John Harris and Jim VandeHei, it aggressively covers government and political news. Its morning "Playbook" newsletter is an influential agenda-setter for the nation's elite.

The expanding company was bought last year by German publisher Axel Springer for a price reported to be around \$1 billion.

"The fact that they broke this story and their name is all over it distinguishes their journalism and puts their name in both the history books and the textbooks," said Frank Sesno, a former CNN Washington bureau chief and professor at George Washington University.

Escaped inmate, jail official had 'special relationship'

FLORENCE, Ala. (AP) — An escaped Alabama inmate had a "special relationship" with the jail official authorities believe assisted in his escape, a sheriff's office said Tuesday.

A manhunt was underway for Casey White, who was awaiting trial on a capital murder case, and Vicky White, a jail official, after the pair vanished after leaving the Lauderdale County Detention Center on Friday morning. The two are not related, authorities said.

"Investigators received information from inmates at the Lauderdale County Detention Center over the weekend that there was a special relationship between Director White and inmate Casey White. That relationship has now been confirmed through our investigation by independent sources and means," the Lauderdale County Sheriff's Office said in a statement to news outlets. The office did not elaborate on the nature of that relationship.

On Friday morning, Vicky White, 56, told coworkers the 38-year-old inmate needed to go to the courthouse for a mental health evaluation. She was escorting the inmate alone, which the sheriff said is a violation of department policy. That afternoon, when she was not answering the phone, authorities discovered the two were missing, and no such evaluation had been scheduled. Her patrol car was found abandoned in the parking lot of a shopping center.

A warrant was issued Monday for Vicky White's arrest on charges of assisting in an escape.

Family members and colleagues said they are bewildered by the involvement of Vicky White, who had worked for the sheriff's office for 16 years, with the inmate who was already serving a 75-year prison sentence for attempted murder and other crimes.

"I just can't picture Vicky running off with that man," her former mother-in-law, Frances White, said in a telephone interview. She remained fond of her daughter-in-law decades after she divorced her son in 1991. He died earlier this year.

She said her former daughter-in-law was kind and always wanted to help others, but added that she was sometimes private. "Vicky was a person who kept all of her thoughts and troubles to herself," she said.

Vicky White had no children, her former-mother-in-law said, and had recently sold her house, a sprawling property of 4 acres (1.6 hectares) she had originally bought to be close to her parents. The property, which included a trailer and barn, was "really too big" for one person, Frances White said.

WAAY reported Vicky White sold her home for \$95,500 just 12 days before disappearing. The purchase price was below the market value for the area, the station reported.

Lauderdale County Sheriff Rick Singleton said Monday that Vicky White had announced plans to retire and the day she disappeared would have been her last day at work.

"This is not the Vicky White we know, by any stretch of the imagination," Singleton said Monday.

The U.S. Marshals Service on Tuesday said the pair might be traveling in a 2007 orange or copper colored Ford Edge with minor damage on the rear left bumper.

Authorities have said Casey White, who stands 6 feet, 9 inches (2.06 meters) tall, should be recognizable by his size. Authorities warned that anyone seeing the pair should not approach them.

"The subjects should be considered dangerous and may be armed with an AR-15 rifle, handguns and a shotgun," the Marshals Service said in the bulletin.

Casey White was serving time for a string of crimes that included attempted murder, robbery and burglary. While in prison, he had confessed to the 2015 stabbing death of a 58-year-old woman, authorities said, which caused him to be brought to the Lauderdale County jail for court proceedings. The sheriff said they believe White plotted an earlier escape from the jail in 2020 when they found a makeshift knife.

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By MATTHEW BARAKAT Associated Press

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (AP) — Actor Amber Heard suffered post-traumatic stress disorder from violence she suffered at the hands of her ex-husband Johnny Depp, including multiple acts of sexual assault, a psychologist testified Tuesday.

The sexual assaults included being forced to perform oral sex and having Depp penetrate her with a liquor bottle, the psychologist, Dawn Hughes, told jurors at Depp's libel trial against Heard. He accuses her of falsely claiming in a newspaper op-ed piece that she was a victim of domestic violence.

Hughes' testimony contradicts that of a psychologist hired by Depp's lawyers, who said Heard was faking her symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and suffered from borderline and histrionic personality disorders. Hughes disputed that Heard suffers from any personality disorder.

Hughes was the first witness to take the stand on Heard's behalf after Depp's lawyers rested their case Tuesday morning.

Hughes said there is corroboration of many of the instances of abuse, including apologies and admissions made by Depp to Heard and admissions he made to friends in text messages about his bad behavior when he drinks. In some cases, Heard told her therapists about the abuse contemporaneously, Hughes said.

Depp has said he never physically attacked Heard, and that she was the aggressor who routinely hit him and threw things at him through the course of their relationship.

Hughes, in her testimony, said Heard acknowledged that she did at times push and shove Depp, call him names and insult his parenting.

But Hughes said there's a difference in the violence when a smaller person strikes at a larger person, and that Depp's violence was intimidating and threatened her safety, but Heard's violence did not have the same effect on Depp.

"That's just physics; that's just proportional force," she said.

Much of the violence, Hughes said, stemmed from Depp's obsessive jealousy. He insisted she avoid nude scenes, if she worked at all, and accused her of affairs with actors Billy Bob Thornton and James Franco. If she did work on a film, Depp would call the director and others on set and say he "had eyes" there who would report to him if she fraternized improperly, Hughes said.

And Heard, who identifies as bisexual according to treatment notes introduced at trial, also faced scrutiny in her interactions with women. Hughes said Depp on one occasion manually penetrated Heard in anger after witnessing Heard's interactions with a woman.

"Amber got accused of women hitting her, and she got accused of men hitting on her," Hughes said.

Heard blinked back tears, and her lips and chin quivered at times as Hughes described the abuse.

Hughes said she based her testimony on 29 hours of interviews with Heard, as well as interviews with her therapists and a review of court documents.

Earlier Tuesday, Depp's lawyers rested their case, and a judge rejected a motion from Heard's lawyers to dismiss the case. Heard's lawyers argued that Depp had failed to make his case as a matter of law and that no reasonable jury could find in his favor.

But the judge, Penney Azcarate, said the standard for dismissing a case at this point in the trial is exceedingly high, and that the case should be allowed to move forward if Depp has provided even a "scintilla" of evidence backing up his claims.

Depp and his lead lawyer, Benjamin Chew, patted each other on the back after the judge ruled the case can proceed.

Chew argued that the jury has a wealth of evidence to conclude that Heard falsely accused Depp of abuse. In fact, he said, the evidence shows that "Ms. Heard physically abused him. She's the abuser."

Heard's lawyer, J. Benjamin Rottenborn, said the evidence is clear over the last three weeks of testimony that Heard's allegations of abuse are truthful.

"We haven't gotten to put on our case yet," he said. "This is all evidence that has come in while plaintiff controls the playing field."

Depp is suing Heard for \$50 million in Fairfax County Circuit Court after Heard wrote a December 2018 op-ed piece in The Washington Post describing herself as "a public figure representing domestic abuse." The

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article never mentions Depp by name, but Depp's lawyers say he was defamed nevertheless because it's a clear reference to abuse allegations Heard levied in 2016, in the midst of the couple's divorce proceedings.

The judge on Tuesday did say she's reserving judgment on whether the article's headline in online editions should be part of the libel lawsuit because she said the evidence is unclear at this point whether Heard wrote the headline or is responsible for it. The online headline reads, "I spoke up against sexual violence — and faced our culture's wrath. That has to change."

Hughes will be cross-examined Wednesday, and Heard is expected to take the stand Wednesday as well.

Condors soar again over Northern California coastal redwoods

REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK, Calif. (AP) — The endangered California condor returned to soar the skies over the state's far northern coast redwood forests on Tuesday for the first time in more than a century.

Two captive-bred birds were released from a pen in Redwood National Park, about an hour's drive south of the Oregon border, under a project aimed at restoring the giant vultures to their historic habitat in the Pacific Northwest.

The two male condors were moved into staging area at late morning and a remotely controlled gate was opened. After a few minutes of warily eyeing the opening, the birds stepped one by one through the opening, spread their giant wings and took off.

"They just jumped up and took flight off into the distance," Tiana Williams-Claussen, wildlife director for the region's Yurok tribe, said in a webcast.

Condors were last spotted in the park area around 1892, authorities said. The California condor is the largest native North American bird, with a wingspan of nearly 10 feet (3 meters). The scavenger was once widespread but had virtually disappeared by the 1970s because of poaching, lead poisoning from eating animals shot by hunters and destruction of its habitat.

The birds can live for 60 years and fly vast distances in search of carrion, so their range could extend into several states.

Federal and local fish and wildlife agencies are involved in the restoration project headed by the Yurok tribe, which traditionally has considered the California condor a sacred animal and has been working for years to return the species to the tribe's ancestral territory.

"For countless generations, the Yurok people have upheld a sacred responsibility to maintain balance in the natural world. Condor reintroduction is a real-life manifestation of our cultural commitment to restore and protect the planet for future generations," tribal Chairman Joseph L. James said in a statement.

Two more condors were set to be released later — after biologists determine that the two birds who took to the skies Tuesday have displayed appropriate behavior, authorities said.

The condors, including one female and three males, are between 2 and 4 years old. Two were hatched at the Oregon Zoo and two at the Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey in Idaho.

In the early 1980s, all 22 condors remaining in the wild were trapped and brought into a captive-breeding program that began releasing the giant vultures into Southern California's Los Padres National Forest in 1992.

That flock has been expanding its range while other condors now occupy parts of California's Central Coast, Arizona, Utah and Baja California, Mexico. The total population now numbers more than 500 birds in captivity and in the wild.

Two years ago, California condors were spotted in Sequoia National Park, in California's Sierra Nevada, for the first time in nearly 50 years.

However, that same year, a dozen adults and two chicks died when a wildfire set by an arsonist ravaged their territory on the Big Sur coast.

What is Roe v. Wade, the landmark abortion access case?

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

A leaked draft of a U.S. Supreme Court decision suggests the country's highest court could be poised

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to overturn the constitutional right to abortion, allowing individual states to more heavily regulate or even ban the procedure.

WHAT DOES 'ROE V. WADE' REFER TO?

Roe v. Wade is the name of the lawsuit that led to the landmark 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision establishing a constitutional right to abortion in the United States. The majority opinion found an absolute right to abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy.

WHO WERE ROE AND WADE?

Jane Roe was a pseudonym for Norma McCorvey, who was 22, unmarried, unemployed and pregnant for the third time in 1969 when she sought to have an abortion in Texas. By the time the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in her favor, McCorvey had given birth to a girl whom she placed for adoption.

Henry Wade was the district attorney of Dallas County, Texas. It was his job to enforce a state law prohibiting abortion except to save a woman's life, so he was the person McCorvey sued when she sought the abortion.

After her death, biographer Joshua Prager said McCorvey made her living giving speeches and writing books on both sides of the abortion debate and was coached by both sides. She had conflicted feelings about each, he said, but was consistent on one point: supporting abortion through the first trimester.

WHAT DID THE COURT DECIDE IN 1973?

The plaintiff alleged that Texas law was unconstitutionally vague and violated her constitutionally protected right to personal privacy. The question before the U.S. Supreme Court was: Does the Constitution recognize a woman's right to terminate her pregnancy by abortion?

Justice Harry Blackmun delivered the opinion for the 7-2 majority, finding that it did indeed — although that protection had to be balanced against the government's interests in protecting women's health and "the potentiality of human life." The conservative-leaning court said a woman's decision to have an abortion during the first three months of her pregnancy must be left to her and her doctor.

WHAT WAS THE PRE-ROE LANDSCAPE IN THE U.S.?

At the time of Roe, abortion was broadly legal in just four states and allowed under limited circumstances in 16 others. Constitutional rights trump state laws, so the court's decision nullified the bans in the remaining 30 states. But it did allow states to impose certain regulations during the second trimester to protect the woman's health and take steps to protect fetal life in the third trimester.

HOW HAVE LATER DECISIONS ALTERED ABORTION RIGHTS IN AMERICA?

Blackmun was still on the court in 1992, when it heard Planned Parenthood v. Casey, a challenge to Pennsylvania abortion laws that included a 24-hour waiting period. The conservative-leaning court unexpectedly upheld the right to abortion — while also making it easier for states to impose regulations.

Three conservative justices — Sandra Day O'Connor, Anthony M. Kennedy and David H. Souter — co-authored the court's main opinion in the 5-4 decision, writing: "The woman's right to terminate her pregnancy before viability is the most central principle of Roe vs. Wade. It is a rule of law and a component of liberty we cannot renounce."

Neither side on the abortion issue was pleased with the ruling. Since then, conservative states have been chipping away at abortion rights with laws that have engendered many more court challenges, including a recent Texas law that bans most abortions after about six weeks.

WHAT IS THIS NEW CASE THAT'S POISED TO TOPPLE ROE?

Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization. It challenges Mississippi's ban on abortion after 15 weeks. Upholding that ban would undermine both Roe and Casey, which allow states to regulate — but not ban — abortion up until the point of fetal viability, at roughly 24 weeks. The decision, per the draft, would likely result in a patchwork of abortion laws, with some states protecting abortion and others prohibiting it outright.

Possible overturning of Roe sends abortion fight to states

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

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The bombshell leak of a draft opinion suggesting the Supreme Court is poised to overturn the landmark Roe v. Wade case legalizing abortion nationwide has set the country on course for an even more polarized and fluctuating landscape of abortion rights.

Almost immediately, Republicans who had fostered a decades-long push to end abortion rights cheered Roe's potential fall. Democrats vowed to fight the possible loss of a constitutional right that has been in place for nearly a half-century.

The Supreme Court confirmed the leaked draft, first published by Politico, was an authentic document but said Tuesday "it does not represent a decision by the court or the final position of any member on the issues in the case."

Though the draft opinion could change, Democrats and Republicans across the states pledged action amid warnings such a ruling could also put other rights at risk —battles that could likewise play out in the states.

In California, Democrats who wield control of the state Legislature and the governor's office issued a joint statement late Monday announcing they would seek to amend the state's constitution to enshrine abortion rights.

"California will not stand idly by as women across America are stripped of their rights and the progress so many have fought for gets erased," California Democrats said. "We know we can't trust the Supreme Court to protect reproductive rights, so California will build a firewall around this right in our state constitution. Women will remain protected here."

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, a Republican, said on Twitter she plans to immediately call a special legislative session "to save lives" if Roe is overturned. The state already has a so-called trigger law that would make abortion illegal if that happens and Noem's office declined to say why a special session would be necessary. Her spokesman, Ian Fury, said the tweet, "speaks for itself."

In Georgia, which is among several dozen states electing governors this year, candidates on both sides of the aisle proclaimed they would prioritize the issue if elected to the state's top office.

Republican gubernatorial candidate David Perdue said he'd call state lawmakers into a special session to outlaw all abortions, while Democratic candidate Stacey Abrams said she would defend the right to abortion if she wins.

About half of U.S. states are expected to ban abortion if Roe falls, according to the abortion-rights think tank Guttmacher Institute. Twenty-two states, largely in the South and Midwest, already have total or near-total bans on the books. Aside from Texas, all are now blocked because of Roe.

States have already been preparing for the protentional of the ruling being weakened or overturned, and Republican-led states have also been working to restrict access to medication abortion, which would allow women to get abortions without the burden of traveling to clinics that may be few and far between.

In addition to South Dakota, 12 other states have trigger laws that would immediately ban abortion if Roe is overturned.

One is Oklahoma, where Republican House Speaker Charles McCall declared Tuesday that "decades of steadfast prayer and unwavering legislative efforts to protect the lives of the unborn are finally on the doorsteps of success."

"For close to 50 years, the silent cries of the millions who lost their lives before even having a chance to live have been heard through the voices of those of us fighting for their rights," McCall said. "The pro-life movement won, securing those yet unborn the future and promise that comes with being born in the United States of America."

A few states still have pre-Roe bans on the books, including Michigan, where Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has sued to remove it and pledged on Twitter Monday to "fight like hell to make sure abortion remains safe, legal, and accessible."

The Kansas Supreme Court in 2019 declared that the state constitution protects abortion rights, but Republican lawmakers placed on the August primary ballot an initiative to overturn it.

In New Hampshire, Gov. Chris Sununu was a rare Republican governor who said he supports abortion rights and was committed to upholding Roe v. Wade. "So long as I am governor, these health care services

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for women will remain safe and legal," Sununu said.

However, last year Sununu signed into law restrictions on abortion when he approved a measure banning abortion after 24 weeks of gestation, with exceptions only for pregnancies that threaten the mother's life or health.

Polling shows relatively few Americans want to see Roe overturned. In 2020, AP VoteCast found that 69% of voters in the presidential election said the Supreme Court should leave the Roe v. Wade decision as is; just 29% said the court should overturn the decision. In general, AP-NORC polling finds a majority of the public favors abortion being legal in most or all cases.

At least eight GOP-led states have already passed new restrictions this year, expecting change from the conservative majority on the high court. Arizona and Florida banned the procedure after 15 weeks, without exceptions for rape or incest. Others, like Oklahoma, went further and made it a felony as of this summer to perform an abortion, with an exception only for the life of the mother.

Idaho followed Texas and allowed people to sue over abortions — including potential family members of the embryo.

Sixteen states and the District of Columbia, meanwhile, have protected access to abortion in state law, and several states moved to expand or strengthen those protections this year.

States like Washington and Connecticut, for example, have protected abortion providers in their states from lawsuits.

The Democratic leaders in Connecticut's statehouse, which over the weekend sent legislation to that state's governor that would protect abortion providers, said in a joint statement Monday night they had feared a proposed decision like the one in the draft opinion and "now this nightmare appears to be all too real."

"America is likely headed down a dark path where individual states will adopt conflicting statutes leading to additional divisions in an already divided nation," Senate President Pro Tempore Martin Looney and Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff said.

Democratic New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said her state would "welcome with open arms" those who need access to abortion.

In Hawaii, state Sen. Roz Baker, a Democrat, questioned what more the ruling, if issued by the court, could bring.

"Are they going to go back and go after the LGBTQ community next?" she said. "Are they going to go after immigrants? Are they going to go after any of the vulnerable populations?"

In some cases, abortion laws may divide states as well.

GOP-led Tennessee also has a trigger law banning abortion if Roe is overturned, but Nashville's district attorney on Monday tweeted that he would not prosecute any doctor who performed an abortion.

Cops: Body in barrel in Lake Mead was man who had been shot

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The body found inside a barrel on the newly exposed bottom of Lake Mead after the lake's level was depleted amid drought is that of a man who was shot, police said Tuesday.

The killing probably happened between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s because the victim was wearing shoes that were manufactured during that period, said homicide Lt. Ray Spencer, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported.

The barrel was found Sunday in the Lake Mead National Recreational Area by boaters who informed authorities.

Drought has dropped the water level of Lake Mead on the Colorado River in southern Nevada and northern Arizona so much that Las Vegas' uppermost water intake became visible last week.

Lake Mead and Lake Powell upstream are the largest human-made reservoirs in the U.S., part of a system that provides water to more than 40 million people, tribes, agriculture and industry in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming and across the southern border in Mexico.

The Clark County coroner's office will try to determine the man's identity.

Even as COVID cases rise, mask mandates stay shelved

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN and STEVE LeBLANC Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — An increase in COVID-19 infections around the U.S. has sent more cities into new high-risk categories that are supposed to trigger indoor mask wearing, but much of the country is stopping short of bringing back restrictions amid deep pandemic fatigue.

For weeks, much of upstate New York has been in the high-alert orange zone, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention designation that reflects serious community spread. The CDC urges people to mask up in indoor public places, including schools, regardless of vaccination status. But few, if any, local jurisdictions in the region brought back a mask requirement despite rising case counts.

In New York City, cases are again rising and this week crossed the city's threshold for "medium risk," indicating the widening spread of the subvariant known as BA.2 that has swept the state's northern reaches. But there appears to be little appetite from Mayor Eric Adams to do an about face just a few months after allowing residents to shed masks and put away vaccination cards that were once required to enter restaurants and concert halls. Adams has said the city could pivot and reimpose mandates but has stressed that he wants to keep the city open.

"I don't anticipate many places, if any, going back to mask mandates unless we see overflowing hospitals — that's what would drive mask mandates," said Professor David Larsen, a public health expert at Syracuse University in upstate New York, whose own county is currently an orange zone.

"People are still dying, but not in the same numbers," he said.

Nationally, hospitalizations are up slightly but still as low as any point in the pandemic. Deaths have steadily decreased in the last three months to nearly the lowest numbers.

The muted response reflects the exhaustion of the country after two years of restrictions and the new challenges that health leaders are facing at this phase of the pandemic.

An abundance of at-home virus test kits has led to a steep undercount of COVID-19 cases that were once an important benchmark. Researchers estimate that more than 60% of the country was infected with the virus during the omicron surge, bringing high levels of protection on top of the tens of millions of vaccinations. Hospitalizations have increased but only slightly.

"If a mask mandate were reinstated right this minute, I don't think it'd be very successful," said Jim Kearns, a videographer at the State University of New York in Oswego, another upstate New York community in the CDC's orange zone.

"I think a lot of people are just over it," he said. "If I saw death rates and hospitalizations going up in crazy numbers, and if I felt that there was a danger to me and my family, I would put it on in a heartbeat. But it has been a long two years."

In Boston, even as COVID-19 cases began to tick up again, there's been little drive to reimpose the indoor mask mandate city officials largely lifted two months ago. Boston still requires masks in schools and on school buses. A statewide mask mandate was lifted for schools at the end of February.

The city is now focused on what Boston Mayor Michelle Wu has described as recovery efforts, including attracting workers and visitors back to the city's downtown. Health officials continue to urge caution. During April's running of the Boston Marathon, which drew tens of thousands of competitors, race organizers and city officials recommended runners take steps to stop the spread of the virus by getting vaccinated, tested for COVID-19 and not accepting water from spectators.

In Maine, there have been few efforts to reinstate COVID-19 precautions, even after Democratic Gov. Janet Mills tested positive for COVID-19 at the end of April. The 74-year-old, who had received a second booster, said she believes that's "one of the reasons why I am still feeling well" and encouraged others to get vaccinated.

One of the most jarring reactions came in Philadelphia, which last month abandoned its indoor mask mandate just days after becoming the first U.S. metropolis to reimpose compulsory masking in response to an increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

City officials, who had said they wanted to head off a new wave of infections, abruptly backtracked

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after what they said was an unexpected drop in the number of people in the hospital and a leveling-off of new infections. The turnabout came amid rising opposition to the reinstatement, but city officials said the decision was about data, not politics.

Inaction by cities comes after a federal judge in Florida last month struck down a national mask mandate for travelers on planes, trains and buses. The CDC still urges people to wear face coverings but the Transportation Security Administration said it would stop enforcing mask mandates at airports and on flights, even as the White House said it would appeal the ruling.

In March, Vermont's largest city, Burlington, ended its indoor mask mandate following a drop in COVID-19 cases. Burlington was one of more than two dozen Vermont communities that required masking after the Legislature in November gave towns and cities the authority to do that. Even as the masks came off, COVID made a return in the state.

Half of Vermont's 14 counties have now been rated as having high community levels of COVID-19, according to the CDC. The rankings are based on a handful of factors, including new hospital admissions for the virus.

Chicago's infection rate is also rising, even though like in most places hospitalizations and deaths remain low.

But the increasing number of infections caused enough concern that the school district sent a letter to parents alerting them to the possibility that with the rise, Cook County, which includes Chicago, "may be moving from 'low risk' to a 'moderate risk' category in the coming days."

The letter did not say if the school district could again require students and staffers to wear masks or return to remote learning.

WNBA to honor Brittney Griner with league-wide floor decals

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

The WNBA will honor Phoenix star Brittney Griner with a floor decal and allow the Mercury to pay her without it counting against the team's salary cap, the league announced Tuesday.

The All-Star center remains in Russia after being detained following her arrival at a Moscow airport on Feb. 17. Russian authorities said a search of her luggage revealed vape cartridges that allegedly contained oil derived from cannabis, which could carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. She has a hearing set for May 19.

The Biden administration determined that Griner is being wrongfully detained in Russia, meaning the United States will more aggressively work to secure her release even as the legal case against her plays out, the State Department said Tuesday.

"We just want her home. I'm glad that they are trying to do something," said New York Liberty coach Sandy Brondello, who previously coached Griner in Phoenix. "They had that prisoner release last week that gave me hope that BG would be one of the next ones out. I can't imagine what she's going through. Hopefully she'll be out sooner than later."

Brondello was happy with the league's creation of the decal.

"There's not a day I don't think about BG. I was trying to message with her family yesterday. She's in everyone's mind," she said. "She can't be forgotten. She means so much to so many people. I coached her for a long time and she's like family. I think it's a great step."

The decal will feature Griner's initials as well as her No. 42. All 12 WNBA teams will have the decal on their home courts starting with the season opener Friday night. The Mercury open their season at home that night against the Las Vegas Aces.

"As we begin the 2022 season, we are keeping Brittney at the forefront of what we do through the game of basketball and in the community," WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert said. "We continue to work on bringing Brittney home and are appreciative of the support the community has shown BG and her family during this extraordinarily challenging time."

The league also approved giving the Mercury both roster and salary cap relief so that they can carry a

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replacement player until Griner returns home. Griner will be paid her full salary of nearly \$228,000.

Engelbert announced at the WNBA draft that there would be a league-wide charity initiative spearheaded by the Mercury to support Griner's philanthropic project, called BG's Heart and Sole Shoe Drive, which helps the homeless.

"In conjunction with the league, the other 11 teams, and those closest to BG, we will work to keep her top of mind as we tip the 2022 season," Mercury Executive Vice President and GM Jim Pitman said. "While we await her return, our main concern remains for her safety and well-being. Our fans will miss her impact on the court and in our community, and this gesture of including her initials on every court and our BG's Heart and Sole Shoe Drive activation in every market are for them and for her."

Griner had one of her best seasons last year — she was the league's second-leading scorer and finished sixth in rebounds. She helped the Mercury reach the WNBA Finals, where they lost to the Chicago Sky.

Mexico relocates migrant camp; Haitians appear at border

By MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexican authorities said Tuesday they have relocated a migrant camp that sprung up in a park in the border city of Reynosa, moving about 2,000 people from Central American and Haiti to a shelter in the city, across the border from McAllen, Texas.

The camp of migrants mainly from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Haiti sprung up after U.S. officials, citing the pandemic, invoked a health rule that denies migrants a chance to seek asylum.

Mexico's National Immigration Institute said the migrants were taken near midnight Monday to the shelter, which it said will have better hygiene and food services.

But on Monday, people in another border city, Nuevo Laredo, said hundreds of migrants, mainly Haitians, have streamed into the city, which is across the border from Laredo, Texas.

The rush apparently started after the U.S. began processing some asylum seekers there.

The Catholic bishop of Nuevo Laredo said Monday that migrant shelters there are already overcrowded, with some migrants sleeping outside in tents.

Bishop Enrique Sánchez Martínez said migrants started streaming into Nuevo Laredo in late April, though the city isn't usually popular among migrants, in part because it is dominated by the violent Northeast drug cartel.

"It is new for us because this is the last place they come, due to the conditions of our border, of our city, which are sometimes adverse for migrants," the bishop said. "But since they opened the door in the United States to asylum requests, a lot of them came in large groups."

Marvin Ajic, the director of the Casa Nazareth shelter, said that around April 16, Mexican authorities notified the shelters that the United States would resume processing asylum claims for humanitarian reasons.

The U.S. had begun allowing more people in, especially Central American adults, to prepare for lifting Title 42 — a pandemic-era health rule that denies migrants a chance to enter the U.S. seek asylum — on May 23. But a federal judge in Louisiana ruled last week that the government could not unwind the rule before the end date.

"The (Mexican) immigration officials organized things with the shelters, and the plan was to send people who had been waiting a long time, without any checks, basically anyone," Ajic.

That apparently drew the attention of other migrants, including Haitians.

In September, similar rumors sparked a rush by about 15,000 mostly Haitian refugees to the Texas border, where they camped under a bridge. U.S. officials began large scale deportations of Haitians while also allowing thousands to remain in the U.S.

Ajic warned migrants against coming to the border, noting the risks. On Monday, Mexico's National Immigration Institute said that so far this year, it has hauled the bodies of 19 immigrants from the Rio Grande, also known as the Rio Bravo.

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CDC restates recommendation for masks on planes, trains

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. health officials on Tuesday restated their recommendation that Americans wear masks on planes, trains and buses, despite a court ruling last month that struck down a national mask mandate on public transportation.

Americans age 2 and older should wear a well-fitting masks while on public transportation, including in airports and train stations, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended, citing the current spread of coronavirus and projections of future COVID-19 trends.

For months, the Transportation Security Administration had been enforcing a requirement that passengers and workers wear masks.

The government had repeatedly extended the mandate, and the latest one had been set to expire May 3. But a federal judge in Florida struck down the rule on April 18. The same day, the TSA said it would no longer enforce the mandate.

The CDC asked the Justice Department to appeal the decision, which the department did. On Tuesday, CDC officials declined to comment on the status of the appeal. DOJ officials did not immediately respond to a request for information.

What's next for abortion after Supreme Court leak?

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's capital has a long tradition of stunning leaks, from national security secrets to political scandals, but this week's disclosure of a draft Supreme Court decision is one for the history books. The document obtained by Politico shows a majority of justices could be poised to overturn Roe v. Wade, the landmark 1973 decision that created a constitutional right to abortion.

Its authenticity was confirmed by the court on Tuesday. The draft was written by Samuel Alito, one of the most conservative justices. According to Politico, four other justices — Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett — have agreed with the opinion, enough for a majority.

If the decision stands as written, it would also overturn Planned Parenthood v. Casey, a 1992 decision that protected abortion services even though it allowed states to add some limitations.

It's not surprising that the court, which has a strong conservative majority after former President Donald Trump appointed three justices during his single term in office, would seek to curb abortion rights. However, the breadth of the draft opinion startled advocates and sent shockwaves through American politics.

Here's a look at where things stand right now.

IS THE SUPREME COURT DECISION FINAL?

No opinion is final until it's issued by the court. The draft could evolve before it is formally released. The court is expected to rule on the case before its term ends in late June or early July.

The leaked version was dated Feb. 10, and any revisions could modify the scope of the decision and its potential impact on other constitutional issues.

But Politico reported that there were enough votes within the court to overturn Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood v. Casey, the two key decisions that have protected abortion rights.

HOW WOULD SUCH A DECISION AFFECT ABORTION RIGHTS?

The draft opinion is related to Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, a case involving Mississippi's ban on abortion after 15 weeks.

But the decision would have ripple effects around the country, giving a green light for other states to enact their own restrictions on abortion. Some states have already passed "trigger laws" that would automatically ban or severely limit abortion in the event that Roe is overturned.

The most likely outcome would be a patchwork of laws around the country. States run by Democrats could be expected to protect access to abortion, while states run by Republicans would not.

CAN I READ THE DRAFT OPINION FOR MYSELF?

You can see all 98 pages here.

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WHERE IS PUBLIC SENTIMENT ON ABORTION?

Only a minority of Americans want to overturn Roe vs. Wade. In 2020, AP VoteCast found that 69% of those surveyed wanted the Supreme Court to leave the decision intact.

A more recent poll conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, released last June, said 57% of Americans believed abortion should be legal in all or most cases. Another 43% said it should be illegal in all or most cases.

When it comes to limitations on abortion, public opinion is more mixed. Support for the procedure is strongest when the pregnancy is in the first trimester, and declines after that.

It's worth remembering that three of the justices who appear poised to overturn Roe were appointed by former President Donald Trump, who did not win the popular vote when he was elected in 2016. A sweeping decision would invite new questions about how the nation's highest court reflects — or conflicts with — public sentiment.

HOW IS CONGRESS LIKELY TO RESPOND?

Alito's draft said control over abortion should be left "to the people and their elected representatives." Theoretically, Congress could move swiftly to enshrine a national right to abortion, but that's unlikely. Such an effort has previously stalled in the Senate, where Democrats have only a slim majority.

If there's no legislative path to protecting abortion, it could take decades for the Supreme Court's decision to be undone. Justices receive a lifetime appointment to the bench, and conservatives have a strong majority that will be difficult to dislodge.

WHAT COULD PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN DO?

Biden said he's asked administration officials to prepare a "response to the continued attack on abortion and reproductive rights," adding that "we will be ready when any ruling is issued."

But without congressional action, his options are limited. Although he said he wants legislation to pass on Capitol Hill, he hasn't said whether Democratic senators should sidestep the filibuster to do so. There's unlikely to be enough support within the caucus for such a step anyway.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RIPPLE EFFECTS?

Democrats and liberals fear that a sweeping decision on abortion could undermine the right to privacy, a concept that has provided the foundation for other Supreme Court rulings over the years. Biden singled out same sex marriage and birth control as facing potential threat. "It's a fundamental shift in American jurisprudence," he told reporters Tuesday.

WHO LEAKED THE DRAFT OPINION?

Chief Justice John Roberts called the leak "a singular and egregious breach," and he's asked officials to investigate.

People familiar with the internal workings of the court could identify around 70 people who might have access to a draft. First, of course, are the nine justices themselves. Then, there is the small group of staff that work for each justice. Finally, there are the justices' clerks, young lawyers who work with the justices for a year in a highly-prized position. Each justice has four clerks — and secrecy is part of their job.

Politico said it received the copy "from a person familiar with the court's proceedings," leading to speculation that a dissenter among the justices or their staff wanted to make it public. However, it's also possible that someone who liked the draft hoped that releasing the document would harden support for it.

DC reaches \$750K settlement in Trump inaugural lawsuit

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Donald Trump's businesses and inaugural committee have reached a deal to pay Washington, D.C., \$750,000 to resolve a lawsuit that alleged the committee overpaid for events at his hotel and enriched the former president's family in the process, according to the District of Columbia's attorney general.

Attorney General Karl Racine announced the settlement agreement in the case against the Presidential Inaugural Committee, the Trump Organization and the Trump International Hotel in Washington in a tweet

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on Tuesday. The document had not yet been signed by a judge.

The agreement says the case is being resolved "to avoid the cost, burden, and risks of further litigation" and that the organizations "dispute these allegations on numerous grounds and deny having engaged in any wrongdoing or unlawful conduct."

As part of the agreement, the defendants will pay the District of Columbia a total of \$750,000, which will be used to benefit three nonprofit organizations, the settlement paperwork says.

"We're resolving our lawsuit and sending the message that if you violate DC nonprofit law—no matter how powerful you are—you'll pay," Racine said in a tweet.

In a statement, Trump blasted Racine and noted that the settlement includes no admission of guilt or liability.

"As crime rates are soaring in our Nation's Capital, it is necessary that the Attorney General focus on those issues rather than a further leg of the greatest Witch-Hunt in political history," Trump said. "This was yet another example of weaponizing Law Enforcement against the Republican Party and, in particular, the former President of the United States."

Racine has said the committee misused nonprofit funds and coordinated with the hotel's management and members of the Trump family to arrange the events. He said one of the event's planners raised concerns about pricing with Trump, the president's daughter Ivanka Trump and Rick Gates, a top campaign official at the time.

The committee has maintained that its finances were independently audited, and that all money was spent in accordance with the law. The committee raised an unprecedented \$107 million to host events celebrating Trump's inauguration in January 2017. But the committee's spending has drawn mounting scrutiny.

Gates, a former Trump campaign aide who cooperated in the special counsel's Russia investigation, personally managed discussions with the hotel about using the space, including ballrooms and meeting rooms, the attorney general's office has said. In one instance, Gates contacted Ivanka Trump and told her that he was "a bit worried about the optics" of the committee paying such a high fee, Racine said.

Prosecutors say the committee could have hosted inaugural events at other venues either for free or for reduced costs but didn't consider those options.

Pfizer hopes to submit little-kid vaccine data by early June

By The Associated Press undefined

Pfizer now hopes to tell U.S. regulators how well its COVID-19 vaccine works in the littlest kids by late May or early June.

Pfizer is testing three extra-small doses of its vaccine in children under 5 after two shots didn't prove quite strong enough. Initial results had been expected last month but the company laid out the latest timeline Tuesday during its discussion of quarterly financial results.

Currently in the U.S., only children ages 5 or older can be vaccinated, using Pfizer's vaccine -- leaving 18 million younger tots unprotected.

Rival Moderna hopes to be the first to offer vaccinations for the youngest children. Last week, it filed with the Food and Drug Administration data it hopes will prove two of its low-dose shots work in children younger than 5. Moderna also has filed FDA applications for older kids, although the agency hasn't ruled on them.

The FDA already has set tentative dates in June to publicly review data on COVID-19 vaccines for tots under 5, from either or both companies.

Review: 'Doctor Strange 2' gets weirder, scarier, messier

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Once a superhero franchise goes multiverse, it's hard to go back.

No work of fiction ever needs permission to break the rules or push the boundaries of traditional story-

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telling, but the multiverse, at least as it's been served up in recent Marvel movies, practically demands it. And for the moment that means a lot of cameo opportunities. "Spider-Man: No Way Home" opened the door to the concept, to mostly charming results, but now Benedict Cumberbatch's master of the mystic arts is flying through the interdimensional portal with the concept in "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness."

This film is technically the sequel to "Doctor Strange," a movie that came out six years ago. But so much has happened in Marvel land that involves Stephen Strange and his goatee — "Infinity War," "Endgame" and, yes, the most recent "Spider-Man" — that where it falls in the "Doctor Strange" standalone film continuity is entirely beside the point. One could not simply watch "Doctor Strange" and then "Doctor Strange 2" and expect it to make sense.

Not only that, understanding, or at least being invested in "Doctor Strange 2," also requires some passing knowledge of "WandaVision," the nine-episode Disney+ series that runs almost six hours total. This is not a surprise or a burden to Marvel fans, but it does seem like quite a lot to ask of the average moviegoer (though perhaps at this point they're one and the same).

So it's especially interesting that Sam Raimi agreed to jump into this messy corporate multiverse at this point. His "Spider-Man" movies are still among the top of the crop of modern superhero franchises, after all. Raimi was able to put his own stamp on this endeavor, including but not limited to a Bruce Campbell cameo. There are horror elements, too, some so intense that families might think twice before bringing everyone to the multiplex, some interesting visuals not entirely dissimilar to the city-bending of "Inception" and some humor. But Raimi doesn't take "Doctor Strange" to an entirely new tonal place, like, say Taika Waititi did with Thor. He mostly sticks to the framework established by Scott Derrickson.

The main issue is that it's a bit of a kitchen sink movie centered on an entirely new and underdeveloped character, America Chavez (Xochitl Gomez), a teen who has the power to travel the multiverse but doesn't quite know how to control it. She's being hunted by someone who wants her powers and Strange decides to help, possibly out of genuine altruism and possibly because it was a good excuse to literally jump off a balcony to get out of his old flame Christine's (Rachel McAdams) wedding early.

Unfortunately, he asks the wrong Avenger for help: Elizabeth Olsen's Wanda Maximoff is the one after the power to go multiverse jumping and has been dabbling in some dark arts to make it happen. She's motivated by the idea that she has children out there in an idyllic suburban multiverse in which she wears yoga pants and loose cotton tops and tucks her boys in at night after ice cream and movies. Soon she and Strange are having a standoff in midair.

The script is inventive in the way it plays around with a jumble of big sci-fi concepts, which makes sense considering screenwriter Michael Waldron is a veteran of "Rick & Morty." But it also underwhelms when it comes to the mishmash structure and the women. Olsen still sells Wanda's pain like the best of them, even though she's been reduced to a stereotype of female hysteria. Christine is merely there to make Strange realize things about himself. And America, well, she never really earns our emotional investment.

After "Infinity War" and "Endgame," "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness" feels a little bit like wheel spinning. Cumberbatch has fun with his character, but his limitless ego seems to have been a little muted here as he grapples with his own happiness. And that invites more questions, like do we ultimately care about whether or not Doctor Strange is happy? Does he? Could everyone just use some post blip therapy instead of these interdimensional bottle episodes?

Perhaps the Marvel universe is finally starting to feel like a long running comic book series. Or maybe Phase 4 just hasn't kicked into gear just yet.

"Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness," a Disney release in theaters Thursday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for, "intense sequences of violence and action, frightening images and some language." Running time: 126 minutes. Two stars out of four.

In Mexico, an entire town has its cross to bear

By FERNANDA PESCE Associated Press

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SANTA CRUZ XOCHITEPEC (AP) — Dozens of men strained and struggled as they hefted a huge cross adorned with colorful ribbons and trudged down a steep hill in a yearly ceremony of the Day of the Cross celebrated in the Mexico City neighborhood of Santa Cruz Xochitepec.

The ceremony on the Cerro de Xochitepec came a day before the formal day on the church calendar, Tuesday, when the cross is the centerpiece of a Mass and a new one is adorned for a return trek up the hill in a week.

The cross has stood sentinel over the city's south side even as what was once a village was swallowed by metropolis' urban sprawl. The importance of the huge, fabric-draped cross to locals is reflected in the town's very name, which means 'Holy Cross of the Flowered Hill.'

In a babel of voices, and after three failed attempts, dozens of local volunteers known as "cargadores," or carriers, managed to lower the 23-foot (7-meter) tall cross from its perch and carry it all the way down to the local church.

It is a cycle that has been going on for decades and perhaps centuries.

Each year, people across the country carry or adorn crosses along roadsides and on hilltops with fabrics and flowers representing offerings.

But for the devotees in Santa Cruz Xochitepec, theirs is not just another cross. According to one local legend, a convict fleeing pursuers in 1890 found a cross on the hill and believed it spared him from getting caught.

But accounts of a cross being placed here — on a spot where pre-Hispanic deities were once apparently worshipped — date back to the time of the Spanish conquerors.

Many townspeople have carried the 1,100-pound (500-kilogram) cross at one time or another. As the carriers made brief pauses, they sang traditional "ranchera" songs, and a group of mariachis accompanied them down the hill, followed by many of the townsfolk.

While only some bear the weight of the cross, the feat is regarded as a group effort of the entire town.

"I have been carrying the cross for 30 years and I am very proud of carrying the Holy Cross with the whole town," said René Rosas, a local carrier. "We are tired but this is all about the faith we have in the cross."

Employers post record 11.5 million job openings in March

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Employers posted a record 11.5 million job openings in March, meaning the United States now has an unprecedented two job openings for every person who is unemployed.

The latest data released Tuesday by the the Bureau of Labor Statistics further reveals an extraordinarily tight labor market that has emboldened millions of Americans to seek better paying jobs, while also contributing to the biggest inflation surge in four decades.

A record 4.5 million Americans quit their jobs in March — a sign that they are confident they can find better pay or improved working conditions elsewhere.

Layoffs, which has been running around 1.8 million a month before the pandemic hit the economy in early 2020, ticked up to 1.4 million in March from 1.35 million in February.

The U.S. job market is on a hot streak. Employers have added an average of more than 540,000 jobs a month for the past year. The Labor Department is expected to report Friday that the economy generated another 400,000 new jobs in April, according to a survey by the data firm FactSet. That would mark an unprecedented 12th straight month that hiring has come in at 400,000 or more.

The U.S. economy and job market roared back with unexpected strength from 2020's brief but devastating coronavirus recession, fueled by massive government spending and super-low interested rates engineered by the Federal Reserve.

Caught off guard by the sudden rebound in consumer demand, companies scrambled to hire workers and stock their shelves. They were forced to raise wages, and factories, ports and freight yards were overwhelmed with traffic. The result has been shipping delays and higher prices.

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In March, consumer prices rose 8.5% from a year earlier — the hottest inflation since 1981.

Where things go from here is uncertain. The Fed is raising short-term interest rates to combat inflation. The COVID-19 stimulus from the federal government is gone. And the war in Ukraine has clouded the economic outlook.

Despite strong hiring, the United States is still 1.6 million short of the jobs it had in February 2020, just before the coronavirus hit the economy; and that shortfall does not take into account the additional jobs that should have been added by a growing population.

For now anyway, the job market looks strong.

"Employees have strong job security and confidence in their ability to find new work," said Nick Bunker, director of economic research at the Indeed Hiring Lab. "The labor market is still very much a job seeker's market. Something dramatic will have to happen for this to change anytime soon."

Report: Supreme Court draft suggests Roe could be overturned

By MARK SHERMAN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A draft opinion suggests the U.S. Supreme Court could be poised to overturn the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade case that legalized abortion nationwide, according to a Politico report.

A decision to overrule Roe would lead to abortion bans in roughly half the states and could have huge ramifications for this year's elections. But it's unclear if the draft represents the court's final word on the matter — opinions often change in ways big and small in the drafting process.

President Joe Biden said Tuesday that the "basic fairness and the stability of our law demand" that the court not overturn Roe. While emphasizing that he couldn't speak to the authenticity of the draft, Biden said his administration is preparing for all eventualities for when the court ultimate rules and that a decision overturning Roe would raise the stakes for voters in November's heated midterm elections.

"If the court does overturn Roe, it will fall on our nation's elected officials at all levels of government to protect a woman's right to choose," Biden said. "And it will fall on voters to elect pro-choice officials this November. At the federal level, we will need more pro-choice Senators and a pro-choice majority in the House to adopt legislation that codifies Roe, which I will work to pass and sign into law."

Whatever the outcome, the Politico report late Monday represented an extremely rare breach of the court's secretive deliberation process, and on a case of surpassing importance.

"Roe was egregiously wrong from the start," the draft opinion states. It was signed by Justice Samuel Alito, a member of the court's 6-3 conservative majority who was appointed by former President George W. Bush.

The document was labeled a "1st Draft" of the "Opinion of the Court" in a case challenging Mississippi's ban on abortion after 15 weeks, a case known as Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization.

The court is expected to rule on the case before its term ends in late June or early July.

The draft opinion in effect states there is no constitutional right to abortion services and would allow individual states to more heavily regulate or outright ban the procedure.

"We hold that Roe and Casey must be overruled," it states, referencing the 1992 case Planned Parenthood v. Casey that affirmed Roe's finding of a constitutional right to abortion services but allowed states to place some constraints on the practice. "It is time to heed the Constitution and return the issue of abortion to the people's elected representatives."

A Supreme Court spokeswoman said the court had no comment, and The Associated Press could not immediately confirm the authenticity of the draft Politico posted, which dates from February.

Politico said only that it received "a copy of the draft opinion from a person familiar with the court's proceedings in the Mississippi case along with other details supporting the authenticity of the document."

The draft opinion strongly suggests that when the justices met in private shortly after arguments in the case on Dec. 1, at least five voted to overrule Roe and Casey, and Alito was assigned the task of writing the court's majority opinion.

Votes and opinions in a case aren't final until a decision is announced or, in a change wrought by the

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coronavirus pandemic, posted on the court's website.

The report comes amid a legislative push to restrict abortion in several Republican-led states — Oklahoma being the most recent — even before the court issues its decision. Critics of those measures have said low-income and minority women will disproportionately bear the burden of the new restrictions.

The leak jumpstarted the intense political reverberations that the high court's ultimate decision was expected to have in the midterm election year. Already, politicians on both sides of the aisle were seizing on the report to fundraise and energize their supporters on either side of the hot-button issue.

An AP-NORC poll in December found that Democrats increasingly see protecting abortion rights as a high priority for the government.

Other polling shows relatively few Americans want to see Roe overturned. In 2020, AP VoteCast found that 69% of voters in the presidential election said the Supreme Court should leave the Roe v. Wade decision as is; just 29% said the court should overturn the decision. In general, AP-NORC polling finds a majority of the public favors abortion being legal in most or all cases.

Still, when asked about abortion policy generally, Americans have nuanced attitudes on the issue, and many don't think that abortion should be possible after the first trimester or that women should be able to obtain a legal abortion for any reason.

Alito, in the draft, said the court can't predict how the public might react and shouldn't try. "We cannot allow our decisions to be affected by any extraneous influences such as concern about the public's reaction to our work," Alito wrote in the draft opinion, according to Politico.

People on both sides of the issue quickly gathered outside the Supreme Court waving signs and chanting on a balmy spring night, following the release of the Politico report.

Reaction was swift from elected officials in Congress and across the country.

In a joint statement from Congress' top two Democrats, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said, "If the report is accurate, the Supreme Court is poised to inflict the greatest restriction of rights in the past fifty years — not just on women but on all Americans."

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, also a Democrat, said people seeking abortions could head to New York. "For anyone who needs access to care, our state will welcome you with open arms. Abortion will always be safe & accessible in New York," Hochul said in a tweet.

Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch said in a statement, "We will let the Supreme Court speak for itself and wait for the Court's official opinion." But local officials were praising the draft.

"This puts the decision making back into the hands of the states, which is where it should have always been," said Mississippi state Rep. Becky Currie.

Congress could act, too, though a bill that would write Roe's protections into federal law stalled in the Senate after passing the House last year with only Democratic votes.

At Supreme Court arguments in December, all six conservative justices signaled that they would uphold the Mississippi law, and five asked questions that suggested that overruling Roe and Casey was a possibility.

Only Chief Justice John Roberts seemed prepared to take the smaller step of upholding the 15-week ban, though that too would be a significant weakening of abortion rights.

Until now, the court has allowed states to regulate but not ban abortion before the point of viability, around 24 weeks.

The court's three liberal justices seemed likely to be in dissent.

It's impossible to know what efforts are taking place behind the scenes to influence any justice's vote. If Roberts is inclined to allow Roe to survive, he need only pick off one other conservative vote to deprive the court of a majority to overrule the abortion landmark.

Twenty-six states are certain or likely to ban abortion if Roe v. Wade is overturned, according to the pro-abortion rights think tank the Guttmacher Institute. Of those, 22 states already have total or near-total bans on the books that are currently blocked by Roe, aside from Texas. The state's law banning it after six weeks has already been allowed to go into effect by the Supreme Court due to its unusual civil enforcement structure. Four more states are considered likely to quickly pass bans if Roe is overturned.

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Sixteen states and the District of Columbia, meanwhile, have protected access to abortion in state law. This year, anticipating a decision overturning or gutting Roe, eight conservative states have already moved to restrict abortion rights. Oklahoma, for example, passed several bills in recent weeks, including one that goes into effect this summer making it a felony to perform an abortion. Like many anti-abortion bills passed in GOP-led states this year, it does not have exceptions for rape or incest, only to save the life of the mother.

Eight Democratic-leaning states protected or expanded access to the procedure, including California, which has passed legislation making the procedure less expensive and is considering other bills to make itself an "abortion sanctuary" if Roe is overturned.

The draft looked legitimate to some followers of the court. Veteran Supreme Court lawyer Neal Katyal, who worked as a clerk to Justice Stephen Breyer and therefore has been in a position to see drafts, wrote on Twitter: "There are lots of signals the opinion is legit. The length and depth of analysis, would be very hard to fake. It says it is written by Alito and definitely sounds like him."

India's Muslims mark Eid al-Fitr amid attacks on community

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India (AP) — Muslims across India marked Eid al-Fitr on Tuesday by offering prayers outside mosques, with the celebrations this year following a series of attacks against the religious minority during the month of Ramadan.

"We will not have the same kind of festivity" this year, said Mohammad Habeeb ur Rehman, a civil engineer in India's financial capital, Mumbai. "This is the most painful Eid with the worst memories for Indian Muslims."

Anti-Muslim sentiment and attacks have surged across the country in the last month, including stone throwing between Hindu and Muslim groups during religious processions and subsequent demolitions by authorities of a number of properties belonging mostly to Muslims.

The community, which makes up 14% of India's 1.4 billion population, is reeling from vilification by hard-line Hindu nationalists who have long espoused an anti-Muslim stance. Some leaders of India's ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party have tacitly supported the violence, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi has so far been silent about it.

Eid al-Fitr is typically marked with communal prayers, celebratory gatherings around festive meals, and new clothes, but celebrations in India for the past two years have been marred by COVID-19 restrictions.

In the Indian-controlled portion of disputed Kashmir, the Muslim festival has been subdued for the past three years because of an unprecedented military lockdown after India stripped the region's semi-autonomy in 2019, followed by the pandemic. The region also saw a rise in violence during Ramadan, with at least 20 militants, two civilians and five police and soldiers killed.

"As we prepare to celebrate Eid, a strong sense of collective loss jars at us," said Bashir Ahmed, a businessman in Srinagar.

A violent insurgency against Indian rule in the Muslim-majority region and New Delhi's brutal response have raged for over three decades. Tens of thousands of people have died in the conflict.

In India's capital, New Delhi, hundreds assembled in the Jama Masjid, one of the country's largest mosques, to offer Eid prayers there for the first time in over two years due to pandemic restrictions. Families came together early Tuesday morning and many people shared hugs and wishes.

Mohammed Hamid, a software engineer, said he was grateful to be offering prayers at the mosque again. "It's a good feeling because there was a lockdown for the past two years. With the grace of God, we are able to offer Eid prayers here with the children and we are thankful," Hamid said.

The mood was cheerful in neighboring Bangladesh as millions traveled from cities to towns and villages over the weekend to celebrate Eid. Huge crowds gathered in Dhaka's main Kamalapur Railway Station and bus terminals.

As in India, Eid celebrations in Bangladesh have been muted for the last two years due to the pandemic.

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This year, the government hasn't imposed restrictions, instead advising people to follow basic health protocols.

Khaleda Akter, a garment worker in Dhaka, said she is traveling to her village and is excited to celebrate with her parents.

"I am very glad that this year we can travel without any trouble," she said.

Today in History: May 4, four killed at Kent State

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, May 4, the 124th day of 2022. There are 241 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 4, 1970, Ohio National Guardsmen opened fire during an anti-war protest at Kent State University, killing four students and wounding nine others.

On this date:

In 1776, Rhode Island declared its freedom from England, two months before the Declaration of Independence was adopted.

In 1886, at Haymarket Square in Chicago, a labor demonstration for an 8-hour work day turned into a deadly riot when a bomb exploded.

In 1904, the United States took over construction of the Panama Canal from the French.

In 1932, mobster Al Capone, convicted of income-tax evasion, entered the federal penitentiary in Atlanta. (Capone was later transferred to Alcatraz Island.)

In 1942, the Battle of the Coral Sea, the first naval clash fought entirely with carrier aircraft, began in the Pacific during World War II. (The outcome was considered a tactical victory for Japan, but ultimately a strategic one for the Allies.)

In 1945, during World War II, German forces in the Netherlands, Denmark and northwest Germany agreed to surrender.

In 1961, the first group of "Freedom Riders" left Washington, D.C., to challenge racial segregation on interstate buses and in bus terminals.

In 1998, Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski (kah-ZIHN'-skee) was given four life sentences plus 30 years by a federal judge in Sacramento, California, under a plea agreement that spared him the death penalty.

In 2001, Bonny Lee Bakley, wife of actor Robert Blake, was shot to death as she sat in a car near a restaurant in Los Angeles. (Blake, accused of Bakley's murder, was acquitted in a criminal trial but found liable by a civil jury and ordered to pay damages.)

In 2006, a federal judge sentenced Zacarias Moussaoui (zak-uh-REE'-uhs moo-SOW'-ee) to life in prison for his role in the 9/11 attacks, telling the convicted terrorist, "You will die with a whimper."

In 2011, President Barack Obama said he had decided not to release death photos of Osama bin Laden because their graphic nature could incite violence and create national security risks. Officials told The Associated Press that the Navy SEALs who'd stormed bin Laden's compound in Pakistan shot and killed him after they saw him appear to lunge for a weapon.

In 2020, New York state reported more than 1,700 previously undisclosed coronavirus deaths at nursing homes and adult care facilities. Struggling fashion brand J.Crew became the first major retailer to file for bankruptcy protection since the start of the pandemic. Former Miami Dolphins coach Don Shula died at 90; he'd won more games than any other NFL coach.

Ten years ago: The U.S. and China outlined a tentative deal to send Chen Guangcheng (chehn gwahng-chung), a blind legal activist, to America for study and potentially bring a face-saving end to a delicate diplomatic crisis. (Chen left China on May 19, 2012.) Adam Yauch, 47, the gravelly-voiced rapper who helped make The Beastie Boys one of the seminal groups in hip-hop, died in New York.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump met with Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull aboard the USS Intrepid, a decommissioned aircraft carrier in New York, to commemorate the 75th anniversary

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of the World War II Battle of the Coral Sea, which reinforced the ties between the U.S. and Australia. A U.S. service member was killed in Somalia during an operation against the extremist group al-Shabab, the first American combat death there in more than two decades. Buckingham Palace announced that Queen Elizabeth II's 95-year-old husband, Prince Philip, was retiring from royal duties.

One year ago: President Joe Biden set a new vaccination goal to deliver at least one shot to 70% of adult Americans by July Fourth. (The effort would fall short, with a 67% vaccination rate.) Crews in Mexico City untangled train carriages from the steel and concrete wreckage that fell onto a roadway a day earlier, killing 26 people. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu missed a midnight deadline to put together a new governing coalition; his Likud party would be pushed into the opposition for the first time in 12 years.

Today's Birthdays: Katherine Jackson, matriarch of the Jackson musical family, is 92. Jazz musician Ron Carter is 85. Pulitzer Prize-winning political commentator George Will is 81. Pop singer Peggy Santiglia Davison (The Angels) is 78. Actor Richard Jenkins is 75. Country singer Stella Parton is 73. Actor-turned-clergyman Hilly Hicks is 72. Irish musician Darryl Hunt (The Pogues) is 72. Singer Jackie Jackson (The Jacksons) is 71. Singer-actor Pia Zadora is 70. R&B singer Oleta Adams is 69. Violinist Soozie Tyrell (Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band) is 65. Country singer Randy Travis is 63. Actor Mary McDonough is 61. Comedian Ana Gasteyer is 55. Actor Will Arnett is 52. Rock musician Mike Dirnt (Green Day) is 50. Contemporary Christian singer Chris Tomlin is 50. TV personality and fashion designer Kimora Lee Simmons is 47. Sports reporter Erin Andrews is 44. Singer Lance Bass (^N Sync) is 43. Actor Ruth Negga is 41. Rapper/singer Jidenna is 37. Actor Alexander Gould is 28. Country singer RaeLynn is 28. Actor Amara (uh-MAH'-ruh) Miller is 22. Actor Brooklynn Prince (Film: "The Florida Project") is 12.